



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

TESTIMONY

S.B. 431: RELATING TO EDUCATION

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Education and Military Affairs
and Committee on Labor

February 14, 2005

By

Randy Hitz
Dean
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

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Chair Sakamoto & Kanno, Vice Chair Hooser & Ihara, Members
of the Committees:

The University of Hawai'i opposes S.B. 431.

The University of Hawai'i has been working hard on many fronts to address the shortage of teachers. The College of Education's (COE) capacity has been increased in recent years, especially in its ability to serve the neighbor islands. Today, the COE has over 200 neighbor island students enrolled in state-wide teacher education programs. Our community colleges are working with UH-West O'ahu to develop an early childhood baccalaureate degree program, and our community colleges have developed programs to accommodate and encourage prospective teachers. Our faculty have received millions of dollars in federal grants and contracts to assist the Department of Education in addressing the shortage, and our faculty have provided leadership on a number of committees designed to address the teacher shortage in one way or another.

The university is committed to providing quality programs. All of our teacher preparation programs are state-approved, and we have the only nationally approved teacher education program in Hawai'i. We offer a wide variety of alternative routes to teaching, including the traditional baccalaureate programs, non-traditional post-baccalaureate programs, and masters degree level preparation programs. We do this in order to accommodate as many highly qualified candidates as possible.

The reasons for the teacher shortage are many and complex, and there is no single answer to the problem. We must recruit more people to teacher education, prepare them well, assist them in their first few years of teaching, provide

on-going professional development and, most of all, make sure that compensation and working conditions attract the best and the brightest into the field. S.B. 1820 is an omnibus bill that addresses the teacher shortage in a comprehensive way and will best meet Hawai'i's needs.

S.B. 431 contradicts efforts of the legislature, the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board, and others who have established and implemented high standards for teachers. While S.B. 431 acknowledges the importance of subject matter knowledge, it minimizes the importance of pedagogical knowledge. Good teachers know their subject matter, and they understand the wide variety of learning styles and needs of their students. We have all been in classes where the instructor knew a lot about his subject, but was not effective in imparting his understanding.

We also believe that the current law which allows for emergency hires and the variety of alternative routes developed by the institutions of higher education adequately accommodate individuals with subject matter knowledge who wish to enter the teaching profession.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

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