

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI‘I SYSTEM LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY



HB 2588 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs
January 31, 2008 at 8:30 am

by

Karen C. Lee
Interim Associate Vice President for Student Affairs
University of Hawaii System

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Chair Evans, Vice Chair Har, and Members of the Committee:

The purpose of HB 2588 is to grant resident tuition to veterans at the University of Hawai'i.

While the University appreciates the outstanding service that military veterans have provided to our country, we are opposed to this bill for both administrative and substantive reasons.

First of all, section 304A-402, Hawai'i Revised Statutes, defines residency for tuition purposes at the University of Hawai'i. All ten campuses of the UH System use this definition, along with Hawai'i Administrative Rules which further delineate the policies of residency for tuition purposes, to determine whether a student is deemed a resident or non-resident in paying tuition. In the past, the Hawai'i Revised Statutes included a section which listed categories of students who *were waived the non-resident tuition differential*, which allowed them to pay in-state tuition. They were not, however, deemed Hawai'i residents for tuition purposes. This section of HRS was recently repealed and more appropriately placed in UH Board of Regents policy. The pertinent section is attached.

Therefore, we ask that the Legislature not amend the definition of residency for tuition purposes in Section 304A-402 to include veterans, as they should not be deemed a "resident." The more appropriate place for such an amendment to occur should be in Board of Regents policy, where they could be exempted from paying the non-resident tuition differential.

Secondly, and more substantively, as stated, the University has categories of students who are already afforded the privilege of paying resident tuition through an exemption of the non-resident tuition differential. Their waived non-resident tuition differential is foregone revenues for the University. Included in this privilege are active duty military and their dependents, and non-resident National Guard members and reservists.

Veterans, through the Federal Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) program, receive up to 36 months of education benefits. This benefit may be used for degree and certificate programs, flight training, apprenticeship/on-the-job training and correspondence courses. Even remedial, deficiency, and refresher courses may be approved under certain circumstances. Generally, benefits are payable for 10 years following release from active duty.

Because veterans have the opportunity of special funding for their education, and because they also have the option of returning to their home of record and pay in-state tuition there, the University respectfully opposes passage of this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Attachment

UH Board of Regents Policy, Chapter 6 Excerpt

Section 6-11 Board Exemptions to Non-Resident Tuition

- a. The students affected by the following guidelines are classified as non-residents for admission and tuition purposes. In accordance with Board of Regents' policy, non-resident students are admitted on a space available basis with the understanding that priority for admission is given to qualified residents.
- b. The following categories of students will receive a waiver of the non-resident tuition differential:
 - (1) East-West Center student grantees pursuing baccalaureate or advanced degrees;
 - (2) United States military personnel stationed in Hawai'i on active duty, and their authorized dependents during the period that the personnel are stationed in Hawai'i;
 - (3) Members of the Hawai'i National Guard and the Hawai'i-based Reserves;
 - (4) Native Hawaiians whose domicile is outside of Hawai'i;
 - (5) Employees of the university, their spouses, and their dependents.
- c. Citizens from an eligible Pacific Island district, commonwealth, territory, or insular jurisdiction, state, or nation which provides no public higher education institution granting baccalaureate degrees are charged 150 percent of the resident tuition rate. The Office of the President updates and distributes the list of eligible Pacific Island jurisdictions.