



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Higher Education  
February 14, 2017 at 1:15 p.m.

By  
David Lassner, President  
University of Hawai'i System

### SB 1162 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII PROMISE PROGRAM

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 1162. This measure would establish a new scholarship program called Hawai'i's Promise that provides support for students with financial need as defined by the U.S. Department of Education, to attend any campus of the University of Hawai'i system at no cost for tuition, fees, books, supplies and transportation.

Hawai'i's Promise would be a "last dollar" scholarship. Other sources of financial aid such as federal Pell grants, UH opportunity scholarships, and other public and privately sponsored scholarships would be applied first, and then Hawai'i's Promise would provide for any unmet needs in the categories mentioned above. This measure would allow any Hawai'i resident who meets the eligibility criteria to attend a UH campus, at no cost for tuition, fees, books, supplies, and transportation. We are hopeful that this measure will encourage more students to attend a UH campus, leading to obtaining our goal of 55% of the State's population having a degree by 2025.

The University of Hawai'i fully supports this bill.

**February 14, 2017 at 1:15PM  
Conference Room 414**

**Senate Committee on Higher Education**

To: Senator Kaiali'i Kahele, Chair  
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

From: Michael Robinson  
Vice President – Government Relations & Community Affairs

**Re: Testimony in Support – SB 1162, Relating to Access to Higher Education**

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My name is Michael Robinson, Vice President, Government Relations and Community Affairs at Hawai'i Pacific Health (HPH). Hawai'i Pacific Health is a not-for-profit health care system, and the state's largest health care provider and non-governmental employer. Hawai'i Pacific Health is committed to providing the highest quality medical care and service to the people of Hawai'i and the Pacific Region through its four hospitals, more than 50 outpatient clinics and service sites, and over 1,600 affiliated physicians. Hawai'i Pacific Health's hospitals are Kapi'olani Medical Center for Women & Children, Pali Momi Medical Center, Straub Clinic & Hospital and Wilcox Memorial Hospital.

I write in support of SB 1162 which establishes the University of Hawai'i Promise Program to provide scholarships for the unmet direct cost needs of qualified students enrolled at any campus of the University of Hawai'i System.

Access to higher education is a critical social determinant of health that has significant impact upon an individual's lifetime earnings which in turn is correlated with a person's ability to make healthier behavioral choices. Therefore efforts to provide greater access to education will also further efforts to address health equity in our community.

The program to provide scholarships through SB 1162 will provide opportunity for people to pursue higher education. We thank the committee for taking the time to consider this important topic and support SB 1162.



To: Senate Committee on Higher Education  
Honorable Representative Kaiali'i Kahele, Chair  
Honorable Representative Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair

Date: Tuesday, February 14, 2017  
Time: 1:15 PM  
Place: Conference Room 414

**Re: IN SUPPORT OF SB 1162 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII' I PROMISE PLAN**

Aloha Honorable Chair Kahele, Honorable Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee on Higher Education:

As the Associated Students of the University of Hawai'i at Windward Community College (ASUH-WCC), representing the 2,400 students enrolled on our campus, we submit testimony in full support of SB 1162, pressing importance on this program being implemented system-wide.

We feel that equal and affordable accessibility to higher and continuing education is crucial to the future of our economy and workforce. Tuition is inevitably rising, and although there are numerous financial aid programs and scholarships available, there are still many students who are unable to find enough financial support to cover the full cost of college tuition.

At a community college such as Windward CC, the majority of students who qualify for financial aid receive a Federal Pell Grant, which when fully awarded typically covers their educational cost, including tuition and books. However, when our students transfer to a 4-year school, many of them receive sticker shock and scramble to cover the full cost of tuition. The same Federal Pell Grant no longer covers their educational costs. Students typically need to find additional funding sources for half of their tuition and books each semester. A program such as the Hawai'i Promise Plan will enable students to continue their education and pursue careers that will enrich our economy and stabilize our workforce.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and for your consideration of our testimony. Once again, the Associated Students of the University of Hawai'i at Windward Community College fully supports SB 1162, pressing importance on this program being implemented system-wide.

Sincerely,  
Kelli Acopan  
President, ASUH-WCC



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**MAILING ADDRESS**

P.O. Box 23404  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96823  
  
[www.adaaction.org](http://www.adaaction.org)

February 9 , 2017

TO:            Honorable Chair Kahele and Members of the Higher Education Committee

RE:            SB 1162 Relating to the University of Hawaii Promise Program  
Support for hearing on Feb. 14

Americans for Democratic Action is an organization founded in the 1950s by leading supporters of the New Deal and led by Patsy Mink in the 1970s. We are devoted to the promotion of progressive public policies.

We support SB 1162 to establish the University of Hawaii Promise Program to provide scholarships for the unmet direct cost needs of qualified students enrolled at any campus of the University of Hawaii system. Too many of our students cannot afford the cost of going to college as they have to forgo much of their income as well as pay the costs of the education itself. Education should be a right not a privilege of those who can afford it.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John Bickel  
President



Ken Hayashida, P.E. | President  
Michael Hunnemann, P.E. | Vice President

**Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Higher Education  
February 14, 2017 at 1:15 PM  
by  
Ken Hayashida  
KAI Hawaii, Inc.**

**SB 1162 - RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII PROMISE PROGRAM**

**Chair Kahele, Vice Chair Kidani and members of the committee:**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on SB 1162 which provides “last dollar” scholarships for the unmet need of qualified students at any campus of the University of Hawai‘i system who meet certain criteria.

I strongly support SB 1162. As a UH Alumni and business person, I am proud of the education I received at the University of Hawai‘i and recognize the critical role UH plays in educating our citizenry for Hawai‘i’s multi-faceted workforce.

The University of Hawai‘i Promise Program will effectively remove cost as a barrier to higher education for UH students statewide facing prohibitive financial challenges. It will ensure that promising, ambitious students have the resources they need to focus on their studies and build a better future for themselves and their families.

*Their future success impacts us all.*

The University of Hawai‘i Promise Program will help our state’s educational leaders meet the goal of having 55% of working-age adults hold a two- or four-year degree by the year 2025. Achieving this goal is critical to Hawai‘i’s future economic health, and our community’s wellbeing.

According to the [Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce](#), by 2020, 70% of jobs in Hawai‘i will require some college education. In 2014, 43.5 percent of Hawai‘i’s working age adults (25-65 years) held a 2- or 4-year college degree according to the U.S. Census. *More Hawai‘i residents with college degrees are needed to fill workforce demands of the future.*

The University of Hawai‘i Promise Program will also help our most economically disadvantaged students escape the cycle of poverty. High school graduates are three times more likely to live in poverty than college graduates, and eight times more likely to depend on public assistance.

With your support, we can truly open the doors of education for all, and strengthen our families and community as a whole. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this measure.

Respectfully submitted,

Ken Hayashida  
President  
KAI Hawaii, Inc.



**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Monday, February 13, 2017 8:38 AM  
**To:** HRE Testimony  
**Cc:** micahalameda@gmail.com  
**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for SB1162 on Feb 14, 2017 13:15PM\*

**SB1162**

Submitted on: 2/13/2017

Testimony for HRE on Feb 14, 2017 13:15PM in Conference Room 414

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Micah Alameda	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 12, 2017 7:18 PM  
**To:** HRE Testimony  
**Cc:** nataliejeanf@gmail.com  
**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for SB1162 on Feb 14, 2017 13:15PM\*

**SB1162**

Submitted on: 2/12/2017

Testimony for HRE on Feb 14, 2017 13:15PM in Conference Room 414

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
natalie Forster	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 12, 2017 4:42 PM  
**To:** HRE Testimony  
**Cc:** codysilva89@gmail.com  
**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for SB1162 on Feb 14, 2017 13:15PM\*

**SB1162**

Submitted on: 2/12/2017

Testimony for HRE on Feb 14, 2017 13:15PM in Conference Room 414

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Cody Silva	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 11, 2017 2:19 PM  
**To:** HRE Testimony  
**Cc:** ariannafeinberg@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Submitted testimony for SB1162 on Feb 14, 2017 13:15PM

**SB1162**

Submitted on: 2/11/2017

Testimony for HRE on Feb 14, 2017 13:15PM in Conference Room 414

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Arianna Feinberg	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Please support SB1162 so that Hawaii residents do not need to go into debt to get a higher education!

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February 5th, 2017

### Written Testimony

In support of: SB1162 (Companion: HB1594)

My name is Jenny Jia May Gao and I want to voice my support for bill SB1162. If passed, this bill will enact that University of Hawaii Promise Program, something that I wish exists today. All my life, my family and I have been considered “low-income.” I am lucky enough to have never experienced being at-risk for homelessness or starvation, but my family and I definitely have not been devoid of struggles. My mother came to the United States in the 80’s with very little to her name and she has worked many stressful, labor-intensive and/or menial jobs all her life in order to provide for my sister and I. Although she had obtained an accounting degree back in China, unfortunately, that degree is considered “invalid,” thus being ineligible for better jobs. If this bill is enacted, it will encourage more people to go [back] to school and probably provide many others the opportunity to attend because of the reduced costs. Everybody knows that attending college is expensive and the price increases every single year. With the UH Promise Program, it will benefit so many people like me, who occasionally struggle with the cost of school. I think it is a shame that almost everybody I know tend to “gamble” on whether or not we actually need a textbook for a certain class for the sake of saving \$100-200 when we should be empowered and motivated to learn and educate ourselves for the sake of our future. I want to live in a place where the opportunity to learn, go to school, and educate ourselves is available for us all. Knowledge is a valuable thing; the value of education has been instilled into me by my mother who brought not much else other than her willingness to persevere and eagerness to learn in America, the land of opportunity and new beginnings.

I am a daughter of Chinese immigrants and I am in my 3rd year of college, majoring in social work in hopes of “passing it forward” by offering my time, energy, and passion in order to give back to my community. I genuinely believe that if this bill is enacted, the majority of its consequences will be positive. More and more people will register to attend some sort of college or university because when combined with the federal Pell grant and other scholarships, one of the biggest barriers to education will have been removed or reduced almost completely. I believe that we will be able to surpass our “55 by 25” goal if the University of Hawaii Promise Program is enacted. What we all need is education, and if the government can do something to enable its citizens to gain something as valuable as knowledge and field experience, I do not think that the opportunity should be withheld. Therefore, I urge the committees to support SB1162 and its companion, HB1954.

**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 7, 2017 6:55 PM  
**To:** HRE Testimony  
**Cc:** mendezj@hawaii.edu  
**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for SB1162 on Feb 14, 2017 13:15PM\*

**SB1162**

Submitted on: 2/7/2017

Testimony for HRE on Feb 14, 2017 13:15PM in Conference Room 414

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Javier Mendez-Alvarez	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 7, 2017 5:25 PM  
**To:** HRE Testimony  
**Cc:** aurasaki@hawaiiantel.net  
**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for SB1162 on Feb 14, 2017 13:15PM\*

**SB1162**

Submitted on: 2/7/2017

Testimony for HRE on Feb 14, 2017 13:15PM in Conference Room 414

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Alan Urasaki	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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## TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

PERSON TESTIFYING: Robyn S. B. Chun

DATE: Tuesday, February 14, 2017

TIME: 1:15 PM

LOCATION: State Capitol Conference Room 414

### TITLE OF BILL: SB 1162 RELATING TO UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII PROMISE PROGRAM

Honorable Chair, Kaiali'i Kahele, Vice Chair Michelle Kidani and Committee Members

**I strongly support SB 1162 Relating to the University of Hawai'i Promise Program** and respectfully ask lawmakers to consider lowering the threshold of credits students must be enrolled in to qualify for the promise program or to make provisions for non-traditional students who are unable to attend school full-time.

In my experience teaching in associate, baccalaureate and graduate early education higher education programs, many of the students of "promise" I serve are only able to attend college part-time. They are often working mothers in low-wage jobs who are balancing school with work and caring for their families. They are primary caregivers for young children and/or elderly parents. And, they will forsake their educational dreams in order to meet the immediate financial obligations of their families.

These students pursue their education part-time in the evenings, on-line, and on weekends making slow and steady progress while raising their families and keeping a roof above their heads. Requiring a threshold of 15 credits in order to qualify for scholarships means that many of the people we are trying to help would need to be able to give up their jobs to pursue an education full-time. This is not a realistic option for the growing number the non-traditional, minority women who are seeking a college education. Given the cost of living in Hawai'i, I suspect it is also not possible for a portion of approximately 69% of the adult population who has earned an associate degree or less (Research and Economic Analysis Division, 2016).

Please consider lowering the number of credits a student must carry so that working adults are able to qualify for scholarship relief or designate some funding for the population of students who must pursue coursework a little at a time. My experience is that when students do not have the means to attend school full-time, most are persistent and see their program through to completion. even if it takes years. Perhaps eligibility for this group could be based on GPA, continuous enrollment, and steady progress. This would put into place requirements that would encourage adults who might want to pursue college, but who cannot give up work in order to obtain a degree.

Research Economic Analysis Division. (2016). Educational Attainment in Hawaii. Honolulu, HI: Hawaii State Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism. Retrieved from [http://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/economic/data\\_reports/briefs/Educational%20Attainment\\_Jan\\_2016.pdf](http://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/economic/data_reports/briefs/Educational%20Attainment_Jan_2016.pdf)