



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I SYSTEM

TESTIMONY

SB 1169
RELATING TO PUBLIC INTEREST ATTORNEYS

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

February 16, 2005

By

Avi Soifer
Dean, William S. Richardson School of Law
University of Hawai'i

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Chair Colleen Hanabusa and Members of the Committee:

The pursuit of justice is at the very core of the William S. Richardson School of Law's mission. Therefore it is very important to us—as well as wonderfully encouraging—that our law students have taken the initiative in doing the research and planning that helped produce Senate Bill 1169. A Loan Repayment Assistance Plan will enable more of our graduates to serve Hawai'i substantially by pursuing careers in public interest law. We could not be prouder of our students and alumni who do such work. Because of the rising cost of attending law school and the high cost of living in Hawai'i, such a program—already in place in many other parts of the country—is particularly important here and now.

A broad array of public interest lawyers worked directly with our students on this bill and they join the Law School in supporting this bill with great enthusiasm. In helping our graduates to help members of the public in the quest for justice, Senate Bill 1169 would be very significant for the Law School. It is even more important for the many citizens of Hawai'i whose rights are ignored and whose needs are underserved.

As Dean of the William S. Richardson School of Law, I would like to express my gratitude for your consideration of Senate Bill 1169. I strongly urge you to adopt it so long as it does not replace or adversely impact priorities of the University's Board of Regents Biennium Budget.