



**TESTIMONY OF  
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA  
THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE, 2023**

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**ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:**

S.B. NO. 1151, RELATING TO THE HAWAII COMMUNITY COLLEGE PROMISE PROGRAM.

**BEFORE THE:**

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

**DATE:** Thursday, February 9, 2023      **TIME:** 3:00 p.m.

**LOCATION:** State Capitol, Room 229

**TESTIFIER(S):** Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or  
Candace J. Park, Deputy Attorney General

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Chair Kim and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General provides the following comments.

The purpose of the bill is to ensure access to Hawaii Community College Promise Program funding by exempting certificate program students from the requirement to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid each academic year.

Section 6 of article X of the Hawai'i State Constitution gives the Board of Regents of the University of Hawai'i "exclusive jurisdiction over the internal structure, management, and operation of the university." Section 6 further provides: "[t]his section shall not limit the power of the legislature to enact laws of statewide concern. The legislature shall have the exclusive jurisdiction to identify laws of statewide concern." If the Committee decides to pass this bill, we recommend an amendment that adds a statement identifying this bill as a law of statewide concern.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.



The Committee on Higher Education  
February 9, 2023, 3:00 PM  
Room 229 & Videoconference

RE: **SB 1151, Relating to the Hawaii Community College Promise Program**

Attention: Chair Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair Michelle Kidani and Members of the  
Committee

The University of Hawaii Professional Assembly (UHPA) appreciates the opportunity to testify in **support of SB 1151**, Relating to Hawaii Community College Promise Program.

This bill ensures wider access to the Hawai'i Promise Program for community college students in certificate programs through the waiver of federal requirements, and will enable more families the opportunity to enroll in community college and acquire the skills necessary to enter the workforce.

Certificate programs enable individuals to attain practical experience focused on the skills and knowledge needed for a specific job, opening the door to gainful employment. The absence of general education courses required in degree programs means it takes less time and money to complete certificate programs. As a community, we have witnessed the difficulties Hawai'i residents faced during the Covid-19 pandemic, and the thousands of jobs that were lost. During the Covid shutdown, over 11,600 Hawai'i residents studied and received certificates from our University of Hawai'i community colleges. This impactful movement enables families to enter the workforce with practicable training that can be built on to advance in the workplace and further educational opportunities.

Respectfully submitted

Christian L. Fern  
Executive Director  
University of Hawaii Professional Assembly

University of Hawaii  
Professional Assembly

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# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## ‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

### Legislative Testimony

### Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

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Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Higher Education  
Thursday, February 9, 2023, at 3:00 p.m.

By

Della Teraoka, Interim Associate Vice President for Community Colleges  
University of Hawai'i System

#### SB 1151 – RELATING TO THE HAWAII COMMUNITY COLLEGE PROMISE PROGRAM

Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i supports the intent of SB 1151, which ensures access to Hawai'i Promise program funding by exempting certificate program students from the requirement to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) each academic year to be considered eligible for the Hawai'i Promise program.

The Hawai'i Promise program has demonstrated its value and benefit to students pursuing degree programs at the University of Hawai'i Community Colleges (UHCC). For students who are interested in pursuing a post-graduate certificate program, the requirement of completing the FAFSA to be considered eligible for the Hawai'i Promise scholarship may be a barrier to some students, including students with developmental disabilities. Exempting students pursuing a certificate program, credit or non-credit, from completing the FAFSA each academic year can ensure access to those students pursuing their educational goals with a shorter certificate program. Hawai'i Promise is an important tool directly benefiting Hawai'i's families otherwise least able to afford higher education.

The UHCC is committed to creating an application form for students exempted from completing the FAFSA and using the Hawai'i Promise scholarship to cover full direct costs as there would be no ability to determine "unmet need" without the completed FAFSA.

The University of Hawai'i supports the intent of SB 1151, on the condition its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our BOR Approved Budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 1151.



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
STATE COUNCIL  
ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES  
1010 RICHARDS STREET, Room 122  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
TELEPHONE: (808) 586-8100 FAX: (808) 586-7543  
February 9, 2023

The Honorable Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair  
Senate Committee on Higher Education  
The Thirty-Second Legislature  
State Capitol  
State of Hawai'i  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Senator Kim and Committee Members:

**SUBJECT: SB1151 RELATING TO THE HAWAII COMMUNITY COLLEGE PROMISE PROGRAM.**

The Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities **STRONGLY SUPPORTS SB1151**, which exempts students who are enrolled in certificate programs from the requirement to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid each academic year to be considered eligible for the Hawaii Community College Promise Program.

We support a Self Advocacy Advisory Council with over 200 individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD). By talking with them, we have learned, the ones who attended higher education, did it on a half-time basis. The majority enrolled in certificate programs. When we asked if they applied for the Promise Program, some stated they had not, because they had to first complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, which they thought they could not apply for it because they weren't enrolled full-time at the Community College. While the other self-advocates expressed, the process to apply for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid was too hard.

Eliminating the need to apply for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid if the student would only qualify for the Promise Program and by expanding the Promise Program to certificate programs allows I/DD individuals to participate in a program that is more flexible and teaches practical, applicable skills. This encourages our I/DD community to gain employment skills, and promotes independence. This measure would increase the opportunity for our population to better integrate and participate in the community through achieving higher education. As well as, reducing the cost of community college would positively impact our I/DD population. The I/DD community often desires to attend higher education programs but cannot due to their financial circumstances.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **strong support of SB1151.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dainty Bantua".

Daintry Bartoldus  
Executive Administrator

Higher Education Committee  
The Hawaii State Senate  
415 S Beretania St.  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: SUPPORT SB1151

Feb 7, 2023

Aloha Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and esteemed members of the Higher Education Committee,

My name is Erika Molyneux, and I am a resident of Kaneohe and an instructor, Legislative Relations Committee Chair, and faculty senate member at Leeward Community College in Pearl City. I am writing as an individual in support of [SB1151](#), relating to expanding eligibility of the University of Hawai'i Promise Program. I also urge you to support the bill.

Strengthening access to community college is essential to delivering the promise of a higher education to all Hawai'i residents. Too often, the cost of college tuition remains unattainable to working families, many of whom are experiencing financial hardship. Community colleges empower students to develop the skills needed to diversify our economy and build a sustainable future. As I understand it, students in certificate programs are not eligible for Federal financial aid like those seeking degrees, meaning filling out a FAFSA will not result in funding for these students. Community college certificate programs provide learners with valuable knowledge, experience, and skills that ready them for the workforce. Eliminating the requirement for certificate-seeking students to file a FAFSA in order to be awarded University of Hawai'i Promise Program funds, will eliminate barriers to college funding.

For these reasons and more, please vote in SUPPORT to [SB1151](#).

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Erika Molyneux', written in a cursive style.

Erika Molyneux