



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
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by

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SB 2903, SD1 RELATING TO THE HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE COLLEGE

Aloha, Members of the Senate Ways and Means committee. I am Dr. Kalena Silva, the Director of Ka Haka 'Ula O Ke'elikōlani College of Hawaiian Language at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo. I urge passage of SB 2903, SD1.

I wish to express appreciation to this body, including the sponsors of SB 2903, SD1, for years of support in developing education through the Hawaiian language. Hawai'i is now the national leader in education through a Native American language. Not only are we known for reviving an endangered language, but for increased academic achievement among students in Hawaiian immersion schools.

The state's Hawaiian language college was established through legislative mandate in 1997 to allow for a P-20 system of education through Hawaiian. We offer programs through to the Ph.D. while serving as a unique resource for the development and support of P-12 education through Hawaiian.

Among the mandates from the 1997 legislature when it created our College was for us to develop a laboratory school program at Nāwahīokalani'ōpu'u School, a site which was created through a partnership between the State DOE, the non-profit 'Aha Pūnana Leo, and Office of Hawaiian Affairs. We have done so, and now have a full P-20 education system in Hawaiian, based around that site. Nāwahī includes both a K-8 charter component and a 9-12 off-site standard public high school component. Three other charter schools have joined our laboratory school program along with the statewide Pūnana Leo preschool system that lies at the base of the Hawaiian immersion schools.

SB 2903, SD1 represents a step toward developing administrative practices that will further strengthen Hawaiian medium education. We seek to pilot the use of Hawaiian in administrative communication, modification of administrative services to meet unique Hawaiian medium education in-service needs, and other modifications of standard English medium education practice as appropriate to the unique needs of education within the context of revitalizing an endangered indigenous language.

Mahalo iā 'oukou no kā 'oukou kāko'o i ka 'ōlelo Hawai'i.