



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT
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By
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HB 1684 Relating to International Liaison for the Legislature

Chair Magaoay, Vice Chair Tokioka, and Members of the House Committee on Legislative Management, I thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding the International Liaison for the Legislature.

The University of Hawai'i supports the intent of this bill to amend the Hawai'i Revised Statutes Section 201-17 but has reservations about some components. We fully support the expansion of the role of the Office of International Affairs within DBEDT to include the facilitation, coordination, and promotion of educational relationships and exchanges with other countries through collaboration with and funding of existing international programs and organizations.

By serving a coordinating role, the Office of International Affairs can help ensure that the State of Hawai'i takes full advantage of our unique position and understanding of the Asia-Pacific region with a goal of competing in the global economy. At present there are numerous public and private organizations and agencies in our state that are engaged in global outreach, youth and leadership development, international education and training but rarely are these entities fully aware of each other and therefore loose opportunities for collaboration and partnership.

Often in Asian cultures the endorsement of State government is essential to having access to government officials in ministries of education and training or key public educational institutions. It would therefore be most beneficial for a Hawai'i State Office of International Affairs to serve as a focal point for our state's global engagement.

Furthermore we fully support communication, coordination, and liaison between DBEDT and the Legislature for international activities, programs, and initiatives. However, it is not clear that in order to achieve this that a full time equivalent position is required. If the Office of International Affairs is fully funded, such legislative liaison work could be included in the position description of one of the newly hired staff.

We also have concerns regarding the language in section (d) which states that "if any of the responsibilities or duties of the office of international affairs under this section overlap with the responsibilities or duties of another agency or authority under this chapter, the office of international affairs shall have exclusive jurisdiction and authority over those responsibilities and duties." This language has been stricken in HB 1367, which we do support. It is essential that the University of Hawai'i retains its autonomy in determining international partnerships, agreements, linkages, programming, international outreach and recruitment without external pressure or influence.

Heretofore the University of Hawai'i has had a very close and collegial working relationship with DBEDT, other State agencies, and the Legislature and fully intends to continue to collaborate, cooperate, and to share information and programming, where and when appropriate.