



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committees on
Labor and Public Employment
and
Economic Development & Business Concerns

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By

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S.B. 1931 S.D. 2, H.D.1 RELATING TO EDUCATION

Chairs Sonson, Yamashita, Vice Chairs Nakasone, Wakai, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity today to present testimony in support of Senate Bill 1931 S.D. 2, H.D. 1, which proposes to establish a new educational workforce working group to examine and address a number of issues relating to education and workforce preparation. The Bill proposes to appoint a number of representatives from business and labor from selected industries, government, and education to serve on the working group, and calls for a report to be submitted twenty days prior to the start of the 2008 legislative session.

As described in the 2007 Report to the Governor, Hawaii is facing a number of critical workforce development issues that must be addressed if we are to be successful in the changing global economy. These issues are well documented in the work from a number of sources whose work was drawn upon in the WDC 2007 report.

There are a number of issues in the Bill that have not been the focus of recent WDC reports. The proposed working group appears to include individuals who could work together to develop an appropriate response to the issues raised in the bill.

The University would be happy to participate in the workgroup and provide a report on the following as called for in the bill:

- (1) The current activities on each of its campuses to prepare students with the skills and knowledge needed to successfully enter and progress in the Hawaii workforce;
- (2) The University of Hawaii's current plans to increase the percentage of Hawaii high school graduates who continue their education by enrolling in a University of Hawaii campus and to increase the percentage of students who earn degrees or certificates within one hundred fifty per cent of the planned length of the degree, particularly in fields where the State is experiencing shortages of qualified employees; and
- (3) Recommendations about additional steps the State needs to consider implementing to increase the number of qualified workers in the State.