



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
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By

Lui Hokoana, Interim Vice President for Community Colleges
University of Hawai'i System

HB 2171 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII.

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

The University of Hawai'i (UH) supports HB 2171, which clarifies the University's authority to operate enterprise-related instructional activities. This measure is vital for providing high-quality, hands-on workforce training across the state while ensuring statutory clarity for the University's educational mission.

Experiential, hands-on learning is essential to preparing students for Hawai'i's priority workforce sectors, including hospitality, culinary arts, agriculture, business, and applied technologies. Facilities such as teaching kitchens, agricultural production sites, and retail laboratories are not commercial ventures; they are instructional spaces where students develop practical skills under faculty guidance in settings that mirror their future work environments.

Because these instructional settings can resemble commercial operations, UH campuses often face local zoning and permitting barriers designed for private businesses rather than educational institutions. These hurdles can delay or prevent the implementation of critical workforce programs.

HB 2171 recognizes that the University's educational mission is a matter of statewide concern and provides the necessary clarity to allow these activities to proceed when a clear educational nexus exists.

This bill maintains a balanced approach by preserving a clear boundary between education and commercial enterprise:

- Authorized activities must be integrated into credit-bearing, certificate, or workforce development programs.
- Activities must be conducted primarily for educational or research purposes, not solely for profit.
- Any revenue generated is retained to support program costs, maintain facilities, and assist students.
- The bill maintains the applicability of all state health, safety, and tax requirements.

The University respectfully requests one technical amendment for clarity and administrative consistency:

In Section 2(e), please remove the phrase "program operating the activity" to ensure that the management of generated funds aligns with standard University fiscal and administrative structures.

(e) Any revenue generated by these activities shall be retained by the university ~~program operating the activity~~ to defray costs, maintain facilities, or support student scholarships.

By reducing regulatory uncertainty, HB 2171 strengthens workforce pipelines and aligns with the University of Hawai'i's public mission.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.