



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented to the
House Committee on Higher Education & Technology
Friday, February 9, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.

by

Vassilis L. Syrmos
Vice President for Research and Innovation
University of Hawai'i System

SB 1511 SD2 – RELATING TO THE RESEARCH CORPORATION OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i (UH) appreciates the Hawai'i State Legislature's intent to provide more clarity to the purpose and scope of the Research Corporation of the University of Hawai'i (RCUH) via SB 1511 SD2.

Over the last three years, a task force/working group of UH and RCUH representatives have diligently examined the entire operation and have implemented the necessary changes to Board of Regents, executive and administrative procedures that clarifies RCUH's purpose and relationship to UH. With these steps already underway, UH feels this proposed legislation is not necessary.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.



**TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY
February 9, 2024, 2:00 p.m.**

SB1511 – RELATING TO THE RESEARCH CORPORATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the Committee:

The Research Corporation of the University of Hawai'i (RCUH) respectfully opposes Senate Bill 1511 as we do not feel that the proposed changes are necessary and/or appropriate at this time.

RCUH has been working with the Senate Committee on Higher Education (HRE) on their concerns for approximately three years. RCUH is committed to supporting UH and the State of Hawai'i, to the best of our abilities, while ensuring our work is in line with our mission and statute. We would also be more than happy to meet to discuss and address any issues or concerns this committee may have relating to this bill.

We respect the Legislature's viewpoints and the intention of this Act, but the suggested changes are concerning as we strongly believe these changes to the statute would create unintended consequences and hardship for our research community, which is bringing in record-breaking extramural awards (over the past three years) that boost our state's economy. We must remember that RCUH was created to enhance research by hiring personnel and procuring goods for research projects in an expeditious and efficient manner, not create more administrative burdens and barriers that are typical with many state agencies. We therefore ask that you allow RCUH to continue to work with UH and the respective bargaining units to determine the most appropriate path forward to support Hawai'i's research community.

Finally, if changes to the statute are deemed necessary by the Legislature, I respectfully submit that this must be accomplished through a transparent and collaborative effort with all interested parties at the table. There is too much at risk to make hasty changes without first giving these issues the time and careful evaluation it needs in order to be a positive change for our research community.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer written testimony on this measure. I will be available for any questions or concerns that anyone may have.

Sincerely,

Leonard R. Gouveia, Jr.
Executive Director



HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION
AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

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

The Thirty-Second Legislature, State of Hawaii
The House of Representatives
Committee on Higher Education and Technology

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association

February 9, 2024

S.B. 1511, S.D.2 — RELATING TO THE RESEARCH CORPORATION OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII.

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO strongly supports the intent of S.B. 1511, S.D. 2 which clarifies the purpose of the Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii and limits its activities to acts that are reasonably necessary to carry out its purpose.

The Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii (RCUH) was founded to promote, encourage, develop, and conduct scientific research and investigations in all branches of learning with the intent to disseminate that information to the public. To accomplish this, RCUH was exempted from a variety of state laws regarding reimbursement of funds and granted flexibility in hiring personnel. Since its creation in 1965, RCUH has expanded its scope beyond the original intent and, at times, abused the hiring process of personnel that should be included in a respective bargaining unit. Therefore, we find it necessary that the Corporation's actions are properly aligned with its purpose, and that a consultative process is established.

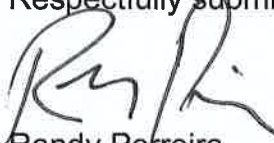
Therefore, we respectfully request a proposed amendment to restore the original language in S.B. 1511, Section 2(c) which states:

"For each state project or program involving the research corporation and each project or program involving the research corporation and a state employee, the university shall consult with the exclusive representative of the appropriate bargaining unit to review conformance of positions with exceptions to collective bargaining. The corporation shall not supplant civil service employees, and if any civil service employees or programs actively employ civil service employees, the corporation shall provide justification to the governor for each civil service position accepted, list the program affected in its next report to the legislature, and obtain approval from the governor prior to hiring."

We look forward to working with the University on this new process to ensure work, that is customarily and historically performed by the public sector, is returned to the public sector.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on S.B. 1511, S.D. 2.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Randy Perreira
Executive Director

SB-1511-SD-2

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 6:24:19 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/9/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mark Yap	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and Esteemed Committee Members,

I am writing to express my **support for SB1511 SD2, SSCR1022**, and specifically highlight the significance of Section 2, (c). This section, which grants the exclusive representative the authority to review RCUH position descriptions, addresses a critical issue that has persisted for far too long.

Over the years, the University has unfortunately witnessed a substantial number of long-term RCUH employees who should rightfully have been included in a bargaining unit. Section 2, (c) serves as a crucial correction to rectify this historical injustice that has spanned more than two decades. By enshrining this revision into law, we take a vital step toward ensuring fairness and equity in employment practices.

Your affirmative vote in favor of this bill is an opportunity to put an end to the persistent oversight and exclusion of deserving individuals from unionized positions. The positive impact of this legislation will not only be felt by the affected employees but will also contribute to fostering a just and inclusive work environment.

I implore each of you to champion this cause by voting to approve the bill and advancing it to the next stage. By doing so, you play a pivotal role in halting the continued erosion of workers' rights and reinforcing the principles of fairness and justice within our institutions.

Mahalo for your thoughtful consideration and commitment to promoting a more equitable and harmonious workplace.

Mahalo,

Mark Yap

SB-1511-SD-2

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 11:42:10 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/9/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristin Bacon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and Esteemed Committee Members,

I am writing to express my support for SB1511 SD2, SSCRI022, Section 2, (c). This section grants the exclusive representative the authority to review RCUH position descriptions

There have been numerous cases of RCUH employees being hired who should have instead been included in the rights and protections of a bargaining unit. Section 2, (c) serves as a crucial correction to rectify this issue.

Please vote to support this bill that promotes a more equitable workplace.

Mahalo,

Kristin Bacon

SB-1511-SD-2

Submitted on: 2/9/2024 9:56:46 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/9/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Marie Eng	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and Esteemed Committee Members,

Please vote yes and keep Section 2, (c). I support for SB1511 SD2, SSCR1022. I hope your affirmative vote will provide oversight and stop the exclusion of deserving individuals from unionized positions and job placements.

This section, which grants the exclusive representative the authority to review RCUH position descriptions, is important. Our state needs to be able to bring folks on as APTs when doing APT-type work and to work hard to protect them as union members.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

E mālama pono,
Lisa Marie Eng