

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



RODERICK K. BECKER
DIRECTOR

ROBERT YU
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
P.O. BOX 150
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND
MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT (OFAM)

TESTIMONY BY RODERICK K. BECKER
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON LABOR, CULTURE AND THE ARTS
AND HIGHER EDUCATION
ON
SENATE BILL NO. 1368

February 12, 2019
3:00 p.m.
Room 224

RELATING TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

This measure allows graduate students employed by the University of Hawaii (UH) to collectively bargain by amending Chapter 89-6, HRS, to remove the exemption from collective bargaining for graduate student assistants employed by the UH and authorizing a new Bargaining Unit 15.

The Department of Budget and Finance has concerns with this measure. The cost implications of allowing graduate student assistants to collectively bargain are a concern, for both the state budget and for UH's current fiscal situation. Negotiation of pay increases for graduate students needs to be weighed against the foregone revenue from tuition waivers and other fees that graduate students do not pay as part of their assistantships. Further, their work hours and work conditions would all need to be part of collective bargaining negotiations that might not fit the flexible schedules that graduate students require to complete their academic program.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committees on Labor, Culture and the Arts
and Higher Education

Tuesday, February 12, 2019 at 3:00 p.m.

By

Donald O. Straney, Vice President for Academic Planning and Policy
University of Hawai'i System

SB 1368 – RELATING TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Chairs Taniguchi and Kim, Vice Chairs Ihara and Kidani, and members of the committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 1368, which proposes to amend HRS §89-6, to allow graduate student assistants employed at the University of Hawai'i to organize for collective bargaining purposes and to form a new bargaining unit. In addition, this bill proposes to amend HRS 89-11 and provide the Hawai'i Labor Relations Board the requisite authority to assist in the resolution of impasse.

The University of Hawai'i opposes passage of this measure.

As we have previously testified in response to similar bills introduced in prior legislative sessions, there are several issues associated with allowing University-employed graduate student assistants to be included in collective bargaining that the Legislature should seriously consider.

First, graduate students are primarily students first and are only secondarily employees. They attend the University to learn about their chosen fields of study and prepare for careers; they do not enroll at the University to obtain a job. These graduate students are mentored and supervised by our rank 3, 4, and 5 faculty members who hold PhDs or other terminal level degrees, with many years of proven professional competence and experience including evidence of proficiency in teaching and/or research.

Although a large part of our efforts as University mentors is aimed at teaching graduate assistants the actual subject matter, a similar large part is devoted to developing graduate student assistants as professionals prepared for careers in research, teaching, or public service. Graduate assistants learn essential skills for their careers while in their graduate assistant positions under the guidance and supervision of our current faculty employees. The purpose of a graduate assistantship is to train and mentor a graduate student in specific skills with the explicit goal of increasing their competitiveness as the graduate student enters a professional academic career. Graduate assistantships are a

component of graduate student education and training designed to help them prepare for their future careers.

Second, “graduate student assistant” is not a career position, but instead is temporary and limited. There are no long-term career opportunities for graduate student assistant positions at the University. The transitory status of a graduate teaching assistant is thus different from the forms of employment represented by the collective bargaining units established under HRS §89-6. An important purpose of these collective bargaining units is to ensure sustainable, long-term careers in local government service in Hawai‘i for teachers, fire fighters, police officers, corrections officers, clerical support staff, custodial and grounds staff and trades employees. Graduate teaching assistants differ substantially from this purpose as there are no long-term careers possible for this category.

Third, establishing a collective bargaining unit for graduate assistants will create a financial burden for the state. Currently, the University manages the compensation for graduate assistants, including tuition waivers, stipends and other benefits. But under the proposed legislation, these would become “cost items” subject to mandatory collective bargaining. The associated costs would be extended to include membership in the State Employees’ Retirement System as provided to employees in Chapter 88, HRS, which would add pension contribution costs to the State. In addition, any increased enrollment in the Employer-Union Trust Fund for health insurance benefits would also add increased expenses to the University and State for contributions to the system.

Finally, graduate student assistants of the University are already compensated via a package that includes a variety of benefits. The University enacted Executive Policy EP5.223 to provide graduate student assistants with the right to file employment related grievances. This policy also clarified that outside employment and calling in sick are not prohibited, and it also provides graduate assistants with a 9 or 11 month pay schedule ranging from Steps 1 to 20. Moreover, our graduate assistants who work at least 20 hours per week are eligible to enroll in the same health and benefit plans (medical, prescription drugs, dental, vision and life insurance) as our career employees who are members of bargaining units. Further, our graduate assistants who are full-time students are also exempt from the FICA tax.

The current level of compensation is a considerable cost to the University and constitutes a significant amount of the financial assistance provided to graduate student assistants. In addition, graduate student assistants receive tuition waivers so they can concentrate on being first-rate students and achieve degree completion in timely manner. At UH Mānoa, for example, general resident graduate student tuition is \$650 per credit hour and most GAs take 9 credits which equates to \$5850 per semester (\$11,700 annually), while non-resident tuition is \$1545 per credit hour, typically \$13,905 per semester (\$27,810 per year on average). Graduate student assistants may also receive monetary stipends that can vary by the educational program in which they are

enrolled. Beginning Fall 2019, the minimum stipend level is Step 8 (\$18,930 for 9-month appointees, \$22,140 for 11-month GAs. Depending on residency, graduate program, and stipend level, the value of tuition waivers and stipends is estimated to typically range between \$30,630 (9-month GAs at the minimum stipend level taking 9 resident-rate credits per semester) and \$49,950 annually (11-month GAs at the minimum stipend level taking 9 non-resident rate credits per semester), with a *potential* maximum value as high as \$80,964 annually (professional school tuition rates [Nursing] taking 12 credits, with an 11-month GAship at the top of the salary range). We note the University did request funding in its budget request to provide increases to graduate student compensation.

In summary, this measure would create a bargaining unit that is unique in the State, comprised of transitory members who remain students first with the intention of learning skills to increase their competitiveness when they graduate and begin a professional career. The University believes this measure could negatively impact our ability to train graduate students and ensure timely degree completion, while increasing expenses to the University and the state, and above all else, blurring the lines between students and employees.

Based on the above, we request that this measure be deferred. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



The Senate Committee on Labor, Culture and the Arts
The Senate Committee on Higher Education
February 12, 2019
3:00 pm, Room 224

RE: SB 1368 RELATING TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Attention: Chairs Brian T. Taniguchi and Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chairs Les Ihara Jr. and Michelle Kidani, and Members of the Joint Committees

The University of Hawaii Professional Assembly (UHPA) urges the joint committees to **support passage of SB 1368** that amends Section 89-6 of the Hawai'i Revised Statute creating a bargaining unit for the graduate assistants to help advance the interests of a group of public employees that currently do not have the right to collectively bargain.

UHPA represents the faculty across the ten campus University of Hawai'i System, and on occasion, have provided guidance to graduate assistants. The current University of Hawai'i policy governing graduate assistants does not provide the proper protections for representation for this group of public employees. Collective Bargaining would allow this group the following:

- Negotiation of grievance procedures with access to arbitration
- Protection from arbitrary and capricious behavior
- Negotiation of salary, wages and benefits

Graduate assistants are essential to instruction and research that contributes to the overall success of the University of Hawai'i. Graduate assistants are employees in the full sense of the term with continuing access to positions based on job and academic performance.

While UHPA is unable to represent graduate assistants, UHPA supports the rights of graduate assistants to organize and collectively bargain. Such a right is consistent with the labor tradition in our state and is compatible with an academic environment whereby the majority of employees have access to representation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of SB 1368**.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kristeen Hanselman".

Kristeen Hanselman
Executive Director



HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

RANDY PERREIRA, Executive Director • Tel: 808.543.0011 • Fax: 808.528.0922

The Thirtieth Legislature, State of Hawaii
The Senate
Committee on Labor, Culture and the Arts
Committee on Higher Education

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association

February 12, 2019

S.B. 1368 – RELATING TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO supports the concept of allowing graduate student assistants employed by the University of Hawaii to be included in an appropriate collective bargaining unit, as proposed in S.B. 1368.

We represent 42,000 public sector employees, retirees, and associate members across the state, counties, judiciary, Department of Education, and the University of Hawaii system. Graduate student assistants continue to encounter work related issues including budgetary set backs and increases in class size and workload, which would be most fairly resolved via the collective bargaining process. The language proposed in this measure not only removes the current exclusion of this group from collectively bargaining but also creates a unique bargaining unit with a dispute mechanism to resolve differences in contract negotiations.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of S.B. 1368.

Respectfully submitted,


for Randy Perreira
Executive Director



1200 Ala Kapuna Street ♦ Honolulu, Hawaii 96819
Tel: (808) 833-2711 ♦ Fax: (808) 839-7106 ♦ Web: www.hsta.org

Corey Rosenlee
President
Osa Tui, Jr.
Vice President
Logan Okita
Secretary-Treasurer
Wilbert Holck
Executive Director

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
LABOR, CULTURE AND THE ARTS AND THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER
EDUCATION

RE: SB 1368 - RELATING TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2019

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Taniguchi, Chair Kim, and Members of the Committees:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association **supports SB 1368**, relating to collective bargaining.

According to Article 23(4) of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948, “everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.” Likewise, the International Labor Organization, the UN agency responsible for safeguarding international labor standards, states in its Constitution and Declaration of Principles that the freedoms to associate and bargain collectively are fundamental rights of workers worldwide.

Graduate student assistants at the University of Hawai‘i must no longer be denied their fundamental workers rights. Besieged by budget cuts over the past decade, graduate students have borne increased class sizes and workloads, while suffering the same low pay of \$17,500 since the 2003-2004 academic year. Like educators throughout Hawai‘i, they have seen their purchasing power crushed beneath our state’s highest-in-the-nation cost of living.

Graduate student assistants are vital to the university community, performing instruction, research, and administrative work. Their labor, like all labor, should be publicly recognized by guaranteeing the right to bargain for fair wages and work conditions. To give graduate student assistants the ability to protect their interests and promote higher education, the Hawaii State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** this bill.

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
LABOR, CULTURE AND THE ARTS AND THE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER
EDUCATION

RE: SB 1368 - RELATING TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2019

MITZIE HIGA, LEGISLATIVE CHAIR
DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAII LABOR CAUCUS
Chair Taniguchi, Chair Kim, and Members of the Committees:

The Democratic Party of Hawaii Labor Caucus **supports SB 1368**, relating to collective bargaining.

According to Article 23(4) of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948, “everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.” Likewise, the International Labor Organization, the UN agency responsible for safeguarding international labor standards, states in its Constitution and Declaration of Principles that the freedoms to associate and bargain collectively are fundamental rights of workers worldwide.

Graduate student assistants at the University of Hawai‘i must no longer be denied their fundamental workers’ rights. Besieged by budget cuts over the past decade, graduate students have borne increased class sizes and workloads, while suffering the same low pay of \$17,500 since the 2003-2004 academic year. Like educators throughout Hawai‘i, they have seen their purchasing power crushed beneath our state’s highest-in-the-nation cost of living.

Graduate student assistants are vital to the university community, performing instruction, research, and administrative work. Their labor, like all labor, should be publicly recognized by guaranteeing the right to bargain for fair wages and work conditions. To give graduate student assistants the ability to protect their interests and promote higher education, the Democratic Party of Hawaii Labor Caucus asks your committee to **support** this bill.

The Thirtieth Legislature
Regular Session of 2019

THE SENATE

Committee on Labor, Culture, and the Arts
Senator Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair

Committee on Higher Education
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

State Capitol, Conference Room 224
Tuesday, February 12, 2019; 3:00 p.m.

**STATEMENT OF THE ILWU LOCAL 142 ON S.B. 1368
RELATING TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING**

The ILWU Local 142 **strongly supports** S.B. 1368, which establishes a collective bargaining unit for graduate student assistants employed by the University of Hawaii.

S.B. 1368 is not complicated – it simply grants collective bargaining rights by establishing bargaining unit 15 for graduate student assistants employed by the University of Hawaii - a right graduate students have been seeking for over a decade.

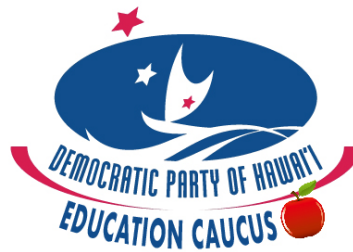
Our State Constitution specifically proclaims persons in private and public employment shall have the right to organize for the purpose of collective bargaining – a clause that has held strong in our Constitution for over four decades. Graduate student assistants are employed by the University of Hawaii as **employees** and perform numerous duties and tasks such as teaching classes, grading assignments, developing curriculum in addition to other responsibilities that may be assigned by the professor and/or university. Many graduate student assistants often work over 40 hours per week on a salary that is nearly equal to Hawaii’s minimum wage resulting in many having to obtain two or three jobs simply to afford Hawaii’s high cost of living all while attending classes to obtain their own degree(s).

Having the right to collectively bargaining will provide graduate student assistants with a unified voice, improved work conditions, better workplace safety and overall a better quality of life. As current at-will employees, termination can occur at any time for nearly any reason leaving many fearful to speak up, unsure of what the recourse may be. With representation, the situation is handled fairly and appropriately – graduate student assistants can file grievances while being protected without any fear of retaliation. Further, having collective bargaining rights not only helps secure a better financial outlook including an improved work environment but also ensures proper justice occurs when an abject situation arises.

As **employees** of the University of Hawaii, graduate student assistants have every right to seek representation – they have terms of employment which includes responsibilities, work days, and work hours. The University also describes graduate student assistants as professionals that are **employed** at the school. In addition, Hawaii’s Constitution grants them those rights just like other workers employed at the University of Hawaii or at other state departments and agencies.

Additionally, nearly 40 public and private graduate student unions have been formed across the country – including at prestigious universities such as Harvard, Columbia, and Brown. The fact is, collective bargaining rights for graduate student unions are not new or unheard of, but rather popular and continue to gain popularity each year. In truth, every worker deserves the right to organize allowing them to have the protections and financial security they deserve. While graduate student assistants employed at the University of Hawaii fall under the Hawaii Labor Relations Board (HLRB) it should be noted that in August 2016, a ruling by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) found that “student teaching assistants” and “student research assistants” are **employees** at private universities and therefore have the right to unionize under the National Labor Relations Act.

The ILWU believes all workers deserve the right to organize and strongly urges the passage of S.B. 1368. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



SENATE BILL 1368, RELATING TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

FEBRUARY 12, 2019 · SENATE LABOR, CULTURE,
AND THE ARTS AND HIGHER EDUCATION
COMMITTEES · CHAIRS SEN. BRIAN T. TANIGUCHI
AND SEN. DONNA MERCADO KIM

POSITION: Support.

RATIONALE: The Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus supports SB 1368, relating to collective bargaining, which establishes a collective bargaining unit for graduate student assistants employed by the University of Hawai'i.

There is a power in a union.

Today, political pundits prognosticate about the possible onslaught of austerity facing our nation. Many of these same pundits believe that labor unions are an impediment to economic prosperity, arguing that collective bargaining sets wages and work conditions above what the free market demands.

They couldn't be more wrong. Collective bargaining is a civil right. Unionized employees' compensation and work protections, moreover, are essential to creating an upwardly mobile middle class and continually increasing economic prosperity. As economist Paula Voos of Rutgers University School of Management and Labor Relations notes, "It is no accident that the prosperity

and consumer boom of the 1950s—a period of unprecedented middle-class expansion, broad business growth, increased home ownership, rising consumer spending, and the shared expectation that a college education was within the reach of everyone and that the lives of our children would be better than our own—followed the greatest sustained expansion of unionization in American history.”

Unsurprisingly, decreasing American middle-class incomes and the rapidly widening wealth gap in our country parallel a significant decline in union membership. It is imperative, then, that we promote higher productivity by strengthening labor-management relations. Through a union, employees have a means to engage with management about workplace problems, inefficient processes, unfair work conditions, and unsupportive compensation. Unions also reduce employee turnover and increase the retention of highly experienced employees, creating circumstances that favor professional development and mutual trust in the workplace.

Graduate student assistants at the University of Hawai’i have earned the right to demand respect from university management. In providing instruction to students and research that expands our society’s knowledge base, graduate students tirelessly toil on behalf of the university community, often under fear of retaliation because of a lack of organizing power in resisting exploitation. Graduate student assistants are short-term positions. Yet, the duration of graduate positions only heightens the urgency of establishing collective bargaining protections, as temporary employees too often fall prey to employers who exploit the precarious nature of these positions and assume student workers will simply “deal with the pain and move on,” as one graduate assistant member of DPH Education Caucus maintains. Most startlingly, UH graduate assistants currently earn an average of \$18,256 per year, according to Glassdoor.com, a number that has not significantly increased since the 2003-2004 academic year. At the sunrise of 2019, that amount carries over \$6,000 less purchasing power than it did fourteen years ago *before* adjusting for Hawai’i’s high cost of living. Even for graduate students, it is nowhere near a livable wage.

Thomas Jefferson wrote, “Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.” The same is true with basic civil rights, including the rights to freely associate and bargain for fair pay and work conditions, which are constantly under assault by a corporate mindset that puts dollars before democracy.

SB-1368

Submitted on: 2/11/2019 2:51:15 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/12/2019 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Melodie Aduja	Testifying for O`ahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities of the Democratic Party of Hawai`i	Support	No

Comments:



KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS
FACULTY ASSOCIATION

11 February 2019

Senate Committee on Labor, Culture and the Arts

Chair: Senator Brian T. Taniguchi

Vice Chair: Senator Les Ihara, Jr.

Senate Committee on Higher Education

Chair: Senator Donna Mercado Kim

Vice Chair: Senator Michelle N. Kidani

I would first like to mahalo the members of the various committees present in the room, from Senators Taniguchi and Ihara from the Senate Committee on Labor, Culture and the Arts and Senators Kim and Kidani of the Senate Committee on Higher Education. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. As the President of the Kamehameha Schools Faculty Association, I write in strong support of SB1368 and the unionization of graduate assistants in the University of Hawaii.

As a former undergraduate student and graduate assistant at the University of Hawaii at Mānoa, I have experienced firsthand the impact of graduate assistant labor. Graduate assistants are generally at the forefront of teaching numerous 100 and 200 level courses that are essential for students to advance in their studies and graduate on time. They not only provide instructional services for undergraduate students but also mentoring services as well. Graduate research assistants are the linchpin of many labs, conducting key research that contributes to bringing in grant monies that are critical to the long-term functioning of various university departments.

To be frank, the university relies on graduate labor to run; however, graduate assistants are not fairly compensated. For example, the English 100 Mentoring Program that I was a part of as a graduate assistant at the University of Hawaii at Mānoa was tasked with not only sharing the duties of teaching a freshman college composition class with a professor, but conferencing with students after class hours to assist them with everything from their coursework to their transition into the university community as freshmen. Although the projected workload was to be no more than 10 hours a week, I regularly worked over 25 hours a week providing services to my students. Some of my colleagues worked even longer hours than that while at the same time, assisting various professors in their research on English composition mentoring programs.

Although I appreciate the teaching experience and the relationships I forged with both the professors I worked under and the students I mentored, my total compensation package at the time during the 2012-2013 school year was a half-tuition waiver and approximately \$600/month, forcing me to balance my graduate assistantship, my coursework, and additional jobs teaching part time at a local high school and my service with the Hawaii Air National Guard, in order to



KAMEHAMEHA SCHOOLS
FACULTY ASSOCIATION

make ends meet. My story is by no means unique not only in the University of Hawaii system, but in universities all around the nation, and it is a story that is still happening today.

In addition, although graduate assistants perform similar academic labor as professors, graduate assistants do not enjoy the same protections against potential capricious and arbitrary decisions and attacks from management through an appropriate grievance mechanism that professors enjoy through the University of Hawaii Professional Assembly. Clearly, graduate assistants belong in the same community of interest as professors, and as such, to deny graduate assistants the right to unionize would have the effect of creating a permanent underclass of exploited academic laborers and could make the University of Hawaii system a less attractive destination for budding scholars and graduate researchers.

Hawaii has led the way in breaking ground for labor unions. A recent study published by The Center for Economic Policy revealed that although union membership nation-wide is dropping, Hawaii is defying that national trend by leading the nation in union membership gains. Hawaii has a rich labor legacy since the sugar and pineapple plantation days and the Big 5, and clearly, the right of workers to freely associate is enshrined in the very history of our state. Graduate assistants create immense value for the University of Hawaii system, and their ability to collectively bargain and have a seat at the table is long overdue. I urge you to pass SB1368.

Mahalo,

Abraham Yi
President, Kamehameha Schools Faculty Association

Chair Taniguchi
Vice Chair Ihara
Senate Committee on Labor, Culture, & the Arts

Chair Kim
Vice Chair Kidani
Senate Committee on Higher Education

Tuesday, February 12, 2019
3:00 PM

**TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB1368 RELATING TO COLLECTIVE
BARGAINING**

Aloha Chairs Taniguchi and Kim, Vice Chairs Ihara and Kidani, Members of the Senate Committee on Labor, Culture, & the Arts, and the Senate Committee on Higher Education,

My name is Jun Shin. I am a freshman at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, currently serving as the Environmental Justice Action Committee Chair for the Young Progressives Demanding Action (YPDA). I am testifying as an individual **in strong support of SB1368 relating to collective bargaining.**

As a young person who has decided to expand my involvement in the legislative process and a Freshman Ethnic Studies major at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, this has remained a very important issue to me since 2018 when I first learned about it. I have seen amazing energy from graduate students who have continued to step up, organize, have meetings, and tell the broader community why graduate student unionization is important.

They have honestly been inspirational. In a time of cynicism and apathy, graduate students who are working hard to unionize have broken this mold, by going the distance to seek to improve their conditions and unionize, through both outside and inside of our political process. I also have to add that Graduate student assistants are really passionate about the fields of study they are in, as exemplified by the fact that they are seeking higher education in these subjects, they are dedicated in the work they do. I know this personally due to several of my instructors during my three semesters at the university being graduate students. They have given me new perspectives, new insights on issues, history, literature, etc that I have taken with me in both life and the advocacy work that I do and have frankly been some of my favorite instructors. So I have a personal stake in seeing graduate students have the ability to collectively bargain. I want to see them keep showing us their passion, doing what they love and following their dreams and goals while having both the opportunity and the mechanisms necessary in order to improve their livelihoods and be better equipped to deal with the stagnation of wages and high cost of living.

Even beyond personal feelings, graduate students are workers. Just like musicians, hotel workers, construction workers, and the many fields that are represented by unions, graduate students are workers who should not be denied their human rights. Article 23, Section 4 of the Universal Declaration of Human

Rights, a document that the United States took part in creating and ratifying lays this out very clearly, “Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests”. In terms of “interest”, it is really more than getting paid. The workers should be able to have a say in their workplace, how it’s run and have a venue to address and find solutions to issues that are very important to them and their success such as equal pay, sexual harassment, abuse of authority, and discrimination against non binary individuals.

As the backbone of our universities through instructing, administrative work, tutoring, and so much more in the line of work that shapes the futures of so many, I want to conclude with this. When graduate students succeed, Hawai‘i succeeds. It is my personal hope that through this measure, not only will it help in improving the lives and working conditions of graduate students, but its success will bring in a new generation of university students ready to become citizen advocates after seeing the hard work of their colleagues and instructors come to fruition. **I urge you to pass SB1368 out of your committees.**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify,

Jun Shin
Environmental Justice Action Committee Chair
Young Progressives Demanding Action (YPDA)
1561 Kanunu St.
Cell: 808-255-6663
Email: junshinbusiness729@gmail.com

SB-1368

Submitted on: 2/10/2019 5:31:51 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/12/2019 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dain Christensen	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

SB-1368

Submitted on: 2/10/2019 9:25:16 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/12/2019 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Justin Keliipaakaua	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. I write in strong support of this bill, which if passed, will create a new bargaining unit for graduate assistants in Hawaii. Every undergraduate student is taught and mentored by a graduate teaching assistant; graduate research assistants advance scientific frontiers and make new discoveries; and graduate administrative assistants run key facilities and labs on campus. The university relies on graduate labor to run. Graduate assistants deserve a seat at the table when decisions are made that affect their lives, those of their students, and the broader community.

Unfortunately, graduate assistants are poorly compensated, with wages that are far below a living wage and far below competitive standards of other universities. Graduate assistant compensation has neither kept up with inflation, the cost of living, or rising productivity. Additionally, graduate assistants are vulnerable to capricious and arbitrary decisions and attacks from management, including sexual harassment, without a proper mechanism for pursuing grievances. To remedy these issues and more, what we are asking for are our basic human rights as workers - to be able to form a legally-recognized union.

It is important to emphasize that this is fundamentally about more than just compensation or grievances. This bill asks for no extra appropriations. It simply creates a pathway for graduate assistants in Hawaii to exercise their basic right to join a union.

In 2016, the National Labor Relations Board reversed the decades-long ban on private university graduate unions at places such as the University of Chicago, Harvard, and Yale, declaring that graduate assistants are workers that deserve the right to unionize. There are currently dozens of graduate unions across the country at public and private institutions, in states such as California, Oregon, Washington, New York, Illinois, Montana, Massachusetts, Iowa, and many more, including many of our peer and benchmark institutions. Graduate assistant unions have existed for 50 years, and all scholarly research has shown that unionized graduate assistants report higher levels of personal/professional support and higher pay that improves educational outcomes, and that faculty report that unionization does not inhibit their ability to advise, instruct, or mentor.

Hawaii has led the way in breaking ground for labor unions. For the cutting-edge

research and instruction graduate assistants do, the ability to collectively bargain and have a seat at the table is essential and long overdue. I urge you to pass this bill.

SB-1368

Submitted on: 2/11/2019 4:01:10 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/12/2019 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jeremy Young	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I myself am currently a graduate student at the University of Hawaii. While I agree that it is difficult to get by on the typical GA salary given here, I do not think unionizing is the answer. I strongly oppose this bill.

I do not believe that colleges or departments are underpaying their GAs and TAs maliciously. We get tuition waivers, and medical insurance in addition to our stipends. I believe our pay and benefits are on par with other Universities nationwide-- it is just the cost of living in Hawaii is much higher than the mainland. Also as a counter point, you can look at the average salary for a lecturer (teaches a class but is not a professor); it is considerably less than a GA makes.

I do not feel like we are being taken advantage of. Sure we do a lot of work, and it is difficult, but that is what graduate school is supposed to be. I think the source of the problem, is that there is a lack of funding in general, because of this, our pay cannot be increased. Unionizing would only add additional bureaucracy and more fees for graduate students to deal with. We are already busy working on our research and trying to graduate.

Finding a way to increase funds for the University over all I think is what is needed. We cannot create money out of nowhere. Alternatively, we can look for ways to reduce the cost of living in Hawaii for everyone.

LATE

SB-1368

Submitted on: 2/11/2019 7:50:06 PM

Testimony for LCA on 2/12/2019 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Theresa Chen	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Theresa Chen and I am a recent Master of Social Work graduate from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. I write in strong support of SB1368, which if passed, will create a new bargaining unit for graduate assistants in Hawaii.

The work graduate assistants do is invaluable. At some point in their undergraduate careers, every UH student is taught by a graduate student; even at the graduate level, I had instructors who were graduate teaching assistants. Many of the departments are run with the help of administrative assistants, and research assistants provide the university with valuable research that cannot be replicated elsewhere. The university flourishes on the backs of graduate student assistants. It cannot thrive without them. Graduate assistants deserve a seat at the table when decisions are made that affect their lives, those of their students, and the broader community.

Unfortunately, graduate assistants are poorly compensated, with wages that are far below a living wage and far below competitive standards of other universities. Graduate assistant compensation has neither kept up with inflation, the cost of living, or rising productivity. Additionally, graduate assistants are vulnerable to capricious and arbitrary decisions and attacks from management, including sexual harassment, without a proper mechanism for pursuing grievances. To remedy these issues and more, what we are asking for are our basic human rights as workers - to be able to form a legally-recognized union.

It is important to emphasize that this is fundamentally about more than just compensation or grievances. This bill asks for no extra appropriations. It simply creates a pathway for graduate assistants in Hawaii to exercise their basic right to join a union.

In 2016, the National Labor Relations Board reversed the decades-long ban on private university graduate unions at places such as the University of Chicago, Harvard, and Yale, declaring that graduate assistants are workers that deserve the right to unionize. There are currently dozens of graduate unions across the country at public and private institutions, in states such as California, Oregon, Washington, New York, Illinois, Montana, Massachusetts, Iowa, and many more, including many of our peer and benchmark institutions. Graduate assistant unions have existed for 50 years, and all

scholarly research has shown that unionized graduate assistants report higher levels of personal/professional support and higher pay that improves educational outcomes, and that faculty report that unionization does not inhibit their ability to advise, instruct, or mentor.

Hawaii has led the way in breaking ground for labor unions. For the cutting-edge research and instruction graduate assistants do, the ability to collectively bargain and have a seat at the table is essential and long overdue. I urge you to pass SB1368.

LATE

SB-1368

Submitted on: 2/12/2019 7:36:13 AM

Testimony for LCA on 2/12/2019 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mericia Palma Elmore	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

 **Testimony in support of SB1368**

Testimony Message

Senate Committee on Labor, Culture and the Arts

Chair: Senator Brian T. Taniguchi

Vice Chair: Senator Les Ihara, Jr.

Senate Committee on Higher Education

Chair: Senator Donna Mercado Kim

Vice Chair: Senator Michelle N. Kidani

Conference Room 224

Tuesday, February 12, 2019 at 3:00 pm

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. I write in strong support of SB1368. SB1368, if passed, will create a new bargaining unit for graduate assistants in Hawaii. Every undergraduate student is taught and mentored by a graduate teaching assistant; graduate research assistants advance scientific frontiers and make new discoveries; and graduate administrative assistants run key facilities and labs on campus. The university relies on graduate labor to run. Graduate assistants deserve a seat at the table when decisions are made that affect their lives, those of their students, and the broader community.

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SB1368	YELLOW=PRESENT				
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Will Caron	Keola Diaz	Mykie Ozoa	Kelly Klocker	Tetsuya Idota	Ariana Huffmyer
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