



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
March 25, 2026 at 2:30 p.m.

By

Debora Halbert

Vice President for Academic Strategy
University of Hawai'i System

HCR 122 / HR 114 – REQUESTING THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII TO ALLOW AN
OLELO HAWAII PATHWAY UNDER THE NIIHAU DIALECT.

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

The University of Hawai'i offers comments on HCR 122 / HR 114 – Requesting The University Of Hawaii To Allow An Olelo Hawaii Pathway Under The Niihau Dialect. The University of Hawai'i appreciates the intent of this resolution and recognizes the importance of serving the linguistic, cultural, and educational needs of all communities across Hawai'i, including Native speakers and families connected to 'Ōlelo Ni'ihau.

We note that establishing any new academic pathway, concentration, or certificate is subject to the University's academic program and curriculum approval processes. These processes are designed to ensure that proposed offerings are academically sound, appropriately resourced, aligned with campus mission and student demand, and developed with appropriate faculty review and governance.

Accordingly, whether a specific campus is able to offer a pathway concentrating on 'Ōlelo Ni'ihau would depend on that campus's academic judgment, available faculty expertise, resources, student interest, and successful completion of the applicable campus and University approval processes.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.

HR-114

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 12:37:28 PM

Testimony for HED on 3/25/2026 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dana Keawe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support HCR122

Dana Keawe