



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education
February 5, 2025 at 2:00 p.m.

By

Kalbert K. Young

Vice President for Budget and Finance/Chief Financial Officer
University of Hawai'i System

HB 548 – RELATING TO THE ACQUISITION OF THE SAINT FRANCIS SCHOOL CAMPUS FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT MANOA

Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today. The University of Hawai'i (UH) supports House Bill (HB) No. 548, Relating to the Acquisition of the St. Francis School Campus for the UH Mānoa. The St. Francis School campus is located at 2707 Pamoia Road and identified as Tax Map Key No.: (1) 2-9-004: 001 ("Property"). The Property is approximately 11.120 acres in size and is owned by the Avalon Group, a local real estate development company. The Property is adjacent to the UH Mānoa campus, and the St. Francis School used the Property until it ceased school operations in May 2019.

The Property was sold to the Avalon Group in 2024. In 2020, UH submitted an offer to acquire the Property – and, was even provided with a Legislative authorization/appropriation in the FY2020 and FY2021 biennium budget to acquire the property. This bill does not grant any special powers or authorities to the UH to acquire the property, other than to provide an appropriation to which the UH could pursue negotiations with the landowner.

The UH is interested in this Property because of its close proximity to the UH Mānoa campus and the potential integration into its long-range development plan.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.



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February 4, 2025

Representative Andrew Takuya Garrett, Chair
Representative Terez Amato, Vice Chair
House Committee on Higher Education

Re: HB 548 – Relating to the Acquisition of the Saint Francis School Campus for the University of Hawaii at Manoa
Hearing date: February 5, 2025

Aloha Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato, and members of the committee,

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of Avalon Group in **OPPOSITION** to **HB 548 – Relating to the Acquisition of the Saint Francis School Campus for the University of Hawaii at Manoa**. Avalon plans to create housing options for local residents at the Aria Lane project at the former Saint Francis School Campus in Mānoa.

This project is consistent with the objectives of the O‘ahu General Plan, in that it creates housing in the Primary Urban Center in harmony with the surrounding neighborhood, convenient to shopping centers, schools and bus lines. We have worked with archeological and cultural consultants to identify historically important features on the property. Avalon has retained architectural consultant Mason Architects Inc, archaeological consultants, Hōnua Consulting and Cultural Surveys Hawai‘i, and Native Hawaiian cultural consultants for guidance throughout this project.

The property sale to Avalon included a 2020 archaeological literature review and field inspection (LRFI), prepared by Honua Consulting at the request of the Sisters of St. Francis (Thurman et al. 2020). The LRFI found no evidence of heiau or burials and reported that development and grading activities within the main grounds of the school likely destroyed or displaced any potential pre-contact and/or early-historic deposits that may have been present. The LRFI identified significant surface architecture still present on the perimeters of the property (historic boundary walls and features along the slope to the stream), and Avalon has taken steps to protect the existing boundary walls and preserve the property bordering Mānoa Stream.

The 1910 Army map that includes labels for “heiau” and “temple” was previously unknown to the project (not included in the 2020 LRFI) and found during CSH’s background research for the Aria Lane Archaeological Inventory Survey (AIS). Although a 1910 map of Mānoa includes a label reading ‘Heiau’ ‘Temple’, no other historic maps, either prior to or after the 1910 map, depict a heiau or remnants of heiau in the project area. However, based on community concerns and out of an abundance of caution, we are planning to conduct a full AIS to conduct surface and subsurface testing for remnants of heiau or other land use activities.

We will be submitting an AIS Plan showing all the proposed locations of subsurface testing to SHPD for approval. Test excavations will be placed to target the area labeled “heiau” temple” on the 1910 Army. We will await SHPD’s review and approval of the coming AIS to bring clarity as to what may or may not exist on the property and will be very transparent with the cultural descendants, stakeholders, and potential buyers about our findings.

We have also commissioned a Reconnaissance Level Survey (RLS) report from Mason Architects Inc, who is well-known for their fine work on many historic sites in Hawai‘i. Mason’s RLS states that none of the original 1930s structures built by the Sisters of Saint Francis remain on the property. Of the 18 buildings currently on site, 11 are more than 50 years old. Mason has found that one of those buildings meets Hawai‘i Administrative Rules Criterion “c” “as a representative example of a postwar institutional building with Streamline Moderne Style with regional Hawaiian elements designed by prominent Hawai‘i architect Guy Rothwell.” Mason has proposed mitigation commitments to include an outward-facing Wall of History that honors Rothwell’s work and commemorates the history of the site and of Mānoa Valley. Mason requested concurrence from SHPD for this plan in a letter submitted on July 18, 2024.

Avalon is committed to creating homes for Hawai‘i’s families that reflect the character and charm of the Mānoa Community and honors the history of the site. There is a shortage of housing in Hawai‘i. To fill the gap, it is imperative to provide housing in established neighborhoods like Mānoa. Aria Lane allows families to take care of their elderly right in their homes, allowing aging parents to have a semblance of independence such as the ability to legally cook in their own studio. Each single-family home will have the option to convert an existing ground floor bedroom and bathroom into a studio suite with a legal kitchen, roll-in shower with grab bars, and a separate entrance. These homes are ideal for families gathering joint resources to buy their homes together with two or more generations under one roof.

Avalon will continue to work closely with the State Historic Preservation Division to follow any recommendations from SHPD and will comply with all laws and regulations if iwi kupuna or any heiau are discovered.

Mahalo for your consideration,



Christine Camp
President & CEO
Avalon Group

HB-548

Submitted on: 1/31/2025 4:26:30 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Seth Kamemoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This would provide the opportunity for alternative uses for this site, more inline with existing PUCDP planning guidelines (Campus use).

HB-548

Submitted on: 1/31/2025 10:39:29 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vernelle Oku	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for voting for this important bill to fund UH's purchase of the property which was the historic St Francis School.

HB-548

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 6:41:25 AM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kurt Takara	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha House Representatives,

The St. Francis School property represents a unique opportunity for the University of Hawai'i to expand its footprint in a way that preserves the integrity of existing structures while enhancing educational facilities. This location, ideally situated adjacent to the UH campus, is not just valuable real estate; it is a golden opportunity to grow our university in a sustainable and responsible manner.

By acquiring the St. Francis School property, we can ensure that its buildings and grounds are preserved or upgraded for continued educational use. This is not merely an acquisition; it is a commitment to providing enhanced resources for our students and faculty. The additional space would facilitate the development of new programs, research initiatives, and community engagement opportunities, ultimately benefiting the entire university community.

Furthermore, the acquisition of this property would enable direct access from Maile Way, significantly reducing the traffic and safety risks currently posed by Pamoia Road. This is a crucial consideration, as student safety must remain a top priority. If this property is not acquired, we face the concerning prospect of a developer seeking emergency access through the UH campus. This poses significant safety and liability risks, not just for students but for all members of the university community. The potential for accidents and injuries is a serious concern that we cannot overlook.

Let us also consider the broader context: Hawai'i is unlikely to ever have another opportunity to expand its flagship university campus onto contiguous property. This is a moment that we cannot afford to miss. The acquisition would serve as a foundation for future growth and innovation, ensuring that UH Mānoa remains competitive and continues to meet the evolving needs of our students and faculty.

In conclusion, I urge you to consider the benefits of this acquisition. By supporting the University of Hawai'i in acquiring the St. Francis School property, we invest not only in our educational institutions but also in the future of our students, our community, and the State of Hawai'i. Together, we can take a decisive step towards fostering a thriving educational environment that benefits us all.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

HB-548

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 9:48:40 AM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
ELIZABETH	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB 548! I am a Manoa resident who feels the St. Francis property should be preserved and become a part of the UH campus. It is a precious piece of land of old Hawaii of historical significance. Please do not desecrate the present buildings, but use them wisely. The UH community would be a perfect match for this property, utilizing the present buildings for educating its students. It is already an off shoot of the crowded UH campus. Wouldn't it be wonderful if UH could expand its resources without destroying valuable artifacts on the property! Please consider HB 548. Thank you!

Elizabeth Higa

HB-548

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 1:45:27 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Arthur Mersereau	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The land where Saint Francis School and convent once was is Kaua‘ala Heiau and a wahi pana, a legendary place. House bill will keep the land from being developed into a place where hundreds of more people will live and bring more population and difficult to navigate traffic for Mānoa and the neighborhood. There is more than enough development in Kaka‘ako and we don‘t need it here in the valley. The idea of transferring the property to the university is a good one since it is already adjacent to the university.

I humbly submit this testimony to our elected officials in hopes that they will consider the bill carefully, approve it, and move it along to the senate.

HB-548

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 1:46:00 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dita Ramler	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Dita Ramler. I am a retired librarian of 30 years . I am writing in favor of saving this wahi pana kauala'a or sacred rain . . I have a close connection to this area since my Aunt is a Franciscan sister and lived and worked at St Francis for many years. Sister Rose Annette Ahuna. This is a cultural, historical and spiritual site that must be protected .

There are so many historical sites there dating back to pre-contact as outlined and researched by Emma Nakuina .. a waterway of great importance to the ahupuaa of Manoa and Waikiki. Also , historical and spiritual significance re: the sisters of St Francis who first came to care for the many suffering with Hansen's disease and who taught and cared for hawaii's children.

Could not the University of Hawaii use this as a teaching site to uplift and educate and strengthen our collective understanding of this wahi pana?

I plead for your reconsideration of selling this land to Avalon who has no interest or intention to honor our heritage.

Dita Ramler

HB-548

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 8:58:05 AM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paul Krushelnycky	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

A more beneficial use of the St. Francis School property would see its existing buildings and grounds preserved or upgraded for continued educational purposes, by the University of Hawai'i. This property is an ideal location adjoining to UH campus. This represents a golden opportunity to grow UH Manoa campus to enhance educational facilities, ultimately benefiting students and faculty. UH acquisition of the property would facilitate direct access from Maile Way, reducing traffic and safety risks associated with Pamoia Road. If not acquired, the developer's request for emergency access through the UH campus poses significant safety and liability risks for students. Emergency access through UH has the potential for injuries and impacts on the university community. Finally, Hawai'i is unlikely to ever have another opportunity to expand its flagship university campus onto contiguous property.

HB-548

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 3:27:32 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Roberto Coronado	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support University of Hawaii buying saint Francis they have easy access to this location and won't create any traffic or hazards conditions

HB-548

Submitted on: 2/2/2025 5:38:04 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alan Lau	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill for the following reasons:

The location is ideal for UH.. This ultimately benefits students and faculty. UH acquisition of the property would facilitate direct access from Maile Way, reducing traffic and safety risks associated with Pamoia Road: this is a much more viable use of the property than the proposed Avalon development of Aria Lane.

The current St. Francis campus contains archeological sites that should be preserved, not taken away or plowed over by a housing development. I believe Dr. Ellen Sofio has presented crucial data/evidence of the Heiau on this.

If not acquired, the developer's request for emergency access through the UH campus poses significant safety and liability risks for students. Emergency access through UH has the potential for injuries and impacts on the university community.

Hawaii is unlikely to ever have another opportunity to expand its flagship university campus onto contiguous property.

Finally, I really don't believe the Avalon's proposed development of the St. Francis property into private homes will have little or no impact on traffic on Pamoia Road. There's already too much traffic on Ala Ula as well as Pamoia Road. Adding more homes on the current St. Francis campus (with only one way in and out) jeopardizes emergency access to the inhabitants along Pamoia Road. Recall the issues with the recent fireworks catastrophe in Aliamanu area where several people died. That road was also very narrow, limiting the emergency vehicles response and access time.

Alan Lau

Honolulu, Hawaii

HB-548

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 8:22:10 AM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William Churchill	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support bill 548. This property should be for UH and the community.

William Churchill

HB-548

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 9:22:10 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
jane fyrberg	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a 55 year resident of Mānoa and Emergency Physician, I cherish the property of St. Francis and the history of education there. The Kaula‘a HEIAU area should never be destroyed by Aria Lane which will level 11 plus acres including all trees and pour concrete over many acres. Incredible number if homes will be built against every rule that ever existed in Mānoa. Preserving Hawaiian cultural history is priceless. Univ. of Hawai‘i should have this area for beauty, education, and for preservation of Hawaiian culture. If Avalon is allowed to build all students from UH, Mid Pac, and Noelani who ride bikes will be at high risk of injury. All residents of Mānoa will suffer from huge amount of traffic.

Dear Chair Andrew Takuya Garrett and members of the House Higher Education Committee, Education Committee Chair Justin H. Woodson, and fellow members of the House and Senate of the Thirty-third Legislature,

It isn't often that we get second chances to correct missed opportunities in life. Today, with the introduction of HB 548, our state has once again been blessed with the once-in-forever opportunity for the University of Hawaii to make the site of the former St. Francis School part of its flagship campus.

As a former member of the St. Francis School Board (1996-2006), former undergraduate UH student and later an adjunct instructor at the William S. Richardson School of Law, I can think of no better use of the 11+ acre site that is contiguous to the main campus than for it to be embraced to become part of the University of Hawaii.

The former St. Francis campus is without question in the best location for any conceivable geographical expansion of the UH campus. Other writers in support of the bill have made suggestions as to how it could be best utilized to improve our university. Regardless of how it may be used, it shall be a welcome addition to the University of Hawaii.

The last time the site was available, we missed the golden opportunity to acquire the former St. Francis campus. Let us not fail the second – and most likely final- opportunity for posterity.

Respectfully Yours,

Howard K. K. Luke

Dear Rep Andrew Takuya Garrett, Chair and Members of the House Higher Education Committee; Rep Justin H. Woodson, Chair and Members of the House Education Committee:

I strongly support HB 548 Relating to the Acquisition of the Saint Francis School Campus for the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

Three generations of my family have been fortunate to receive excellent education in the arts, sciences, and law which have benefited our lives and enabled us to contribute to the community. My father received a bachelor of arts degree in art in 1942, and later a masters degree in vocational education in 1975 while taking a sabbatical leave from teaching architectural drafting at the University of Hawaii, Community College in Hilo. My mother received a bachelor of science degree (1946) in medical technology and worked as a microbiologist and laboratory administrator at the Waiakea Health Center in Hilo. My brother earned a bachelors and masters degree (1975) in Architecture. I have a bachelors degree (1970) and PhD (1976) in psychology and currently work as a clinical psychologist. My son has a Juris Doctor degree (2017) from the Richardson School of Law and works as a public defender. My niece received a Doctor of Pharmacy degree (2021) from the Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy We are truly grateful to the University of Hawaii and the state of Hawaii and want the University to thrive.

Not only has the University of Hawaii been a place for education for us but also for cultural activities with the Kennedy Theater, the museums, the East West Center.

My family residence is on Pamoia Road across from the University of Hawaii Maintenance yard which is next to the St. Francis School campus. The acquisition of the 11+ acres which is adjacent to the Pacific Biomedical Research Center, Campus Security, Agricultural Services, the Center for Korean Studies, Lincoln Hall, Hale Laulima, would be a much needed and welcome expansion of the University of Hawaii campus for educational purposes for generations to come. Many university students, staff and faculty cross through the St. Francis School campus onto nearby Pamoia Road and a private road Hipawai to get to the Manoa Marketplace for groceries, sundries, restaurants and for exercise.

Please vote in favor of HB 548.

Sincerely,

Annette Shimizu

HB-548

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 12:21:07 AM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elton Fukumoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato, and the members of the House Committee on Higher Education:

I support HB548.

I am a resident of Manoa Valley. My Mother's cousin lived on Pamoia Road, and we visited her many times. I know how narrow that road is and how unsuitable for a housing development to occur there given the character of the road.

One of the best solutions for the residents of that area is for the traffic to run not through Pamoia Road but instead through the campus of UH Manoa. Hawaii's flagship campus is in the best position to increase the size of its campus and to utilize this parcel, formerly St. Francis School, for whatever purpose best serves the University.

This parcel should be a part of UH Manoa and is needed to avoid a traffic nightmare for residents of Pamoia Road.

Thank you.

Elton Fukumoto

HB548

Measure Title: RELATING TO THE ACQUISITION OF THE SAINT FRANCIS SCHOOL CAMPUS FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT MANOA.

Report Title: UH; Saint Francis School; Campus; Acquisition; Revenue Bonds; Appropriation (\$)

Description: Authorizes the Board of Regents of the University of Hawai'i to issue revenue bonds for the acquisition of the Saint Francis School campus located at 2707 Pamoia Road in Honolulu. Appropriates funds to the University of Hawai'i for the acquisition of the Saint Francis School campus located at 2707 Pamoia Road in Honolulu.

Companion:

Package: None

Current Referral: HED, FIN

Introducer(s): GARRETT, AMATO, KAPELA, KILA, LA CHICA, OLDS, SOUZA

This testimony is in support of HB 548 to authorize the Board of Regents of the University of Hawai'i to issue revenue bonds for the acquisition of the Saint Francis School campus located at 2707 Pamoia Road in Honolulu. The bill will appropriate funds to the University of Hawai'i for the acquisition of the Saint Francis School campus located at 2707 Pamoia Road in Honolulu.

The acquisition will provide a more beneficial use of the St. Francis School property and its existing buildings and grounds for continued educational purposes by the University of Hawai'i. The property:

- Is an ideal location adjoining to UH campus.
- Is a Golden opportunity for the UH Manoa campus to enhance its educational facilities, ultimately benefiting students and faculty.
- Would have a direct access from Maile Way, thereby, reducing traffic and safety risks associated with a Pamoia Road access.

If the property is not acquired:

- The developer's request for emergency access through the UH campus poses significant safety and liability risks for students. Emergency access through UH has the potential for injuries and impacts on the university community.
- Hawai'i is unlikely to ever have another opportunity to expand its flagship ' university campus onto contiguous property.

Gary & Lois Mizumoto
Manoa residents

HB-548

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 10:00:54 AM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michele-Lynn Luke	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha kākou,

I am writing to fully support the passage of HB548. The bill would facilitate the purchase of the old St. Francis property adjoining the University of Hawai'i's Manoa campus, a valuable and much needed asset to the institution's continued growth. The purchase presents a unique opportunity to expand the University's footprint to incorporate much needed space for the expansion of educational as well as research programs, many of which ultimately provide financial support to the University in the form of grants and the like. In addition, the use of the St. Francis property in this manner, benefits the community at large, and allows for the development of the property, in a manner that largely preserves certain cultural and historic features of the property, to the betterment of our community.

Much aloha,

Michele-Lynn E. Luke

HB-548

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 11:13:31 AM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessie Kai	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha nō. My name is Jessie Kai and I humbly ask for your kōkua to protect Kauala‘a Heiau, its lands and our Hawaiian culture.

I strongly oppose the proposed demolition of Kauala‘a Heiau. This site is an irreplaceable part of our history, culture, and identity, and its loss would be devastating to both our lāhui and our future nā keiki o ka ‘āina.

Kauala‘a Heiau is not just a building—it is a living piece of our history. Built to honor the many rains of the ‘ili of Mānoa—least we forget the bounty of the apana.

If Kauala‘a Heiau is destroyed, we will lose more than just pōhaku. We will lose a tangible connection to our past, a space that tells the story of who we are. The demolition would set a dangerous precedent for further historical losses here in Hawai‘i and diminish the unique character and aspects of our island home.

Instead of demolition, I urge the committee to explore alternative solutions such as bestowing the Historical designation or landmark status to protect the heiau and land, or allowing adaptive reuse, where the heiau and land are preserved while being repurposed for the modern needs of our lāhui.

We do not inherit history—we borrow it from future generations. Once this site is gone, it is gone forever. I urge you to stand with our lāhui and make the right decision: protect Kauala‘a Heiau from destruction and ensure that its legacy and presence endures.

Mahalo ā nui for your time and consideration. I hope you will join us in preserving this invaluable piece of our history in Hawai‘i.

Me ka ha‘aha‘a,

Jessie Kai

February 4, 2025

To: Representative Andrew Takuya Garrett and members
Committee on Higher Education

Testimony in conditional support of HB548 suggesting amendments to acknowledge that the property is a historic heiau with multiple historic buildings on site

From: Ellen Sofio M.D.

Dear Representative Garrett and members of the House Higher Education Committee,

I have spent considerable time over the past 9 months researching the cultural history of the Saint Francis Mānoa Property, I strongly support HB 548 to appropriate funds to transfer the property to the University of Hawai'i but with conditions.

Old maps, historic literature and legends, previous archeological surveys and other documents which have surfaced from my own research as well as the extensive photographs I took early last year and incorporated into a power point presented to the city's O'ahu Historic Preservation Commission in September, 2024, as well as research done by Avalon's contract archeologist, suggest strongly the entire 11.2 acre Saint Francis Mānoa property is a heiau in its entirety.

The heiau was originally recorded by SHPD archeologist Carol Kawachi in her 1988 field study as an agricultural heiau (The Kūkao'o Heiau chapter 8, Archeology of Mānoa Valley).

A 1910 Army Map which surfaced early in Avalon's archeological inventory study labels the entire property as a heiau. An 1847 Metcalf map has the name of high chief Abner Paki. He was the father of Bernice Pauahi Bishop, who's legacy founded Kamehameha Schools Bishop Estate, and was the grandson of the 18th century King of Maui. In 1847 King Kamehameha III, Kūikeyouli, had initiated the Mahele in hopes of keeping Hawaiian lands in Hawaiian hands. He was a close friend of Abner Paki.

Emma Ka'ilikapuolono Metcalf Beckley Nakuina, daughter of high chiefess Ka'likapuolono and Massachusetts surveyor Theophilus Metcalf, was born in 1846 on land adjacent to the heiau and raised there. She later was appointed to become the first Hawaiian woman judge and water commissioner and was also made curator of the National Museum of the Hawaiian Kingdom by King Kamehameha IV. Emma was considered an authority on Hawaiian language and legends. In her book of legends published in 1904, "Hawai'i its People their Legends", Emma referred to the high priest of the heiau at what is now Saint Francis Mānoa in the Legend of Kahalaopuna, as the Kauala'a Heiau. Kauala'a can be translated to mean "the sacred rain" Lono is the Hawaiian god of rain, agriculture, fertility, music and peace.

I am happy to share my power point and these documents and others with any interested legislators.

The University of Hawai'i has a declared mission to be a place of Native Hawaiian Learning. This iconic, beautiful and sacred property which is literally right at the back door of the University contiguous with its mauka boundary, has the potential to add immensely to fulfilling that mission. The historic convent could be repurposed to provide housing for Lahaina fire survivors and other Hawaiians who desperately need shelter, giving them the opportunity to seek a higher education here instead of becoming homeless or having to leave for the mainland and empowering them to use their education as a means of helping rebuild their community on Maui. The original historic school building could be restored to be used as a school again, to teach Hawaiian language, history and culture to the children of local residents and community including University of Hawaii faculty. It could also act to supplement the education of public school children at Noelani and Mānoa Elementary and other schools who could be bussed in for classes and events. Office space, conference space.... I'm sure faculty and administration at UH could add to this list of possibilities.

The goals of protecting both the neighborhood and the Mānoa community from the dangers inherent in inappropriately sited high density development and the goal of historic preservation are compatible.

The price of the property for acquisition by the University will be more reasonable if the critical need for historic and cultural preservation and the goal of making Saint Francis Mānoa and the Kauala'a Heiau a Hawaiian cultural and educational sanctuary in perpetuity is taken into consideration in the appraisal.

Mahalo nui for your kind consideration and your efforts to preserve and protect this irreplaceable and priceless cultural historic property in perpetuity for Hawaiians, for the University and for the immense benefit of the community at large.

Ellen Sofio M.D.
Mānoa
honsofio@aol.co

HB-548

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 1:22:59 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Welton Nekota	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Date: February 4, 2025

From: Welton Nekota, Manoa Resident

Subject: Testimony in Support of HB548

Relating to the Acquisition of the Old Saint Francis School Campus

Aloha HED Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato, and Members Evslin, Kapela, Kila, La Chica, Olds, Sayama, Woodson, Muraoka and Souza:

I am writing in strong support of HB548, which would authorize the acquisition of the old Saint Francis School campus for the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa.

The University of Hawai‘i has pressing needs for additional space to support faculty housing, expand academic programs, and enhance Hawaiian studies initiatives. The old Saint Francis campus presents a unique opportunity to address these needs while preserving an established educational space in our community.

This acquisition represents a multi-generational investment in Hawai‘i's educational infrastructure. The value of such a property acquisition extends well beyond the immediate term - potentially serving the university and Hawai‘i's people for the next century or more. As we consider the financial aspects of this purchase, it's important to recognize that we are investing in an asset that will benefit four or five generations of Hawai‘i's students and scholars, as well as the community.

The location and existing facilities would allow UH to implement its vision for growth and development in a way that serves both the university community and the broader public interest. This is not just a purchase for today's needs, but an investment in Hawai‘i's educational future.

There many never be another chance like this again.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Welton Nekota

HB-548

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 1:55:39 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Edward Chung III	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

To Representative Andrew Garrett, Chair of the Committee on Higher Education of the House

I oppose luxury development but support the future for our keiki at UH particularly furthering its mission to truly be a place of Native Hawaiian Learning where Hawaiian culture, history and language are prioritized. Transfer of the property to the UH Mānoa will prevent many significant safety issues inherent in Avalon's inappropriately stied propped high density development.

LATE

HB-548

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 2:42:18 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gerald Saito	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Members of the House of Representatives,

My wife and I have lived on Pamoia Road for the past 60 years. We are in full support of HB548 that will enable the University of Hawaii to gain control of the former St. Francis School property. We are "against" the proposed housing development by the Avalon Group because of the amount of homes that will be built on this property. The existing infrasturcture will not support this proposed development and many of these homes are being priced to sell at 2 million dollars. There will only be a small percentage of these homes that could be deemed as "affordable" homes.

In any case, we encourage you to support HB548. This property is better suited to be part of the UH campus.

Respectfully,

Gerald and Mae Saito

LATE

HB-548

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 9:33:37 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Whitney Bosel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is such a unique lot. It is absolutely fantastic for the needs of UH, and very very difficult for nearly any other use, if required to be accessed only from the narrow dead end that it is situated at the end of. Access through UH (or both through UH and the city street) is by far and away the best for the neighborhood, and if there is any chance at all for the University to gain this gem it should be snatched up. I am in strong support of this bill.

LATE

HB-548

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 11:17:54 AM

Testimony for HED on 2/5/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laulani Teale	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Inam in strong support of this measure and the protection of this sacred site.

I do not believe the community has had adequate review of this situation and if they did, they would want to protect the area.

Aloha,

Laulani