



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Hawaiian Affairs  
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by

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### HB 908 RELATING TO TUITION WAIVERS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Chair Carroll, Vice Chair Shimabukuro, and Members of the Committee:

The purpose of HB 908 is to require the UH Board of Regents to grant tuition waivers for Native Hawaiian students in the University of Hawai'i system.

The University supports the overall intent of this bill and appreciates the Legislature's concern for improving the academic success of Native Hawaiians in higher education. Likewise, the University strives to improve the access to state higher education and the success of our Native Hawaiian students. In 2008, we placed Native Hawaiian Educational Attainment as our very first strategic outcome for the years 2008 to 2015. It is our goal to increase degree attainment of Native Hawaiians by 6 to 9 percent per year.

To help us succeed in our goal, we are encouraging students who have financial need to apply for financial aid so that we can maximize federal assistance to students. We also already award 250 Native Hawaiian tuition exemptions to Native Hawaiian students with financial need, per UH Board of Regents policy. These are given in whole or partial amounts, depending on a student's financial need. Furthermore, we exempt non-resident Native Hawaiian students from paying the non-resident tuition differential; they are only charged the resident rates for tuition. Finally, the President of the University created a scholarship in 2008 that designated research funds to be used for Native Hawaiian students with financial need. In 2008-09, we will give an additional \$800,000 to Native Hawaiian financial assistance. In 2009-2010, it will be \$1,650,000 and in 2010-2011, it will be \$2,500,000, which is the amount to be designated every year after that.

We respectfully request that the bill be amended to target all Native Hawaiian students *with financial need*, as determined by the federal financial aid guidelines. This way, the University can continue to target those with financial hardships through a variety of federal, state and institutional grants and scholarships that can cover the cost of tuition. We also respectfully request that the assistance be in the form of University grants or scholarships to be consistent with the University's comprehensive financial assistance policy created in 2006.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.