



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

---

Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Higher Education  
February 6, 2018 at 2:10 p.m.

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

### HB 1651 HD1 – RELATING TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Chair McKelvey, Vice Chair Hashem, and members of the Committee:

On behalf of the University of Hawai'i, I am submitting testimony regarding House Bill 1651 HD1 – Relating to Collective Bargaining – 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 the passage of this measure.

As we explained in prior testimony submitted in response to similar bills introduced in the 2015, 2016 and 2017 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 and, potentially, for graduate students. 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.

All compensation collectively bargained for may be treated as wages that will be subject to employment and income taxes. Currently, graduate student assistants’ tuition waivers are not taxed as income. However, this fall, the US House of Representatives passed legislation that would make tuition waivers taxable, which would have had a large, negative economic impact on graduate student assistants. Fortunately, the final tax legislation excluded this provision, but there is continuing concern that Congress may pursue policies that will further tax the benefits of graduate student assistantship compensation.

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 currently ranges is \$637 per credit hour and most GAs take 9 credits which equates to \$5733 per semester (\$11,466 annually), while non-resident tuition is \$1532 per credit hour, typically \$13,788 per semester (\$27,576 per year on average). Graduate student assistants may also receive monetary stipends that can vary by the educational program in which they are enrolled. During the 2016-17 academic year, depending on residency, educational program, and schedule, the value of tuition waivers and stipends was estimated to typically range between \$28,958 (9-month GAs at the minimum stipend level taking 9 credits per semester) and \$50,604 annually (11-month GAs at the minimum stipend level taking 9 credits per semester), with a *potential* maximum value as high as \$58,663 annually (professional school tuition rates [Nursing] taking 12 credits, with a 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.



**STATE OF HAWAII  
OFFICE OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**  
235 S. BERETANIA STREET, SUITE 1201  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-2437

February 2, 2018

TESTIMONY TO THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION  
For Hearing on Tuesday, February 6, 2018  
2:10 p.m., Conference Room 309

By

RYKER WADA  
CHIEF NEGOTIATOR, OFFICE OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

**House Bill No. 1651, HD1  
Relating to Collective Bargaining**

(WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY)

CHAIRPERSON MCKELVEY, VICE CHAIR HASHEM AND MEMBERS OF THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION:

House Bill No. 1651, HD1 proposes to establish a collective bargaining unit for  
graduate student assistants employed by the University of Hawaii.

The Office of Collective Bargaining (OCB) **DOES NOT SUPPORT** this bill for the  
following reasons:

- Unlike other public employees, who are career, long term employees engaged in collective bargaining, a graduate student employment is temporary and is not a career or profession. However, the OCB defers to the University of Hawaii on the definition of employee versus graduate students.

- Establishing UH graduate students as collective bargaining unit 15 could have significant cost increases for both the UH and the State since mandatory subjects of collective bargaining cover wages, hours, condition of employment, and fringe benefits.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on this measure.



**STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE**

P.O. BOX 150  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

**WRITTEN ONLY**

TESTIMONY BY LAUREL A. JOHNSTON  
ACTING DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE  
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION  
ON  
HOUSE BILL NO. 1651, H.D. 1

**February 6, 2018  
2:10 p.m.  
Room 309**

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 special 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.



The House Committee on Higher Education  
Tuesday, February 6, 2018  
2:10 PM, Conference Room 309

**RE: HB 1651 HD1 Relating to Collective Bargaining**

Attention: Chair Angus McKelvey, Vice Chair Mark Hashem and Members of the Committee

The University of Hawaii Professional Assembly (UHPA) urges the committee to **support passage of HB 1651, HD1** that amends Section 89-6 of the Hawai'i Revised Statute to create bargaining unit 15, allowing full-time graduate students employed at the University of Hawai'i to collectively bargain.

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

When representing faculty, UHPA has worked with graduates students, and on occasion, have provided guidance. The current University of Hawai'i policy governing Graduate Students does not provide the proper protections of this group of 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

While UHPA is unable to represent Graduate Students, our experience indicates this group of student employees needs the ability to advance its interests in establishing appropriate conditions of employment and treatment in the workplace.

**UHPA supports the passage of HB 1651, HD1.**

Respectfully submitted,

Kristeen Hanselman



Executive Director

University of Hawaii  
Professional Assembly

1017 Palm Drive ♦ Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-1928  
Telephone: (808) 593-2157 ♦ Facsimile: (808) 593-2160  
Website: [www.uhpa.org](http://www.uhpa.org)



**HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION**

AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

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

The Twenty-Ninth Legislature, State of Hawaii  
House of Representatives  
Committee on Higher Education

Testimony by  
Hawaii Government Employees Association

February 6, 2018

H.B. 1651, H.D. 1 – RELATING  
TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO strongly 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 H.B. 1651, H.D. 1.

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 bargaining process. The language proposed in H.B. 1651 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 strong support of H.B. 1651, H.D. 1.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira  
Executive Director



Randy Perreira  
President

# HAWAII STATE AFL-CIO

345 Queen Street, Suite 500 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Telephone: (808) 597-1441  
Fax: (808) 593-2149

The Twenty-Ninth Legislature, State of Hawaii  
Hawaii State House of Representatives  
Committee on Higher Education

Testimony by  
Hawaii State AFL-CIO

February 6, 2018

H.B. 1651, H.D.1 – RELATING TO  
COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

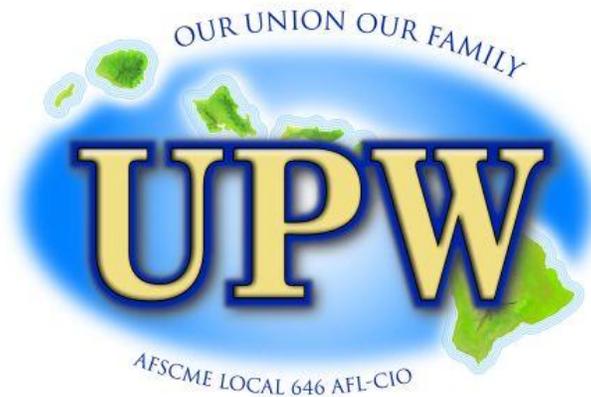
The Hawaii State AFL-CIO strongly supports H.B. 1651, H.D.1 which establishes a collective bargaining unit for graduate student assistants employed by the University of Hawaii.

Having the ability to collectively bargain will give University of Hawaii graduate assistants a unified voice to discuss their working conditions, wages, and a number of other benefits to help improve their quality of life and work environment. Collective bargaining will help solve workplace problems and provide a grievance process to ensure each situation is handled appropriately and fairly. The Hawaii State AFL-CIO strongly urges the passage of H.B. 1651, H.D.1.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira  
President



THE HAWAII STATE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
The Twenty-Ninth Legislature  
Regular Session of 2018

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

The Honorable Angus L.K. McKelvey, Chair  
The Honorable Mark J. Hashem, Vice Chair

DATE OF HEARING: Tuesday, February 6, 2018  
TIME OF HEARING: 2:10 p.m.  
PLACE OF HEARING: State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street  
Conference Room 309

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB1651 RELATING TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING**

By DAYTON M. NAKANELUA,  
State Director of the United Public Workers (UPW),  
AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO

My name is Dayton M. Nakanelua, State Director of the United Public Workers, AFSCME, Local 646, AFL-CIO. The UPW is the exclusive bargaining representative for approximately 12,000 public employees, which include blue collar, non-supervisory employees in Bargaining Unit 01 and institutional, health and correctional employees in Bargaining Unit 10, in the State of Hawaii and four counties. The UPW also represents about 1,500 members of the private sector.

The National Labor Relations Board ruled in a 3-1 vote that, "...graduate students working as teaching or research assistants in private universities are employees with the right to collective bargaining". Graduate students at public universities such as the University of Hawaii do the same type of work; they deserve to be recognized as employees.

According to the Council of Graduate Schools, there are about 1.7 million graduate students in the United States. About 2% are unionized, nearly all of them are at public universities. Therefore, there is precedent for a graduate student union at the U.H. The UPW supports HB1651 to establish a collective bargaining unit for graduate assistants employed by the University of Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.



# IBEW1260

‘A‘OHE HANA NUI KE ALU ‘IA

February 6, 2018

The Twenty-Ninth Legislature  
Hawaii State House of Representatives  
Committee on Higher Education

HB1651 - RELATING TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Chair McKelvey, Vice Chair Hashem and Members of the Committee,

The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 1260, AFL-CIO (IBEW1260), represents more than 3500 members, has advocated for all workers in the State of Hawaii for over seventy-five years and respectfully offers the following testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** of House Bill 1651 (HB1651).

Graduate Student Assistants are essential to the success of the University of Hawaii system and should be extended the same collective bargaining rights as all other workers to address wages, benefits and work rules. For this reason, IBEW1260 respectfully ask the Committee to support HB1277 guaranteeing graduate students a voice in the workplace and the ability to work collectively for workplace dignity.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this issue.

Respectfully,



Michael M. Brittain  
Asst. Business Manager  
IBEW1260 / AFL-CIO



46-063 Emepela Pl. #U101 Kaneohe, HI 96744 · (808) 679-7454 · Kris Coffield · Co-founder/Executive Director

---

**TESTIMONY FOR HOUSE BILL 1651, HOUSE DRAFT 1, RELATING TO  
COLLECTIVE BARGAINING**

**House Committee on Higher Education  
Hon. Angus L.K. McKelvey, Chair  
Hon. Mark J. Hashem, Vice Chair**

**Tuesday, February 6, 2018, 2:10 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 309**

Honorable Chair McKelvey and committee members:

I am Kris Coffield, representing IMUAlliance, a nonpartisan political advocacy organization that currently boasts over 400 members. On behalf of our members, we offer this testimony in strong support of House Bill 1651, HD 1, relating to collective bargaining.

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 IMUAlliance 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 2018, that amount carries nearly \$6,000 less purchasing power than it did fourteen years ago *before* adjusting for Hawai'i's high cost of living. Even for 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. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this bill.

Sincerely,  
Kris Coffield  
*Executive Director*  
IMUAlliance



# Academic Labor United

[www.academiclaborunited.org](http://www.academiclaborunited.org)

House Committee on Higher Education  
Tuesday, February 6, 2018  
2:10PM, Room 309

Attention: Representative Angus McKelvey, Chair  
Representative Mark Hashem, Vice Chair

Re: **Support for HB1651 HD1 Relating to Collective Bargaining**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Academic Labor United (ALU) stands in **strong support** of this bill. ALU is working to improve the lives of the 1250+ graduate assistants employed at the University of Hawaii and gain recognition for the work we do.

HB1651 will amend HRS 89-6 to create bargaining unit 15 for graduate assistants and provide a conflict resolution mechanism for said bargaining unit that is consistent with other units representing workers employed at the University of Hawaii. This will enable graduate assistants to organize for the purposes of collective bargaining.

The majority of teaching assistants (GTA) are in charge of teaching their own classes. They do all the grading and lecturing, as well as design the syllabus and manage the classroom. Our research assistants (GRA) are often working on multiple independent projects, performing cutting-edge research, at the direction of an assigned supervisor. Other graduate assistants (GA) are working in administrative offices and running key facilities, performing the same duties as any administrative office worker. Many GAs in fact work as replacements for positions that were once performed by better-paid, unionized faculty.

Article 13 Section 2 of the Hawaii State Constitution states “Persons in public employment shall have the right to organize for the purpose of collective bargaining as provided by law.” Graduate assistants in every role meet the common-law test’s criteria for employment as well as the so-called ABC test’s criteria. Graduate Assistants do not control their own hours and have employment taxes withheld from their State of Hawaii issued paychecks. graduate assistants are required to attend trainings and undergo periodic evaluations. A graduate assistant’s supervisor, often a University recognized employee, controls the means and manner in which a graduate assistant carries out their work. Graduate assistants further qualify as employees under HRS 377-1 and HRS 377-4.6(C). They are recognized as employees by National Labor Relations Board, the State of Hawaii, and the University of Hawaii. It is clear that graduate assistants have a constitutionally guaranteed civil right to organize for the purposes of collective bargaining. (Hawaii. Const. art XIII, sex. 2)

In August 2016, the National Labor Relations Board reversed a Bush-era decision that had prevented graduate assistants at private universities from engaging in collective bargaining. They found that it “deprived an entire category of workers of the protections of the Act without



# Academic Labor United

[www.academiclaborunited.org](http://www.academiclaborunited.org)

a convincing justification.” (National Labor Relations Board, 2016) We are now seeing unions form at private universities such as Columbia University, Harvard University, and many more.

There are currently 33 graduate assistant unions at public universities in the United States. They include the University of California System, University of Oregon, University of Iowa, University of Washington, University of Illinois Chicago, and many more. ([CGEU, 2018](#)) Graduate assistant unions have existed for 50 years. We are not seeking to depart from the norm. Collective bargaining for graduate assistants has become the norm.

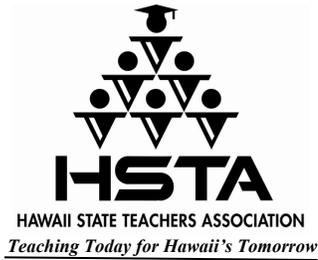
While executive management has argued that they are better at handling workplace issues than organized workers, they have consistently failed to obtain any wage increases for graduate assistants while organized workers represented by a union have received wage increases. The combination of stagnant wages well below the minimum cost of living, zero job security, and the absence of basic benefits like sick, medical, and parental leave, make the University of Hawaii uncompetitive when it comes to recruiting and retaining graduate students.

Graduate assistants are denied paid sick days, medical leave, and parental leave. (University of Hawaii, 2016) According to a recent campus climate survey one in six graduate students at UH experiences sexual harassment. (Loui et al. 36) Additionally, their harassers were significantly more likely to be employees at the university in positions of greater authority than others surveyed. (Loui et al. 38) Graduate assistants have not received a pay raise since 2004 while executive management have continued to see raises. Graduate assistants lack recourse when faced with administrative decisions that jeopardize their wellbeing and safety. They have no formal protection guaranteeing their right to free inquiry and expression. These are issues that unions have had ample success resolving.

Graduate assistants are an integral part of the UH system and the local economy. While attending UH, we constitute a committed learning community, conduct important research, and perform a substantial proportion of teaching and administrative duties. Unfortunately, we are poorly compensated and are vulnerable to capricious and arbitrary behavior by our employer. As individuals, we stand little chance of success in demanding better treatment and compensation, and the long history of failed attempts at improvements proves this to be true. Our best hope for improving our own situations, then, is to come together and collectively bargain for a better university. **For these reasons, we strongly urge you to support HB1277.**

Sources:

1. Hawaii. Const. art. XIII. sec. 2
2. "NLRB.gov" *Board: Student Assistants Covered by the NLRA / NLRB*. N.p.,n.d, Web. 23 Jan. 2018.
3. "Coalition of Graduate Employee Unions." *United States- Coalition of Graduate Employee Unions*. [www.thecgeu.org/wiki/United\\_States](http://www.thecgeu.org/wiki/United_States).
4. "Executive Policy EP 5.223, Graduate Assistants." University of Hawaii. <https://www.hawaii.edu/policy/index.php?action=viewPolicy&policySection=ep&policyChapter=5&policyNumber=223&menuView=closed>. n.d. Web Jan 23 2018
5. Loui, Patricia, et al. *REPORT ON UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII'S STUDENT CAMPUS CLIMATE SURVEY ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE*. Omni Trak Group, 2018.



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

Corey Rosenlee  
President  
Justin Hughey  
Vice President  
Amy Perruso  
Secretary-Treasurer  
Wilbert Holck  
Executive Director

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
HIGHER EDUCATION

RE: HB 1651, HOUSE DRAFT 1 - RELATING TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2018

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT  
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair McKelvey and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association **supports HB 1651, HD 1**, relating to collective bargaining.

Collective bargaining is a human right. 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 human 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.



---

Aloha Chair McKelvey, Vice Chair Hashem, members of the House Committee on Higher Education,

On behalf of the nearly 600 registered members of the Hawai'i chapter of the Young Progressives Demanding Action (YPDA), many of whom are students and student laborers, I would like to express my **strong support** for this bill. YPDA supports the basic human right of all workers to unionize. While graduate assistants are still technically students, it is undeniable that they labor in production of vital research, teaching outcomes and administrative duties.

In the past few years, an increasing amount of work previously performed by unionized faculty is being performed by graduate labor instead, for lower pay and less freedom. As wages have stagnated and the cost of living continues to rise, they have formed Academic Labor United as an organizing vehicle, but it's time for the state to recognize their basic human right to unionize.

Article 23 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights states:

- Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
- Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
- Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
- **Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.**

The privatization of our public university institutions has resulted in a declining cycle of budget cuts and rising tuition that puts more strain on graduate student workers by simultaneously requiring more labor from them for stagnating wages, while also costing them more out of pocket to obtain their degree. It is high time we afford these hardworking young people the right to collectively bargain for better pay, benefits and working conditions.

YPDA stands with Academic Labor United in support of HB1651.

Please support this bill and continue to advocate for it throughout the session.

Mahalo,

Will Caron  
Social Justice Action Committee Chair  
8083874920



AMERICANS FOR DEMOCRATIC ACTION

---

| OFFICERS                     | DIRECTORS      |                  |               | MAILING ADDRESS |
|------------------------------|----------------|------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| John Bickel, President       | Guy Archer     | Jan Lubin        | Cameron Sato  | P.O. Box 23404  |
| Alan Burdick, Vice President | Juliet Begley  | Jenny Nomura     | George Simson | Honolulu        |
| Marsha Schweitzer, Treasurer | Gloria Borland | Stephen O'Harrow |               | Hawai'i 96823   |
| Karin Gill, Secretary        | Chuck Huxel    | Doug Pyle        |               |                 |

---

February 2 , 2018

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

RE: HB1651 HD1 Relating to Collective Bargaining

Support for hearing on Feb. 6

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 HB 1651 as it would establish a collective bargaining unit for full-time graduate student assistants employed by the University of Hawaii. The history of the betterment of workers is the history of unionization. Unionization of graduate students gives them a voice and some collective power to improve their status and thereby improve the university experience for themselves as well as the professors and students they serve. Graduate students are being exploited by a system that is giving them sub-minimum wages that grew out of prior practices in which grad students previously did occasional work that might justifiably allow for less than optimum compensation. It is time to give them a path to justice. .

Thank you for your favorable consideration.

Sincerely,

John Bickel  
President

**HB1651 HD1- Testifiers in support**

Patricia Sendao

McLean Worsham

Will Cecil

Henryk Szadziewski

Heidi Needham

Lelia Merrin

Elise Dela Cruz-Talbert

Adaure Dawson

Brian Dawson

Bryant De Venecia

Janet Graham

Tyler Greenhill

Michelle Brown

Dawn Hoewaa

Halena Kapuni-Reynolds

Randy Gonce

Kim Compoc

David Stupplebeen

Carrie Bach

Cameron Ahia

Jamaica Osorio

Justin Keliipaakaua

Kerry Long

Hunter Heavilin

Randy Ching

Veerle van Wijk

Daniel Flores

Van Wishingrad

Erika Ruppelius

Elaine Luo

Kawehi Kina

Nicole Woo

Cameron Ahia

Kahala Johnson

Don Krasky

Georgia Fredeluces

Chantell Ballaan  
Michael Hinchman  
Nathaneil Wehr  
Kirsten Moy  
Christian Zavata  
Ross Viliger  
Samantha Pilgrim  
Jill Adams  
Katie Taladay  
Alex Miller  
Kaitlin Hill  
Hilary Gould  
Christi Trask  
Vania Filipa Lima Fernandes  
Mary Baker  
Joy Enomoto  
Orjana Lubura-Winchester  
Nate Hix  
Christopher Gray  
Kyle Kajihiro  
Brian Crow  
Ya-chu Chang  
Kevin Landers  
Celina Herrera  
Laura Williams  
Kristen Harmon  
Jacob Henry  
Don Krasky  
Sitara Pelecanda  
Michael Inouye  
Ida Peric  
Kate Feloy  
Rachel Wade  
Rhianna Shaheen  
Mirza Uzair Baig  
Justin Jansen  
Eric Dilley

James McDonough  
Amy Perruso  
Aaron Friedman  
Jun Shin  
Caleigh Bird  
Nathan Yuen  
Nicole Woo Nicholas Chagnon  
Brett Jones  
Timothy Zhu  
Julie Zill  
Wesley Sparagon  
Elizabeth Monaghan  
Noam Atlman-Kurosaki  
Narissa Spies  
Chelsie Counsell  
Ashley McGuigan  
Michael Hoban  
Florybeth La Valle  
Tiffany Lum  
Laura Damiani  
Nicole Chatterson  
Evan Barba  
Jessica Schaefer  
Rachel Dacks  
Kate Chikasuye  
Anela Akiona  
Nanea Lo

**From:** Patricia Sendao <noreply@jotform.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 5, 2018 10:20 AM  
**To:** academiclaborunited@gmail.com; HEDtestimony  
**Subject:** In Support of HB1651



**Testimony in support of HB1651**

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Name                  | Patricia Sendao  |
| Position/Organization | GA/UH Manoa  |
| Email                 | sendao@hawaii.edu  |
| Testimony Message     | <p>House Committee on Higher Education<br/>Conference Room 309<br/>Chair: Rep. Angus McKelvey<br/>Vice Chair: Rep. Mark Hashem<br/>Tuesday, February 6, 2018 at 2:10 pm</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. I write in strong support of HB1651. HB1651, if passed, will create a new bargaining unit, 15, for graduate assistants in Hawaii. At some point every undergraduate student is taught by a graduate teaching assistant; graduate research assistants advance scientific frontiers; and graduate administrative assistants run key facilities on campus. The university increasingly 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.</p> <p>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</p> |

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. 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 led the way in breaking ground in supporting public sector unions. For the cutting-edge research and instruction graduate assistants do, the ability to collectively bargain over compensation, benefits, and working conditions is essential and long overdue. I urge you to pass HB1651.

Attending Hearing? Yes

You can [edit this submission](#) and [view all your submissions](#) easily.

**HB-1651-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/4/2018 7:30:53 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/6/2018 2:10:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Justin Keliipaakaua |                     | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

**HB-1651-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/4/2018 7:57:28 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/6/2018 2:10:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Theresa Chen        |                     | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

I am currently a graduate student at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, in the final semester of my Master's of Social Work program at the Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work. While I myself am not a graduate assistant, many of my friends are. Many of them would not be able to afford a graduate education without the tuition waiver many graduate assistantships offer.

Because of their status as students, it is often easy to forget that graduate students are in fact cheap labor. Currently, the base salary for graduate assistants University of Hawai'i at Manoa is \$17,500, just over half of the calculated living wage for a single adult in Hawai'i. At this time, UH Manoa has over 1,200 graduate student assistants who labor as research, administrative, and of course, teaching assistants.

The work these 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 have 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.

Even so, graduate student assistants at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa do not have representation or a formal mechanism to pursue grievances should they need to do so. These deficiencies leave graduate student assistants vulnerable to abuse, for which they have no legal recourse.

For these reasons, I support HB1651 HD1, which seeks to allow graduate student assistants in Hawai'i to form a collective bargaining unit. Graduate students should have the right to represent and advocate for themselves. Research has shown that unionized graduate assistants report higher levels of personal and professional support and of higher pay, resulting in improved educational outcomes. Faculty report that unionization at their institutions does not hinder their ability to instruct, advise, or mentor. In the last 50 years, more than 30 officially recognized graduate student unions have been established at both private and public universities in states such as California, Oregon, Washington, New York, Illinois, Montana, Massachusetts, and Iowa. This list should

include Hawai'i. I urge you to support the rights of graduate student assistants and to pass HB1651 HD1.

**HB-1651-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/4/2018 8:50:42 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/6/2018 2:10:00 PM

| Submitted By   | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|----------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Diliaur Tellei |              | Support            | No                 |

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of HB 1651.

As a graduate student, the ability of grad students to join their collective voices to bargain directly with university admin would have a direct impact on my life. Not only would it help to address the issue of inadequate compensation (for the value that we as graduate assistants provide the university), but it would also give a voice & support system to graduate students who end up at odds with the administration, their supervisors, their professors, etc. The university may have committed to an inclusive, respectful place of work and study on paper, but I know of too many situations where graduate students have been wronged (or are currently being wronged) and have little to no recourse as there is not an effective enough grievance process or they perceive that they will stand alone without support. This is how abuse is perpetuated in situations of unequal power distribution. Giving graduate students a voice in the form of their peers evens the playing field and creates a more supportive, egalitarian environment in which grad students are more likely to thrive.

PUBLIC HEARING TESTIMONY  
SUPPORTING HOUSE BILL 1651, HOUSE DRAFT 1 - RELATING TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION  
Representative Angus L.K. McKelvey, Chair  
Representative Mark J. Hashem, Vice Chair

Tuesday, February 6, 2018  
2:10 PM  
Conference Room 309  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street

To the House Committee on Higher Education:

Mahalo for taking the time to hear this bill, which will strengthen our public flagship university in Hawaii.

During my time in a PhD program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, I had the benefit of a strong collective bargaining unit for graduate assistants. Certainly, our union made our benefit package stronger, but it also introduced us to the union experience while we were still in graduate school. At the time, it never occurred to me that other universities would not have collective bargaining for graduate assistants, but I am aware of it now in my home state.

Graduate assistantships are far too scarce at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, and those which do exist certainly are not competitive for the sake of recruiting talented graduate students. Slim compensation packages are only one part of the problems UH faces with recruiting talented students, but allowing collective bargaining can begin to improve the way we treat graduate students and thus improve our recruiting efforts. The more talent we have at our public flagship university, the stronger our state will be. This bill can help slow the brain drain.

When I began my PhD program, I remember having orientation with all the faculty, getting keys to my new office, and spending time with union representatives. The union representatives taught us about our rights and their role in our graduate student experience. This experience with collective bargaining during graduate school helped prepare me for my experiences now with a collective bargaining unit in my permanent, full-time position here in Hawaii. When I began interacting with my union for this job, I was more confident and comfortable with the process, and I am getting a lot more out of it than I did the first time. That experience in graduate school primed me for my future.

Please support collective bargaining for graduate assistants at the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

Mahalo nui loa,

Justin Salisbury  
1617 Kapiolani Boulevard  
Apartment 1402  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814

*"Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire."* - William Butler Yeats

**From:** Tom Iwanicki <noreply@jotform.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 5, 2018 12:11 PM  
**To:** academiclaborunited@gmail.com; HEDtestimony  
**Subject:** In Support of HB1651



**Testimony in support of HB1651**

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Name                  | Tom Iwanicki   |
| Position/Organization | ALU Member, GSO Employment & Compensation Chair  |
| Email                 | iwanicki@hawaii.edu  |
| Address               | Postal / Zip Code: 96816   |
| Testimony Message     | House Committee on Higher Education<br>Conference Room 309<br>Chair: Rep. Angus McKelvey<br>Vice Chair: Rep. Mark Hashem<br>Tuesday, February 6, 2018 at 2:10 pm |

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. I write in strong support of HB1651. HB1651, if passed, will create a new bargaining unit, 15, for graduate assistants in Hawaii. At some point every undergraduate student is taught by a graduate teaching assistant; graduate research assistants advance scientific frontiers; and graduate administrative assistants run key facilities on campus. The university increasingly 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.

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. 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.

Collectively bargained wages and benefits will alleviate much of the financial burden experienced by graduate assistants and provide an incentive for graduate assistants to pursue teaching positions at UH. In the life sciences, teaching assistant wages are set by University and are significantly lower than federally funded research assistant wages, providing a strong disincentive for passionate teaching assistants to continue teaching to the detriment of undergraduate education at UH.

Hawaii led the way in breaking ground in supporting public sector unions. For the cutting-edge research and instruction graduate assistants do, the ability to collectively bargain over compensation, benefits, and working conditions is essential and long overdue. I urge you to pass HB1651.

|                    |     |
|--------------------|-----|
| Attending Hearing? | Yes |
|--------------------|-----|

You can [edit this submission](#) and [view all your submissions](#) easily.

REPRESENTATIVE Angus L.K. McKelvey  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Taylor Lewis

Graduate Student Organization (University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa)

301-219-0244

Tuesday, February 6, 2018

Support for H.B. No. 1651, Relating to Collective Bargaining

I am writing in strong support of HB1651, which would allow graduate students in Hawai‘i to create a collective bargaining unit. My work with the Graduate Student Organization at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa has always been centered on listening to and supporting students. Often those conversations start with the stress that we are facing and end with us running off to some duty, or to recover from a busy day. While we might have not known exactly what graduate school would be like before enrolling, we knew that there would be a lot of work. What most of us did not expect was that the act of surviving would be one of those burdens.

For most of my life, I saw graduate school as something too complicated and intangible to be a reality. That changed after seeing the kind of research students were doing, and realizing that one could get paid and have tuition covered through a graduate assistantship. The former uncomplicated graduate school for me, while the latter made it tangible. I could go back to school without adding to my \$30,000 of debt from my undergraduate experience.

I have been fortunate enough to be supported by my department at UH-Mānoa. But though my department may have good intentions, my salary must be supplemented in so many diverse ways that I cannot give a clear number on how many jobs I maintain. I have been fortunate enough to work in a supportive environment, but it seems not a day has gone by without hearing about another student’s mistreatment.

Allowing graduate student assistants the possibility of unionization is not just so that we can get paid more—though the cost of living in Hawai‘i and declining graduate student enrollment at UH-Mānoa suggests that we should. Most of us are used to scrapping to get by. But there is always a sense of shock from students when they tell me about having to fight for the compensation they were promised, or to not be punished for not working because of a health emergency, or having to endure an abusive supervisor for the sake of their education. Graduate student assistants are suffering from abuse at this very moment, and every delay in denying them their rights as workers is an affront to their dignity as human beings.

Collective bargaining for graduate student assistants is beneficial not just for us students. We advertise and advocate for this university whenever we talk to our families and friends—some of whom are considering enrolling here. Through empowering its students, the university empowers

itself. Because of my love for what this university has given me, I urge the committee to pass HB1651. Thank you for accepting my testimony.

**HB-1651-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/5/2018 12:39:22 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/6/2018 2:10:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b>        | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Melodie Aduja       | OCC Legislative Priorities | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

**LATE**

**HB-1651-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/5/2018 2:22:37 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/6/2018 2:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

**From:** Erika Johnston <noreply@jotform.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 5, 2018 8:34 PM  
**To:** academiclaborunited@gmail.com; HEDtestimony  
**Subject:** In Support of HB1651



 **Testimony in support of HB1651**

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Name                  | Erika Johnston   |
| Position/Organization | Graduate Student   |
| Email                 | erikacj@hawaii.edu   |
| Testimony Message     | <p>House Committee on Higher Education<br/>Conference Room 309<br/>Chair: Rep. Angus McKelvey<br/>Vice Chair: Rep. Mark Hashem<br/>Tuesday, February 6, 2018 at 2:10 pm</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. I write in strong support of HB1651. HB1651, if passed, will create a new bargaining unit, 15, for graduate assistants in Hawaii. At some point every undergraduate student is taught by a graduate teaching assistant; graduate research assistants advance scientific frontiers; and graduate administrative assistants run key facilities on campus. The university increasingly 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.</p> <p>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</p> |

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. 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 led the way in breaking ground in supporting public sector unions. For the cutting-edge research and instruction graduate assistants do, the ability to collectively bargain over compensation, benefits, and working conditions is essential and long overdue. I urge you to pass HB1651.

You can [edit this submission](#) and [view all your submissions](#) easily.

**From:** Lisa Grandinetti <noreply@jotform.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 5, 2018 6:21 PM  
**To:** academiclaborunited@gmail.com; HEDtestimony  
**Subject:** In Support of HB1651



**Testimony in support of HB1651**

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Name                  | Lisa Grandinetti   |
| Position/Organization | Organizer at UNITE HERE Local 5  |
| Email                 | lisanakagrand@gmail.com  |
| Testimony Message     | <p>House Committee on Higher Education<br/>Conference Room 309<br/>Chair: Rep. Angus McKelvey<br/>Vice Chair: Rep. Mark Hashem<br/>Tuesday, February 6, 2018 at 2:10 pm</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. I write in strong support of HB1651. HB1651, if passed, will create a new bargaining unit, 15, for graduate assistants in Hawaii. At some point every undergraduate student is taught by a graduate teaching assistant; graduate research assistants advance scientific frontiers; and graduate administrative assistants run key facilities on campus. The university increasingly 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.</p> <p>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</p> |

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. 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 led the way in breaking ground in supporting public sector unions. For the cutting-edge research and instruction graduate assistants do, the ability to collectively bargain over compensation, benefits, and working conditions is essential and long overdue. I urge you to pass HB1651.

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Attending Hearing? | No  |
| Optional           | I permit ALU to use excerpts of my testimony on social media. |

You can [edit this submission](#) and [view all your submissions](#) easily.

**From:** Kelsie Okamura <noreply@jotform.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 6, 2018 8:44 AM  
**To:** academiclaborunited@gmail.com; HEDtestimony  
**Subject:** In Support of HB1651

**LATE**



**Testimony in support of HB1651**

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Name              | Kelsie Okamura   |
| Email             | kelsie.h.okamura@gmail.com   |
| Testimony Message | House Committee on Higher Education<br>Conference Room 309<br>Chair: Rep. Angus McKelvey<br>Vice Chair: Rep. Mark Hashem<br>Tuesday, February 6, 2018 at 2:10 pm |

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. I write in strong support of HB1651. HB1651, if passed, will create a new bargaining unit, 15, for graduate assistants in Hawaii.

Personally, I have had the experience of not being protected by a bargaining unit when taking unpaid leave for the birth of my first child. Because graduate students were not protected, my application for Temporary Disability Insurance was denied because we were not considered actual staff of the University. This caused considerable hardship for myself and family.

At some point every undergraduate student is taught by a graduate teaching assistant; graduate research assistants advance scientific frontiers; and graduate administrative assistants run key facilities on campus. The university increasingly 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.

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. 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 led the way in breaking ground in supporting public sector unions. For the cutting-edge research and instruction graduate assistants do, the ability to collectively bargain over compensation, benefits, and working conditions is essential and long overdue. I urge you to pass HB1651.

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Attending Hearing? | No  |
| Optional           | I permit ALU to use excerpts of my testimony on social media. |

You can [edit this submission](#) and [view all your submissions](#) easily.

**From:** Yvonne Barkley <noreply@jotform.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 6, 2018 8:48 AM  
**To:** academiclaborunited@gmail.com; HEDtestimony  
**Subject:** In Support of HB1651



**Testimony in support of HB1651**

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Name                  | Yvonne Barkley  |
| Position/Organization | graduate assistant/UH Manoa   |
| Email                 | ybarkley@hawaii.edu   |
| Testimony Message     | <p>House Committee on Higher Education<br/>Conference Room 309<br/>Chair: Rep. Angus McKelvey<br/>Vice Chair: Rep. Mark Hashem<br/>Tuesday, February 6, 2018 at 2:10 pm</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. I strongly support HB1651 since we, UH graduate assistants, work extremely hard on world-class research for low wages while dealing with Hawaii's expensive cost-of-living. HB1651, if passed, will create a new bargaining unit, 15, for graduate assistants in Hawaii and provide us the necessary support afforded to all other staff and faculty on campus.</p> <p>At some point every undergraduate student is taught by a graduate teaching assistant; graduate research assistants advance scientific frontiers; and graduate administrative assistants run key facilities on campus. The university increasingly 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</p> |

pursuing grievances.

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. 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 led the way in breaking ground in supporting public sector unions. For the cutting-edge research and instruction graduate assistants do, the ability to collectively bargain over compensation, benefits, and working conditions is essential and long overdue. I urge you to pass HB1651.

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Attending Hearing? | No  |
| Optional           | I permit ALU to use excerpts of my testimony on social media. |

You can [edit this submission](#) and [view all your submissions](#) easily.

**From:** Michele Cantwell <noreply@jotform.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 6, 2018 12:04 PM  
**To:** academiclaborunited@gmail.com; HEDtestimony  
**Subject:** In Support of HB1651

 Testimony in support of HB1651

**Name** Michele Cantwell  
**Position/Organization** Graduate Student/Lecturer  
**Email** mncantwe@hawaii.edu  
**Address** Street Address: 45-776 Kamehameha Hwy  
 Street Address Line 2: C  
 City: Kaneohe  
 State / Province: HI  
 Postal / Zip Code: 96744  
 Country: United States

**Testimony Message** House Committee on Higher Education  
 Conference Room 309  
 Chair: Rep. Angus McKelvey  
 Vice Chair: Rep. Mark Hashem  
 Tuesday, February 6, 2018 at 2:10 pm

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. I write in strong support of HB1651. HB1651, if passed, will create a new bargaining unit, 15, for graduate assistants in Hawaii.

This is a human rights issue, a public health issue, and an issue to bolster the strength of the institutions of education. Graduate assistants cannot currently stay home if sick, cannot bargain on their own behalf, and cannot function the way regular faculty are allowed to function, though they are required to fulfill the much of the same duties in research and class instruction. I personally have worked through cancer treatments and have been very ill while teaching, while performing research, and while serving faculty in my capacity as a research assistant. My choice has prolonged my recovery time from cancer treatments, but with no sick leave, or even personal or sick days off, I would have had to go without pay to take time off for cancer treatments. I barely make enough to pay rent and the cover the cost of my scans, for which

my insurance through the school does not cover, that any reduction in pay due to taking a sick day would have resulted in my loss of housing. I have been homeless before as a graduate student assistant. This period lasted for nine months and was due to an error in pay dates and paperwork. I was told I had no rights to ask for the money I was owed even though such a delay in payment goes against state and Federal labor laws. An ability to bargain or simply an advocate would have saved me significant pain and suffering due to an institutional error.

At some point every undergraduate student is taught by a graduate teaching assistant; graduate research assistants advance scientific frontiers; and graduate administrative assistants run key facilities on campus. The university increasingly 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.

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. 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 led the way in breaking ground in supporting

public sector unions. For the cutting-edge research and instruction graduate assistants do, the ability to collectively bargain over compensation, benefits, and working conditions is essential and long overdue. I urge you to pass HB1651.

Attending Hearing?

No

Optional

I permit ALU to use excerpts of my testimony on social media.

You can [edit this submission](#) and [view all your submissions](#) easily.

# LATE TESTIMONY

## HB1651 – These individuals have provided the attached testimony:

1. Michele Cantwell
2. Devin Barney
3. Puanani Hee
4. Benton Rodden
5. Timothy Martin
6. Matthew Milette-Winfrey
7. Kathleen Tatem
8. Yvonne Barkley
9. Kelsie Okamura
10. Erika Johnston
11. Lisa Grandinetti