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House Committee on Higher Education

Attn: Representative Nishimoto, Chair

Re: HB 2859

Aloha Chair Nishimoto,

This testimony is in strong support of HB2859. There will be much more testimony regarding this bill, but mine will be simple. Without a raise in the past eight years, graduate student workers are suffering undue financial hardship. It is common for us to assume that we will not be making a great deal of money in academia, especially as graduate students. But if the University's testimony is to be believed, that there hasn't been any money to raise graduate student pay since 2004, no one should have received a pay increase.

We do not expect to earn an unreasonable salary, but it should come as no surprise when we ask the question: when things were going well for the University financially, why was there no raise implemented then? The massive economic downturn did not begin in 2004; it is therefore obvious that even when UH could have raised our salaries commensurate with either the Consumer Price index or cost of living, there was no intention to treat our work as meaningful.

With the losses to the UH budget in recent years, we understand that things are not going well, and our intention is to never strain any budgetary realities beyond a breaking point. This does not mean we should tolerate being strained to ours. Without a voice in negotiating for our basic well-being as employees of the state of Hawai'i, we have subsequently been given the clear message that we are expected to work jobs in excess of being full-time graduate students, and employed in what we are told is full-time work as Graduate Assistants and Teaching Assistants.

With the expected load of at least eight units, which usually implies at least five hours of work per week per unit taken, and then an expectation of twenty hours of work in a GA position, this already amounts to 60 hours of expected work per week. Another job is prohibitive of even above average scholarship and teaching or research duties, yet the expectations for excellence still apply.

After this, we still have to find ways to feed ourselves, provide basic necessities such as modest clothing and a place to sleep, and front money for our costs in furthering our careers such as attending conferences and professional development seminars. This is unacceptable.

Please vote in favor of this bill. We will fight for the continued excellent reputation and educational availability provided by the University of Hawai'i, and will be partners in solving our



collective financial and academic challenges. Together, we can keep the UH at the forefront of Hawai'i's personnel and technological infrastructure, but without a voice, we continue to advocate in an environment contrary to the mission and vision of UH.

Mahalo,

Nicholas Gibson

# LATE TESTIMONY

Lori Hasegawa

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 14, 2012 10:20 AM  
**To:** HEDtestimony  
**Cc:** sharain@hawaii.edu  
**Subject:** Testimony for HB2859 on 2/14/2012 2:00:00 PM

Testimony for HED 2/14/2012 2:00:00 PM HB2859

Conference room: 309  
Testifier position: Support  
Testifier will be present: No  
Submitted by: Sharain Naylor  
Organization: Individual  
E-mail: [sharain@hawaii.edu](mailto:sharain@hawaii.edu)  
Submitted on: 2/14/2012

Comments:

# LATE TESTIMONY

Leane Darling  
Written Testimony for HB2859  
February 14, 2012

My name is Leane Darling. I am a 3<sup>rd</sup> year Graduate Student at UH Manoa in Spanish Literature. I have funding from the University as I am a Graduate Assistant; however, it is not enough. After taxes and benefits taken out I earn about \$970/month. My rent is \$750. I have to pay for a parking pass, University fees, gas, phone bill, groceries (and we all know what the cost of food is in the islands); and what about entertainment? There is no time for that; I am a Graduate Student. This is my life. I am not asking to be paid as a regular working person, or that I do half the work that I already do now, but simply that there is more equilibrium in my rights as a Graduate Student. I believe we should be included as state employees in a collective bargaining unit.

I am very thankful to receive free education. I know that I do not have the amount of student loans that others have, but I still have student loans. I am fortunate enough to have the ability/credit to receive some loan money (I could not apply for scholarships as I am not a Hawaii High School graduate, of Asian descent or in the Sciences). There are some, however, who are not as fortunate. I have helped my colleague, who shall remain anonymous, move twice within the last two months. My colleague is a great student and person who has traveled here from Chile in order to receive a Masters in Spanish Literature. Upon his arrival, my colleague did not get paid for the first two months. There is absolutely no excuse for this. For someone with no family ties here that could help him, my colleague was left to live in poverty until he received his first stipend from the University. The second time I helped him move into what looked like a cockroach infested shack in a questionable part of Waikiki, he told me that it was very difficult for him to be here. He had only his backpack and a laptop. How is this acceptable? Under what conditions are Graduate Students expected to work and be able to excel?

My colleague cannot take out loans very easily, because he is a foreigner. Even if he could, the process takes too long. He would not be able to keep up with his responsibilities as a GA and a Graduate Student. Waikiki is a couple of miles away from the campus, yet it takes him an hour to arrive here via bus. His bike was stolen and he cannot afford to buy a new one.

Again, I am grateful for the education that I am receiving. However, I plea on my behalf on the behalf of my colleague and on the behalf of others that HB2859 be considered to pass. We are adults and should be represented and considered for a pay raise. 5 years is a long way without any increase in stipends. We should be included in a bargaining unit

## LATE TESTIMONY

**nakashima2 - Susie**

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 14, 2012 12:48 PM  
**To:** HEDtestimony  
**Cc:** ljmiller@hawaii.edu  
**Subject:** Testimony for HB2859 on 2/14/2012 2:00:00 PM  
**Attachments:** HB2859.txt

Testimony for HED 2/14/2012 2:00:00 PM HB2859

Conference room: 309  
Testifier position: Support  
Testifier will be present: No  
Submitted by: Lisa J Miller  
Organization: Individual  
E-mail: [ljmiller@hawaii.edu](mailto:ljmiller@hawaii.edu)  
Submitted on: 2/14/2012

Comments:

HB2859

I am writing to ask that you support HB2859.

I am a graduate research assistant in the Information and Computer Sciences Department at UH Manoa.

I am also a single mother and someone who returned to school after many years of running my own business on the Big Island.

In 2009, I was accepted into one of the top 20 computer science PhD programs in the country at Brown University in Providence Rhode Island. While at Brown I was paid a research stipend. After a year there it was apparent that my family needed me to return home to Hawaii. Not wanting to give up my dream of a career in research I enrolled at UH and was able to get a research assistantship. Unfortunately, a research assistantship at UH pays less than 2/3 of what I was paid at Brown while the cost of living here in Honolulu is tremendously high compared to Providence.

I honestly cannot live and support my daughter on my graduate assistantship pay. The only way I am able to continue at school is through the generosity of my parents and many student loans.

The State of Hawaii and UH Manoa as a Research 1 University desperately need graduate researchers like myself that perform research at the cutting edge of technology, but without adequate compensation and no rights to pursue decent working conditions it is hard to justify remaining in graduate school here.

Please support HB2859.