



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I SYSTEM

TESTIMONY

S.B. 1159

MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR FUNDING AND POSITIONS TO EXPAND
ETHNIC STUDIES, LABOR HISTORY, AND DIVERSITY CURRICULUM AT ALL
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII CAMPUSES

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Higher Education

February 10, 2005

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Dean Alegado
Chair, Ethnic Studies
University of Hawai'i

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Chair Clayton Hee, Vice Chair Lorraine Inouye, and Members of the Committee:

Aloha and good afternoon! My name is Dean Alegado. I am here this afternoon to speak in support of SB 1159. I am not here as a representative of the University of Hawai'i but as a private individual who happens to be a faculty member and chair of the Department of Ethnic Studies at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. My colleagues and I in the Ethnic Studies Department at Manoa are extremely pleased and happy that Senators Clayton Hee and Colleen Hanabusa have introduced SB 1159. In fact we were pleasantly surprised to learn about this bill a few days ago and despite the fact that no one in our department was involved in drafting it, we thoroughly support its goal of expanding ethnic studies, labor history, and diversity curriculum at all UH campuses, not just in Manoa.

Since Ethnic Studies was granted a permanent status at UHM in 1977, the program has developed into one of the strongest academic programs in the nation focusing on Asian and Pacific American communities, their history and cultural contributions to the development of the United States, particularly in Hawai'i. We now enroll more than 700 students each semester and have between 25 to 30 majors and more than 40 students in our certificate programs. Our faculty and staff have continued our tradition of maintaining strong partnership and collaboration with communities in the state, especially in the area of service learning and civic engagement.

An increase in funding and in the number of faculty from our current 6 full-time and 2 half-time positions would enhance tremendously our effort to develop into the premier Asia Pacific American studies program in the country, take serious steps towards the development of a graduate program, and offer regular courses on the Chinese American experience and the growing Southeast Asian and Pacific Island communities. It would also enable our faculty to develop and strengthen ties with other campuses in the UH system seeking to build ethnic studies and diversity curriculum on various campuses such as UH Hilo. Increased resources would enable us to meet our mission and mandate, which are: 1) to prepare academic specialists in ethnic studies for teaching in the primary and secondary levels; 2) to support the diffusion of ethnic studies

materials into inter-disciplinary curricula particularly in the public schools, and; 3) the increase understanding of the nature of ethnic and racial conflict in Hawai'i and elsewhere and provide resources for social justice and peace. I would just like to request an amendment in the proposed bill that the funding for positions not be limited to fiscal year 2005-2006 and 2006-2007, but to make the funding a permanent one to insure that the commitment is not temporary but long-term. In conclusion, I believe SB 1159 is in harmony with the strategic mission of the University of Hawai'i which is striving to be an academic leader nationally and internationally not only in the study of Asia and the Pacific but in the study of Asian and Pacific American communities and peoples as well. By doing so we can build on our existing strengths including our unparalleled cultural and natural environment and tradition of preparing students for leadership roles in our society.

Thank you.