

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Education

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By

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S.B. 2057: Relating to Teacher Education

Chair Sakamoto, Vice Chair Hooser, and Members of the Committees:

The University of Hawai'i supports S.B. 2057.

The university is painfully aware of the shortage of qualified teachers in Hawai'i. We commend your efforts to address the issue through special loans for teacher candidates and we thank you for your efforts to increase the capacity of our teacher education programs.

The Hawai'i Department of Education (DOE) hired 1,363 new teachers in 2002-2003 and only 32% of those teachers came from the University of Hawai'i. Twenty-eight percent came from Mānoa and just over 4% from Hilo. The University system is a long way from meeting the DOE need for teachers.

The funding provided through S.B. 2057 will make it possible for the College of Education to rebuild its capacity to 1995 levels and prepare more teachers. The College currently turns away students in elementary education and in our Masters of Education in Teaching program. This proposed funding will make it possible for the College to accept all qualified candidates and increase our output of teachers. It will also stabilize our special education program and remove our dependency on Hawaii State Department of Education funding.

The seven special education faculty will essentially replace those currently hired on a temporary basis with funds provided by the Hawai'i State Department of Education. The DOE has provided this support for the last five years as part of their effort to meet the need for more special education teachers. This partnership between the DOE and the College of Education has been successful. Over the last five years the college has more than tripled its output of special education teachers from approximately 35 per year to over 100. The college has also created two new programs in special education and we offer these programs on the neighbor islands as well as Oahu in order to provide more options for teacher candidates wishing to enter the field.

The DOE need for new special education teachers each year is between 300 and 400. It is safe to say that for the foreseeable future the DOE will need more than the 100 special education teachers prepared by the College of Education. A more permanent state investment in the preparation of special education teachers is warranted. The DOE cannot and should not be expected to continue to subsidize teacher preparation. Teacher preparation is a university responsibility and it is appropriate that the university be provided the resources necessary to address the need for special education teachers.

The university also needs an additional position in educational administration in order to help the DOE meet the ongoing need for more school administrators.

Though the funding suggested in this bill is above that requested by the university it is important and we appreciate the opportunity to provide this testimony in support of this bill.

Attached is more background information regarding the need for this funding.

Background Information:

Many Routes to Teacher Licensure

The University of Hawai‘i has developed a wide variety of routes to teacher licensure in order to attract as many teacher candidates as possible. We have traditional baccalaureate programs in both elementary education and secondary education. It is also possible for candidates to obtain special education preparation at the undergraduate level.

The university offers “fast-track” routes in elementary education, secondary education, and special education for candidates who possess a baccalaureate degree in a subject area and wish to obtain a teaching license in one year. The university also has two masters degree programs that lead to initial licensure. The Masters of Education in Teaching degree (MET) is available for candidates who possess a baccalaureate degree, who qualify for graduate status at the university, and who wish to obtain a masters degree and a license to teach in elementary education or secondary education. This is a two-year program with a one-semester paid internship. The Masters degree in special education is available for candidates who possess a baccalaureate degree and who wish to obtain a masters degree and teach in special education. This program too takes approximately two years to complete.

Among these various alternative routes are additional alternatives. The post-baccalaureate program is offered for candidates who do not currently hold teaching positions and a special version of the program has been created for DOE teachers employed on an emergency basis. Classes are offered at convenient times for students and a special version of “student teaching” supervision is available for employed candidates. In addition to this, all of the college teacher preparation programs, with the exception of the MET, are offered on the neighbor islands. Over the last few years the college has prepared over 120 teachers on the neighbor islands.

Teacher education is a priority for the University of Hawai‘i

The university has made teacher education a priority. Since 1998 we have provided 25 tuition waivers for teacher candidates in shortage fields identified by the Hawai‘i Department of Education. The College of Education awards \$150,000 in scholarships to worthy candidates each year. In the years 2000 and 2001, all of the general funds for the University Laboratory School (approximately \$900,000) were diverted to teacher education to compensate for budget cuts, and over the last two years the university provided the college over \$750,000 to support programs for neighbor islands and Leeward Oahu. In FY 2003 the college was given an extra \$340,000 to cover most of the budget cuts imposed that year. This fiscal year the college budget will not be saved from budget reductions totaling approximately \$240,000.

Budget cuts reduce the university's capacity in teacher education

Because of the severe budget cuts, and in spite of the efforts mentioned above, the university has not been able to increase its capacity in teacher education. The College of Education reached its peak capacity in 1995 with a faculty FTE of 118.75. By 1998 the FTE had declined to just 103.25. In fiscal years 1999, 2000, and 2001 budget cuts were imposed, but internal reallocations (laboratory school funds described above) made it possible for the college to maintain its faculty FTE for teacher education.

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