



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Written Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Education
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By

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SCR 120 – REQUESTING THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AND THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO DEVELOP, OFFER, AND EXPAND PHILIPPINE LANGUAGE COURSES.

Chair Sakamoto, Vice Chair Tokuda, and Members of the Senate Committee on Education:

I am Linda Johnsrud, Vice President for Academic Planning and Policy, University of Hawai'i System. On behalf of the University System, I am testifying on Senate Concurrent Resolution 120 which requests the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Philippine Language and Literature program and the Mānoa Student Equity, Excellence, and Diversity (SEED) Office to work with the College of Education, other University of Hawai'i campuses and the Department of Education to develop a plan to offer Philippine language and related courses and teacher training workshops, including recommendations to implement these courses in specific schools and University of Hawai'i campuses.

SCR 120 presents data about the number and percentage of Hawai'i residents who are of Filipino ancestry, the large representation of Filipino students in the K-12 public schools, and their underrepresentation in higher education. It makes a compelling case that the availability of courses in the Filipino language and culture would support the academic success of Filipino students in our schools.

We concur with the observation in SCR 120 that the UH Mānoa Philippine Language and Literature program and the SEED Office have the expertise in language, culture, ethnic studies, and service learning opportunities to develop a plan to offer courses at other campuses. We would like to note that resources available to fund new courses or programs are scarce for all campuses, and that each campus must have the opportunity to prioritize with care the needs of their particular students and communities. We strongly recommend that in developing a plan, UH Mānoa must ensure that other campuses have the opportunity to weigh in with their own needs as they balance having to implement new courses or programs with the other priorities they must address.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.