



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

TESTIMONY

S.B. 1068: 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. 1068.

The University of Hawai'i has been working hard on many fronts to address the shortage of teachers. The College of Education's 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. 1068 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. 1068 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 qualification of teachers.

The Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board already has in place a liberal reciprocity policy. Any individual from any state who has completed a state-approved teacher education program and who passes Hawai'i's licensing examinations may be licensed in Hawai'i.

Providing credit for prior experience to individuals with experience teaching at private schools or public schools in other states is an idea that deserves more attention. We would argue, however, that this is an issue for IHEs rather than the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

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