



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I SYSTEM

## TESTIMONY

SB 116 SD2, HD1 (HSCR 1141) RELATING TO NURSES

Testimony Presented Before the House  
Committee on Finance

March 31, 2005

by

Lois Magnussen, EdD, APRN  
Interim Dean and Associate Professor  
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Jane K. Kadohiro, DrPH, APRN, CDE  
Assistant Professor, Department of Nursing  
School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene

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Chair Takamine and Members of the Committee:

This initiative establishes a nursing scholars program to attract baccalaureate prepared nurses into master's and doctoral programs that will prepare them for academic careers. It also re-establishes Operation Nightingale as a means to immediately increase the number of licensed nurses in the state through a four to six month review and training program for graduates of nursing schools to facilitate their being able to pass the written examination for licensure required by the state Board of Nursing.

Under the parameters of the scholarship program, scholarship grants may be provided to an eligible student who is a resident of this State upon confirmation from an approved educational institution that they have been accepted for enrollment in an approved graduate course of study. The measure provides for repayment or partial or complete forgiveness of the scholarship grant for eligible individuals who satisfy the work requirement described.

Operation Nightingale, as proposed, will assist 1) RNs who have not recently been employed as nurses to facilitate their return to active participation; 2) graduates of nursing schools preparing for their licensure exam; and 3) graduates of foreign nursing schools preparing for the Hawaii state licensure exam.

As noted, Hawaii's registered nurse workforce is aging. By the year 2010 it is anticipated that the current nursing shortage will have extended beyond the capabilities of state nursing programs to address with current numbers of faculty. The University of Hawaii at Manoa School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene applauds the Hawaii State Legislature for exploring numerous options to address the pending nurse shortage in the state of Hawaii. We believe that providing assistance to students is an important part of a multifaceted response to the nursing shortage. This bill provides an incentive and added opportunity for men and women of the state to enter a graduate nursing program which will give them the educational preparation to teach nurses. It will provide the financial security to allow them to decrease the amount of paid work they undertake while in the program. This will not only decrease financial worries, it will empower students to be successful. It is anticipated that this program will ultimately increase the number of graduates from nursing programs and, thus, improve the quality of health in this state.

While the School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene supports the intent of this initiative, it is requested that priority be given to fund the Board of Regents approved biennium budget requests related to nursing education. An important part of a multifaceted response to the nursing shortage is the

support for additional faculty positions at the University of Hawaii. Each semester the Department of Nursing turns away qualified applicants to its baccalaureate nursing program. Over the 2003-2004 academic year 240 applicants were denied admission to the program because of the financial constraints of hiring faculty because of the required faculty to student ratios for clinical courses (1:10) required by our accrediting body. In addition to providing scholarship grants to potential faculty, there is a definite need for funding for additional faculty in the University of Hawaii at Manoa's nursing program.

Regarding Operation Nightingale, we would prefer to have funds made available so that we are able to admit the many qualified applicants to schools of nursing in Hawaii, qualified applicants whom we must turn away because we do not have funds to hire the number of faculty required to meet the student faculty ratios which are dictated by our accrediting body. Although there are shortages of nurses in specialty areas at the present time, the larger concern is the anticipated shortage in the next five to ten years as a large number of the existing nurse workforce retires. It should also be pointed out that the nursing shortage is not just a localized problem in our state or our country. It has been documented that the nursing shortage is a world-wide problem. Therefore, it is not reasonable to expect that we will solve our problem by importing nurses from other countries.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.