UNIVERSITY OF HAWAIʻI SYSTEM LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

SB 2862 Relating to Education

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Economic Development and Taxation
and
Senate Committee on Education

February 2, 2008 at 9:00 a.m.

by
Virginia S. Hinshaw, Chancellor
Presented by
Peter Crouch, Dean
College of Engineering
University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa

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Chair Fukunaga, Chair Sakamoto, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. The University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa supports SB 2862, which would allow for an extension of the lapse date of funds supporting science, technology, and education that were appropriated in ACT 111, Session Laws of Hawai‘i 2007. This bill would further ensure the success of Hawai‘i’s students in the global economy by providing continued support for innovative educational programs in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics, and prepare them for further education and employment.

ACT 111 from SLH 2007 included the Administration’s *Innovation in Education Initiative – Fostering Innovation and Relevance through Science and Technology* (FIRST) *Pre-Academy Program*. ACT 111 appropriated $1,402,230 for each year of the biennium and 9 FTE positions to the College of Engineering to expand these programs in efforts to substantially boost student interest in pursuing courses of study which lead to postsecondary access and STEM careers, beginning at an earlier stage in the K-12 trajectory.

The two major programs in the initiative are as follows:

The Robotics and problem-based, applied learning program provides significant opportunities for students in the State of Hawaii to participate in scholastic robotics programs. Recent interest and demand for participation in robotics competitions is staggering. Clearly, this will become a key vehicle to engage students in math and science, and to develop critical thinking, teamwork, and communication skills.
Research Experiences for Teachers: The vision of the RET-Middle Schools is to bring the knowledge of engineering and technological innovation into the middle school classrooms specifically in the area of wireless technology. RET provides a unique

opportunity for the University to share its research knowledge and technological tools with middle schools teachers at the same time strengthening opportunities for teachers to work with faculty, graduate students, and industry.

I understand there was a delay in the release of the ACT 111 funds which has resulted in a 2008 Spring implementation as opposed to Fall 2007. With schools six months into the academic year this has created unexpected challenges. This bill will allow for a smoother statewide roll-out of the programs and in the hiring of personnel.

In closing, I'd like to take a moment to also remind you that our top priority this year is addressing the urgent repair and maintenance of our facilities. If Mānoa is to continue to blossom and support program such as this, we must have support to repair and maintain our facilities. We must enhance our efforts to become a destination of choice for student, faculty, and staff, the citizens of Hawaii and beyond. We look forward to a productive partnership.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. We appreciate your interest and support for Hawaii's premier institution of higher learning.