



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education
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By
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HB 2767 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Chair Choy, Vice Chair Ichiyama, and members of the committee:

I am providing testimony on behalf of the University of Hawai'i on HB 2767 that prohibits the University of Hawai'i from placing a financial obligation hold on a student's financial account due to an unpaid tuition balance, prior to the last day by which students are allowed to drop a course or receive a refund of tuition.

The University of Hawai'i (UH) appreciates the interest of the legislature in initiatives supportive of our students and their access to higher education. However, we oppose this bill and would like to correct inaccuracies reflected in the language of the bill around UH procedures on holds and refunds.

First, UH procedures for issuing student refunds are guided by UH Administrative Procedure 8.770, and already allow for a schedule of refunds. A student is refunded a 100% refund for complete withdrawal or when change in status is made on or before the last day of late registration. And, even after that, students can receive a 50% refund up to the third week of instruction. While semester payment is due the month before classes start, a financial hold is not placed on the student account until after the third week of instruction. If payment in full or a payment plan is not completed, the hold will prevent a student from registering for the following semester.

To remove holds or allow students to continue to register without tuition payment affects the University's ability to operate in a fiscally sound manner. The University does not think it is a good business practice to allow delinquent accounts to continually increase the debt on non-payments.

Second, UH has taken initiatives to streamline the withdrawal process for students. Prior to Fall 2015, students were able to drop all courses online except for the last course (which would result in withdrawal from the University) which had to be processed in person. Beginning fall 2015, students across the UH System have had the ability to process a complete withdrawal online, including dropping their last class via the MyUH Portal online system.

This measure should be deferred because the process of holds, refunds and collection of delinquent accounts is an internal operation of the University, guided by UH Administrative Procedures, and within the governance purview of the U.H. Board of Regents.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.