



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Written Testimony
presented before the
House Committee on Higher Education
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by
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and
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HB 2706 RELATING TO EDUCATION

Chair Nishimoto, Vice Chair Nakashima, and members of the House Committee on Higher Education, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on HB 2706.

The University of Hawai'i College of Education supports HB 2706. We appreciate the acknowledgement of Ho'okulaiwi's accomplishments on behalf of Native Hawaiian children and their exemplary work with schools on the Leeward coast, Ni'ihau, and Moloka'i. Our College of Education faculty, including those associated with Ho'okulaiwi, have been successful in obtaining grant funds through the Native Hawaiian Education Act and other sources, enabling us to support teachers and schools through curriculum development and professional development throughout the state. However, such grant funding is inconsistent and short term, usually for two to five years maximum.

In addition, the College has reallocated its own resources, expanding its outreach to and support of Native Hawaiian communities by increasing recruiting efforts to bring more Native Hawaiians into our teacher preparation programs, streamlining access to these programs for students coming from community colleges, and establishing counseling and student support efforts for undergraduate students interested in pursuing education as a career. Even with these increased efforts the need remains great.

HB 2706 proposes to complement these efforts with more stable funding of permanent positions that will better ensure sustained focus and support through programs of proven effectiveness. Ho'okulaiwi has established a strong record of accomplishments and by working closely with communities gained their support and appreciation.

We note one clarification in the current language of the bill. Ho'okulaiwi is a program within our department of curriculum studies and not an official center within the University, a designation that requires Board of Regents approval.

As with other legislative initiatives of this kind, however, we support this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in the University's Board of Regents Approved Executive Biennium Budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.