



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education
Wednesday, February 12, 2025 at 2:00 p.m.

By

Naoto T. Ueno, Director
University of Hawai'i Cancer Center

And

Michael Bruno, Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 531 HD1 – RELATING TO SPECIAL NUMBER PLATES

Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of HB 531 HD1, which authorizes the issuance of special license plates recognizing the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center (UH Cancer Center), with a portion of the proceeds from these plates supporting cancer research, patient care, and community outreach in Hawai'i. The UH Cancer Center is the only National Cancer Institute (NCI)-designated cancer center in the Pacific. It is dedicated to saving lives through groundbreaking research and state-of-the-art cancer care. As an NCI-designated center, we play a critical role in advancing cancer treatments tailored to the unique needs of our diverse population in Hawai'i and the broader Pacific region.

Investment in the UH Cancer Center is an Investment in the Health and Well-being of Our Community

Cancer remains the second leading cause of death in Hawai'i, affecting thousands of local families each year. More than 70,000 people in our state are living with cancer, and annually, 2,300 Hawai'i residents lose their lives to this devastating disease. The UH Cancer Center, in collaboration with major healthcare and community partners—including The Queen's Health Systems, Hawai'i Pacific Health, Adventist Health Castle, Kuakini Medical Center, and John A. Burns School of Medicine—continues to make significant strides in cancer prevention, early detection, and treatment.

Funding from special license plate sales will directly support vital initiatives such as:

- Expanding access to cutting-edge clinical trials for Hawai'i residents, particularly for cancers that disproportionately affect our communities.
- Conducting groundbreaking research on cancers that impact Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, Filipinos, and other at-risk populations.
- Strengthening our community outreach and education programs to promote cancer prevention and early detection efforts.

Investment in the UH Cancer Center is an Investment in Economic Growth

Beyond improving health outcomes, investing in the UH Cancer Center contributes to Hawai'i's economy by attracting federal research grants, forging partnerships with leading pharmaceutical companies, and drawing world-class researchers and oncologists to our state. Our work positions Hawai'i as a global leader in cancer research and care, ensuring that residents have access to the best possible treatments without having to leave the state for specialized care.

Funds raised through the special license plate program will help sustain and expand the Center's ability to provide state-of-the-art research and patient care, bringing direct benefits to our local workforce, healthcare industry, and economy.

A Commitment to a Future Free from Cancer

The introduction of a UH Cancer Center special license plate provides the public with a meaningful way to show their support for cancer research and treatment in Hawai'i. By purchasing these plates, residents can contribute to life-saving initiatives that will improve health outcomes for generations to come.

We strongly urge the committee to pass HB 531 HD1, establishing this innovative funding mechanism and further strengthening Hawai'i's fight against cancer.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.



Committee on Higher Education
Rep. Andrew Garrett, Chair
Rep. Terez Amato, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: Wednesday, February 12, 2025

ACS CAN SUPPORTS HB 531 HD1 – RELATING TO SPECIAL NUMBER PLATES.

Cynthia Au, Government Relations Director – Hawai'i Guam
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

Thank you for the opportunity to **SUPPORT** HB 531 HD1: Relating to Special Number Plates.

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), the nonprofit, non-partisan advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society advocates for public policies that reduce death and suffering from cancer. ACS CAN works with federal, state, and local government bodies to support evidence-based policy and legislative solutions designed to eliminate cancer as a major health problem.

ACS CAN supports specialty license plates for the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center (UH Cancer Center). This year, more than 9,000 residents from Hawai'i will be diagnosed with cancer, with more than 2,000 residents expected to die from the disease.

The UH Cancer Center provides important cancer research, access to life-saving treatment including clinical trials which play a critical role in reducing the cancer burden for multi-ethnic residents. Sustainability of the National Cancer Institute (NCI) designated UH Cancer Center is vital for cancer screening, prevention, treatment, and education, significantly reducing the cancer burden in Hawai'i and the Pacific. UH Cancer Center is the only NCI-designated cancer center in the Pacific and top 4% of all cancer centers in the U.S.

Specialty plates would allow supporters of the cancer center to publicly do so and create additional funds for the UH Cancer Center.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Government Relations Director Cynthia Au at Cynthia.Au@Cancer.org or 808.460.6109.

HB-531-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 12:43:38 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Josh Fowler	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT

House Committee on Transportation

RE: Strong Support of HB531 – RELATING TO SPECIAL NUMBER PLATES

Written Testimony

My name is Joshua Fowler, and I am a volunteer and advocate with the **American Cancer Society - Cancer Action Network**. I strongly support **HB531**, which authorizes the issuance of **special license plates** recognizing the **University of Hawaii Cancer Center** and establishes a fundraising mechanism to support cancer research.

Why This Matters:

- **Supports Cancer Research** – Revenue from the special plates will provide **critical funding** to the **UH Cancer Center**, helping to advance **cancer treatment, research, and prevention** efforts in Hawaii.
- **Raises Public Awareness** – These plates will increase **visibility and awareness** for cancer research, encouraging **community support** and advocacy.
- **Easy and Voluntary Fundraising** – This is a **simple, effective way** for residents to contribute to cancer research without additional taxation or public spending.
- **Follows a Successful Model** – Other states, including **California and Florida**, have implemented special license plate programs for cancer research, raising **millions in funding**.

Looking at Other States:

- **California** – The **Breast Cancer Awareness** plate generates **millions of dollars annually** to support research and early detection programs.
- **Florida** – Specialty plates for various causes, including cancer research, have provided **significant and consistent funding** for public health initiatives.
- **Hawaii’s Opportunity** – HB531 allows residents to **show their support** for cancer research while contributing directly to the **UH Cancer Center’s mission**.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I urge the committee to **support HB531** and help fund life-saving cancer research in Hawaii.

Mahalo,
Joshua Fowler
Honolulu, Hawaii

HB-531-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 10:51:18 AM

Testimony for HED on 2/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mark Willingham	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I ask the state to fully Support HB531 that authorizes the issuance of special number plates to recognize the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center. Specialty plates would allow supporters of the cancer center to publicly do so and create additional funds for the UH Cancer Center, which provides important cancer research, access to life-saving treatment including clinical trials which play a critical role in reducing the cancer burden for multi-ethnic residents. Thank you