



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## TESTIMONY

S.B. 497: RELATING TO TEACHERS

Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Education and Military Affairs

February 14, 2005

By

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Dean  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

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

The University of Hawai'i opposes S.B. 497.

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. 497 contradicts efforts of the legislature, the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board, and others who have established and implemented high standards for teachers. Also, 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.

S.B. 497 would require the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board to accept teachers from all states, including those with the lowest teacher standards. In essence, if this bill passes, Hawai'i will give up its state right and responsibility to determine the qualifications of teachers. Accepting any teacher from a private school is even more problematic, since there are no uniform standards for teachers in private schools in Hawai'i.

Subsection (A) is problematic because it asks the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board (HTSB) to "establish alternative routes" to teacher licensing. The HTSB is responsible for establishing standards for preparation programs and establishing programs would create a conflict of interest. The role of the HTSB is to create standards that accommodate a variety of routes to licensure. Based on the wide variety of programs offered by the University of Hawai'i and other universities in the state, we believe it is clear that the HTSB standards are appropriately flexible.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

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