



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, March 19, 2025, at 2:15 p.m.

By

Debora Halbert, Vice President for Academic Strategy

and

Della Teraoka, Interim Vice President for Community Colleges
University of Hawai'i System

HCR 195/HR 188 – REQUESTING THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM TO
ESTABLISH A VETERINARY MEDICINE EXPANSION WORKING GROUP TO
EXPLORE THE FEASIBILITY OF DEVELOPING A DOCTOR OF VETERINARY
MEDICINE PROGRAM AT WINDWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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

The University of Hawai'i (UH) appreciates the opportunity to submit comments regarding HCR 195/HR 188 which requests the University of Hawai'i System to establish a Veterinary Medicine expansion working group to explore the feasibility of developing a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) program at Windward Community College.

The UH agrees that Hawai'i faces a critical shortage of veterinarians, particularly in rural areas and for large animal agricultural services. As there is currently no DVM program within the state, students who wish to pursue veterinary medicine must leave Hawai'i to complete their education on the mainland. UH participates in the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) [Professional Student Exchange Program](#), which offers Hawai'i residents the opportunity to study veterinary medicine at participating institutions, but this program has limitations (limited slots and support for certain specialties, higher than in-state tuition rates) and does not address the long-term needs of the state.

The Veterinary Technology program at Windward Community College provides valuable entry-level training for students pursuing careers in veterinary medicine. Additionally, UH Mānoa's College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience (CTAHR) offers a pre-vet curriculum and has a strong track record of Bachelor of Science alumni receiving DVM degrees. UH has also been exploring the possibility of expanding Windward Community College's program to a bachelor degree, which would require comprehensive discussions with key stakeholders to assess feasibility.

The UH supports addressing the critical need for animal science-related education in Hawai'i. However, we suggest amending the resolutions to request that the working group be charged with not only assessing the feasibility of creating a DVM program, but

also assessing the demand for such programs and their potential integration within the UH system. This expanded scope will ensure that the working group develops a clear, sustainable strategy that addresses the full spectrum of veterinary education in the state. It should be noted that Community Colleges are not authorized to offer doctoral programs, hence the need for a system-wide approach.

Furthermore, we recommend adding a representative from UH Hilo to the working group. Given their established veterinary-related programs and expertise, their inclusion will be essential to creating a coordinated approach to veterinary education in Hawai'i. Together, these programs can provide the necessary pathways to a future DVM program and support the development of a comprehensive in-state veterinary workforce development strategy.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments regarding HCR 195/HR 188. We look forward to contributing to the development of a strategic plan that will address Hawai'i's veterinary workforce needs and support the long-term sustainability of veterinary education within the state.



Hawaiian Humane Society

People for animals. Animals for people.

Date: March 17, 2025

To: Chair Rep. Andrew Takuya Garrett
Vice Chair Rep. Terez Amato
and Members of the Committee on Higher Education

Submitted By: Stephanie Kendrick, Director of Community Engagement
Hawaiian Humane Society, 808-356-2217

RE: Testimony in support of HCR 195 / HR 188
Wednesday, March 19, 2025, 2:15 p.m., Room 309 & Videoconference

On behalf of the Hawaiian Humane Society, thank you for considering our support for House Concurrent Resolution 195 / House Resolution 188, which requests the University of Hawai'i system to establish a veterinary medicine expansion working group to explore the feasibility of developing a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine program at Windward Community College.

The nationwide shortage in veterinary professionals is acutely felt in our island state. As this measure points out, Hawai'i's high cost of living make it extremely difficult to attract veterinarians to return home or relocate to the state, even for salaries that are competitive with mainland locales. Specialists, such as those in shelter medicine, are in particularly short supply and high demand.

While this measure won't solve the shortage of veterinarians overnight, it would be an exciting step toward cultivating local talent in this high-demand field. Enabling local students to pursue veterinary medicine here at home at lower financial costs than studying at mainland schools, could encourage more of them to stay after graduation and serve our community.

The Hawaiian Humane Society partners with Windward Community College's outstanding Veterinary Technology program and this would be an exciting opportunity to expand on its professionalism and rigor by offering an advanced degree.

Please pass HCR 195 / HR 188 and create a brighter future for animals, pet owners and aspiring veterinary professionals. Mahalo for your consideration.

HR-188

Submitted on: 3/18/2025 6:28:39 AM

Testimony for HED on 3/19/2025 2:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marian Hussenbux	Animal Interfaith Alliance in Britain	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We are very much in support of this proposition as we are informed that there is a shortage of veterinary professionals in Hawai'i.

We hope such a course can be established.



Date: 3/18/2025

To: Chair Rep. Andrew Takuya Garrett, Vice Chair Rep. Terez Amato, and Members of the Committee on Higher Education

Submitted By: Smeeta Narang, Communications Coordinator
Kaua'i Humane Society, (808) 632 - 0610

RE: Testimony in support of HCR195/ HR188: Relating to veterinary medicine expansion working group at University of Hawaii

Wednesday, March 19, 2025 TIME: 2:15 PM VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

On behalf of Kaua'i Humane Society, I am writing in strong support of HCR195, which requests that the University of Hawai'i System establish a Veterinary Medicine Expansion Working Group to explore the feasibility of developing a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine program at Windward Community College.

Hawai'i is currently facing a critical shortage of veterinary professionals—a challenge that is particularly acute in rural areas and our island communities. With the absence of an in-state veterinary school, aspiring Hawai'i veterinarians are forced to pursue their education on the mainland or abroad. This not only increases financial burdens but also significantly reduces the likelihood that newly licensed veterinarians will return home to serve our communities.

At our animal shelter, the impact of this shortage is felt daily. We struggle to provide timely veterinary services, and our community spay/neuter clinics have been delayed due to staffing challenges. An in-state Doctor of Veterinary Medicine program would empower local talent, create a more sustainable pipeline of qualified professionals, and improve access to vital veterinary care across the state.

I respectfully urge you to support HCR195. Establishing this working group is a necessary first step toward addressing our workforce shortages, supporting local agriculture, safeguarding animal welfare, and strengthening biosecurity. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

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HR-188

Submitted on: 3/18/2025 4:53:27 PM

Testimony for HED on 3/19/2025 2:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tanya Ramseth	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

On behalf of Kaua'i Humane Society, I am writing in strong support of HCR195, which requests that the University of Hawai'i System establish a Veterinary Medicine Expansion Working Group to explore the feasibility of developing a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine program at Windward Community College.

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HR-188

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 4:18:20 PM

Testimony for HED on 3/19/2025 2:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lois Crozer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I love this idea! We have such a shortage of vets with the result that people don't bring their pets to get proper treatment because of the cost. We also have too many stray cats and dogs wandering our streets. If we had more vets, we could give our pets the loving care they deserve.

HR-188

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 5:12:24 PM

Testimony for HED on 3/19/2025 2:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephanie McLaughlin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill.

HR-188

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 7:00:05 PM

Testimony for HED on 3/19/2025 2:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vivian S. Toellner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

"There is a demand for veterinary education by qualified applicants that exceeds the seats available in current veterinary schools," says Texas A&M University professor emerita and dean emerita of veterinary medicine Eleanor Green, DVM,. "Existing veterinary schools cannot expand their class sizes to meet this need."

At the University of Hawai'i at Hilo (UH Hilo) there is a farm laboratory located 5 miles from the main campus in Panaewa, Hawai'i. The 110-acre farm is used primarily for UH Hilo/ CAFNRM courses to provide students with a unique opportunity for hands-on learning. "*Learning by doing*" allows students to connect lecture-based information with practical subject-based experiences. The farm also supports local applied research activities and outreach with substantial community engagement. This track of study provides students with a variety of animal science courses related to health and management. All the courses are aimed at giving students hands-on experiences working with livestock through farm laboratory activities. The courses emphasize safe and confident animal handling and good animal husbandry practices. The Animal Science areas at the UH Hilo farm consists of: Horse arena and barns, Goat and cattle barns, and Swine facility.

There is a severe shortage of veterinarians and access to veterinary care here in Hawaii and across the country. Many animals are not receiving the care they need.

A Veterinary School would be a dream come true for Hawaii, in so many ways. Please recommend requesting the university of Hawaii system to establish a veterinary medicine expansion working group to explore the feasibility of developing a doctor of veterinary medicine program in hawaii.

HR-188

Submitted on: 3/18/2025 2:43:48 AM

Testimony for HED on 3/19/2025 2:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Chiwa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Representative Garrett, Vice Chair Representative Amato and Members of the Committee on Higher Education.

Please support HCR 195/HR188 as consideration of establishing a doctor of veterinary medicine program would be very beneficial to what I understand is a shortage of veterinarians in Hawaii.

Mahalo.

Jennifer Chiwa

Makiki and life long resident of Oahu

HR-188

Submitted on: 3/18/2025 6:04:59 AM

Testimony for HED on 3/19/2025 2:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melanie Kim	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. Hawaii has had a long standing shortage of veterinarians which is unbelievable given our large population of pets and Hawaii's livestock/agricultural industry. Individuals who are raised here and want to become veterinarians have to travel to the Mainland for their training which is not only costly both for tuition/educational expenses but for cost of living.

UH Manoa has a great example in the School of Medicine(JABSOM) of establishing and supporting a school to educate individuals for their profession and supports keeping these individuals here to practice here in Hawaii, to address the doctor shortage. I am a physician who benefited from this support.

UH Manoa also has a school of pharmacy on the Big Island who has educated many pharmacists who work in Hawaii's pharmacies and local hospitals.

It's time for Hawaii to establish their own veterinarian school

HR-188

Submitted on: 3/18/2025 8:29:08 AM

Testimony for HED on 3/19/2025 2:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carole R. Richelieu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

support. The measures will address the persistent veterinary medicine shortage in our state by creating home-grown talent.

HR-188

Submitted on: 3/18/2025 9:29:46 AM

Testimony for HED on 3/19/2025 2:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jane E Arnold	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HCR195 and HR188. We have a shortage of veterinarians in Hawai'i, which, among other things, makes it difficult to get pet or feral cats spayed or neutered. This causes overpopulation of cats, which most people consider a problem.

Jane E Arnold

1763 Iwi Way, Apt D

Honolulu HI. 96816

HR-188

Submitted on: 3/18/2025 1:57:37 PM

Testimony for HED on 3/19/2025 2:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Natalie Graham-Wood	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HCR 195. My name is Natalie Graham-Wood and I live at Sunset Beach, Oahu.