

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI‘I SYSTEM LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY



SB 2676 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Education

February 1, 2008 at 1:30 pm

by

Gene Awakuni
Chancellor
University of Hawai'i - West O'ahu

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Chair Sakamoto and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i West O'ahu supports the intent of SB 2676, which appropriates funds for sixteen full-time equivalent (FTE) permanent positions for our middle-level and secondary teacher education programs.

The University of Hawai'i West O'ahu is committed to the development of Hawai'i's teaching workforce and especially the preparation of highly qualified teachers for Central, Leeward, and Waianae communities. Our ultimate goal over the next decade is to provide teacher education programs leading to pre-K-12 regular and special education licensure. By 2015 we envision graduating 300 teachers per year, thus contributing to closure of the current "1600" teacher gap.

The need to prepare highly qualified middle-level and secondary teachers is particularly critical in the core areas of Mathematics, Science, English, and Social Studies. To address this need, we are in the process of developing middle-level and secondary teacher education program proposals to be submitted to the Hawai'i Teacher Standards Board (HTSB) in May 2008. Once approved by the HTSB, and subsequently the UH Board of Regents, we anticipate recruitment of faculty and students to begin in earnest, with program implementation by fall 2009.

Passage of SB 2676 will provide the University of Hawai'i West Oahu the needed resources to fully staff our comprehensive middle-level and secondary teacher education programs in Mathematics, Science, English, and Social Studies. UHWO entry-level faculty salaries are competitive with mainland universities, including those on the east and west coasts. Thus, we are confident in our ability to hire highly qualified university faculty who will assist in our mission to recruit Native Hawaiian and Filipino teacher candidates who will return to their communities to teach in the middle and high schools.

Thank you for your support of UHWO's initiatives in preparing highly qualified middle level and secondary teachers and for the opportunity to testify today.