
HOUSE RESOLUTION

SUPPORTING ACCESS TO DEBT-FREE HIGHER EDUCATION AT PUBLIC
COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES.

1 WHEREAS, the economic competitiveness of the United States,
2 including Hawaii, in the global economy requires a well-educated
3 workforce; and
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5 WHEREAS, students in Hawaii currently average about \$23,000
6 in debt upon graduation from a four year college, and a majority
7 of students take six years or more to obtain a Bachelor's
8 degree, which significantly hinders their ability to participate
9 in the local economy; and
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11 WHEREAS, current and future generations of young people in
12 Hawaii should have the same opportunities as those who went to
13 college in previous generations, including the ability to attend
14 state colleges and universities without taking on burdensome
15 debt; and
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17 WHEREAS, in 2016, higher education is more important than
18 ever because it is an essential step to entering and remaining
19 in the middle class; and
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21 WHEREAS, public investment in higher education pays off, as
22 evidenced by the fact the GI Bill resulted in a seven to one
23 return on investment for our national economy and workers with
24 college degrees earn more money, pay more taxes, and rely less
25 on government services; and
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27 WHEREAS, student loan debt saddles the very students who
28 most depend on a college degree to level the economic playing
29 field with a burden that constrains their career choices and
30 hurts their credit rating, prevents them from fully
31 participating in the economy, and threatens their achievement of



1 essential milestones of the American dream including purchasing
2 a home or car, starting a family, and saving for retirement; and
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4 WHEREAS, the federal Schatz-Schumer-Warren Senate debt-free
5 college resolution and Grijalva-Ellison-Clark House debt-free
6 college resolution have gained national momentum in recent
7 months, becoming central in the national dialogue around higher
8 education; and
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10 WHEREAS, achieving a national goal of debt-free college
11 will necessarily include significant federal aid to states,
12 including Hawaii; now, therefore,
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14 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
15 Twenty-eighth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
16 Session of 2016, that this body supports efforts to enact
17 legislation that:
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- 19 (1) Ensures, through a combination of efforts, all
20 students have access to debt-free higher education,
21 defined as having no debt upon graduation from any
22 public institution of higher education;
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- 24 (2) Increases investments in higher education and brings
25 down costs for students;
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- 27 (3) Increases aid to students, helping them cover the
28 total cost of college attendance without taking on
29 debt;
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- 31 (4) Encourages innovation by the State and its
32 institutions of higher education to increase
33 efficiency, lower costs, and enable speedy and less
34 costly degree completion; and
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- 36 (5) Reduces the burden of existing student loan debt; and
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38 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
39 Resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States;
40 the Majority Leader of the United States Senate; the Speaker of
41 the United States House of Representatives; the members of



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