



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I SYSTEM

TESTIMONY

S.B. # 214 S.D. 1 Relating to Workforce Development

Testimony Presented Before the
Joint Senate Committees on Labor and Education

February 18, 2004

by

Mark Silliman
Chancellor, Leeward Community College
University of Hawai'i

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Chair Kanno, Chair Sakamoto and Members of the Joint Committee:

I am submitting this written testimony in support of S.B. 214 S.D. 1 which seeks to establish a program to provide cultural education and integration, language, employment, training and legal services for Micronesian, Marshallese, and Palauan immigrants in Hawaii to assist them in becoming gainfully employed members of the community. If the bill is passed with an appropriation, it should not displace items in the Board of Regent's approved University budget request.

The services to be provided to immigrants from the Freely Associated States (FAS) represent an enlightened use of the proposed \$1,000,000 appropriation of funds provided to the State pursuant to section 104 (e) of the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003, PL. 108-188, 11 Stat. 2027. The Office of Continuing Education and Workforce Development is prepared to broadly disseminate a Request for Proposals to oversee and administer a program of re-grants from the appropriation to both public and private/non-profit agencies with demonstrable records of success in providing education and services to FAS immigrants and their families.

The dimensions of the need for these services in Waipahu, in the heart of Leeward Community College's service district, makes the College a logical choice to oversee the program. However, the broad range of services required by FAS immigrant families militates in favor of a cooperative strategy with other community colleges to assure that the range of services provided is drawn from the most qualified and prepared service providers available.