



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Submitted to the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
January 29, 2014 at 9:00am
by
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SB 2925 – RELATING TO BUDGETING

Chair Ige, Vice Chair Kidani and members of the committee:

The University of Hawai'i appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on this measure, which imposes position ceilings for all state departments, and repeals the University President's authority to establish temporary unbudgeted positions beyond the authorized position count reflected in the applicable appropriations act.

The University of Hawai'i's current authority to establish temporary unbudgeted positions is primarily related to our receipt of extramural funds that are negotiated throughout the fiscal year, and may extend across and between state and federal fiscal years. However, because the majority of these funds are direct contracts or awards to the University, and such funds are held outside the state treasury, we would not consider such position ceilings to be applicable. Should the legislature impose position ceilings upon hiring staff using extramural funds, this would severely restrict the University's ability to use extramural funds in a timely manner. Requiring legislative approval could result in a delay of six to eight months if we are required to seek legislative approval in a subsequent legislative session if funds were received in the prior interim period.

Additionally, our campuses hire temporary lecturers and instructors to accommodate fluctuating enrollments from one semester to the next or to provide instructional services when a faculty member is on sabbatical leave or assigned to perform other related faculty work. Further, we are not clear how this measure would impact our student employees, many of whom are working to help pay for their college or graduate education.

Finally, we are aware of concerns expressed by both the State Administration and the legislature regarding the growth of OPEB-related costs of all state employees. As such, we are presently taking steps to review all temporary unbudgeted positions within the University System, and have been diligently reporting the recruitment and hiring of such positions as required by Section 113 of Act 134, SLH 2013.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our comments on this measure.