



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Education
Monday, March 23, 2026 at 1:11 p.m.

By

Brenda Hernandez, PhD

and

Naoto T. Ueno MD, PhD, Director
University of Hawai'i Cancer Center

and

Vassilis Syrmos, PhD

Interim Provost

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 1970 HD2 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII CANCER CENTER

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

The University of Hawai'i ("University") respectfully offers comments for HB 1970 HD2, which appropriates \$1,539,455 in general funds for the Hawai'i Tumor Registry (HTR) at the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center for fiscal year 2026-2027. This appropriation aligns with the State's longstanding commitment to public health surveillance and cancer control.

For more than fifty years, HTR has served as the State of Hawai'i's official cancer surveillance system, providing the backbone for collecting, analyzing, and reporting data on cancer incidence, survival, and mortality for all residents of Hawai'i.

The HTR operates as the designated public health authority on behalf of the Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) to fulfill the State's statutory responsibilities for cancer surveillance, as established under Hawai'i Revised Statutes §324-21 and §321-43. These statutes require hospitals, laboratories, medical providers, and the DOH to report cancer diagnoses and cancer-related deaths. This statutory authority also extends to the collection of biological specimens and other relevant materials necessary to support surveillance, research, and public health efforts related to individuals with cancer or pre-cancerous conditions.

This includes data across age groups, ethnicities, and geographic areas, which are essential to understanding cancer burden and guiding prevention, early detection, and treatment strategies. HTR directly supports statutorily mandated surveillance functions and fulfills Hawai'i's role in national cancer data systems.

HTR is part of the National Cancer Institute's (NCI) Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results (SEER) Program, which provides approximately 80 % of its funding. The Registry also meets the federal contract requirement of a 20 % minimum cost share from the University. Recent federal funding reductions have jeopardized HTR's ability to continue operations at its prior capacity. This bill's appropriation will help restore the program's ability to:

- Offset recent federal reductions in contract support;
- Meet the mandatory cost-share requirement to retain federal contract eligibility;
- Sustain the statewide tumor biorepository that supports advanced research; and
- Rebuild electronic pathology reporting capabilities across Hawai'i's hospitals and labs.

HTR provides the only comprehensive cancer surveillance system for Hawai'i. Accurate, timely data are vital for:

- Tracking trends in cancer incidence and outcomes;
- Among the recent statewide trends reported by the HTR:
 - Uterine cancers now tie colon & rectum cancers as the third most common cancer among Hawai'i women with incidence rates significantly higher than that of the U.S. overall and mortality (death) rates increasing at nearly 5% per year.
 - Colon & rectal cancer incidence rates are increasing among younger adults (both men and women), and rates in all males are higher than those of the U.S. overall.
 - Prostate cancer remains the most common cancer among men, with over 1,000 newly diagnosed cases each year, and its incidence is increasing nearly 4% per year. Native Hawaiian males have the highest proportion of advanced-stage prostate cancers.
- Supporting research into cancer disparities among Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and other ethnically diverse populations;
- Informing community health interventions and state policy responses;
- Partnering with the Department of Health on investigations (e.g., suspected cancer clusters) and evaluating impacts of public health events such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Without this funding, critical HTR functions would be scaled back, compromising the State's ability to monitor cancer trends and undermining public health planning.

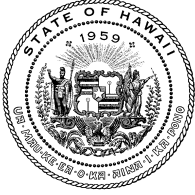
HTR employs highly trained cancer surveillance professionals. Loss of adequate funding would likely result in staff reductions, diminished institutional capacity, and the erosion of decades of built expertise that is difficult to replace.

While HB 1970 HD2 appropriately supports core operations and essential tools, we respectfully request that the Committee consider the following enhancements:

- Ongoing support for statewide electronic pathology reporting is essential to timely case ascertainment and complete coverage;
- A long-term funding strategy would help stabilize operations and minimize future disruptions;
- A reporting provision could ensure transparency and allow the Legislature to monitor implementation outcomes, including impact on data quality, staffing, and reporting restoration.

Cancer remains a pressing public health challenge for Hawai'i families. Continuing robust funding for the Hawai'i Tumor Registry is an investment in evidence-based health policy, early detection, prevention, and improved health outcomes for all communities across the Islands.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



**STATE HEALTH PLANNING
AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH - KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO

JOSH GREEN, MD
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII

KENNETH S. FINK, MD, MGA, MPH
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH
KA LUNA HO'ŌKELE

JOHN C. (JACK) LEWIN, MD
ADMINISTRATOR

1177 Alakea Street, #402, Honolulu, HI 96813

Phone: 587-0788 Fax: 587-0783 www.shpda.org

March 20, 2026

TO: SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair
Honorable Members

FROM: John C. (Jack) Lewin, MD, Administrator, SHPDA, and Sr. Advisor to Governor
Josh Green, MD on Healthcare Innovation

RE: **HB 1970-HD2 -- RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII
CANCER CENTER**

HEARING: Monday, March 23, 2026 @ 1:11 pm; Conference Room 229

POSITION: SUPPORT with COMMENTS

Testimony:

SHPDA strongly supports HB1970-HD2, with comments.

SHPDA supports HB 1970-HD2, which appropriates approximately \$1.5 Million in general funds for the Hawai'i Tumor Registry (HTR) at the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center (HTR) for fiscal year 2026-2027, as a critical part of Hawaii's longstanding commitment to public health surveillance and cancer control. HTR is our state's official cancer surveillance system, providing the capacity for collecting, analyzing, and reporting data on cancer incidence, survival, and mortality for all residents of Hawai'i.

Recent federal funding cuts are adversely affecting HTR's ability to continue to provide the essential services of the Registry in these regards. We defer to the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center on funding and other background specifics, but also fully support their recommendations to include in this funding the following:

1. Ongoing support for statewide electronic pathology reporting is essential to timely case ascertainment and complete coverage;
2. A long-term funding strategy would help stabilize operations and minimize future disruptions;
3. A reporting provision could ensure transparency and allow the Legislature to monitor implementation outcomes, including impact on data quality, staffing, and reporting restoration.

Thank you for hearing HB1970-HD2 and mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

■ -- Jack Lewin, MD, Administrator, SHPDA



Senate Committee on Education
Senator Donna Mercado, Chair
Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: Monday, March 23, 2026

ACS CAN STRONG SUPPORT HB 1970 HD2: RELATING TO UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII CANCER CENTER.

Cynthia Au, Government Relations Director – Hawai‘i Guam
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 1970 HD2: RELATING TO UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII CANCER CENTER, which provides critical state funding to sustain the Hawai‘i Tumor Registry (HTR)—the backbone of cancer surveillance in our state. We work to ensure that cancer patients and survivors in Hawaii and across the country have a fair and just opportunity to find, treat and survive cancer.

Cancer remains the second leading cause of death in Hawai‘i, with over 9,400 new diagnoses and over 2,700 deaths in 2026ⁱ. Continuous, high-quality cancer surveillance is essential to understanding how, where, and in whom cancer occurs. These data guide prevention strategies, ensure timely treatment, and help all patients—regardless of geography or background—benefit from early detection.

Tumor registries provide a road map in the fight against cancer. They allow public health leaders and clinicians:

- Monitor cancer incidence and mortality trends over time;
- Evaluate cancer patterns within populations and identify high-risk groups;
- Guide the planning and evaluation of cancer control programs;
- Prioritize the allocation of limited resources; and
- Support research into cancer causes and prevention strategies to determine which interventions improve health outcomes.

The Hawai'i Tumor Registry (HTR) is the state's only comprehensive cancer surveillance program. It ensures reporting of *all invasive cancer diagnoses statewide* and provides the high-quality data that drive:

- Targeted cancer screening programs in underserved communities;
- Evaluation of treatment access and disparities across ethnic and geographic groups;
- Rapid response to cancer clusters, emerging trends, and other urgent public health concerns; and
- Research that informs prevention, early detection, and clinical care, strengthening Hawai'i's ability to fight cancer effectively and equitably.

Without HTR, Hawai'i would lose the ability to measure cancer burden accurately and respond effectively.

Policies such as the federal STAR Act, the National Firefighter Registry, and national efforts to address childhood, young adult, and rare cancers all rely on state-level cancer registry data. Without strong, local data from HTR, Hawai'i risks being excluded from lifesaving national initiatives and research opportunities.

Recent federal cuts to the National Cancer Institute's SEER program have reduced HTR's funding by over 20%. Without state support, HTR may soon be unable to maintain current staffing levels; delay or suspend case reporting; reduce data quality; scale back or eliminate critical registry functions.

HTR's data have been vital in identifying disparities affecting Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and rural communities. Hawai'i is one of the most diverse states in the country; maintaining a strong, culturally representative cancer registry is essential to ensuring that cancer control policies are equitable and grounded in evidence.

ACS CAN urges the Legislature to pass HB 1970 HD2 to protect public health, strengthen cancer equity, and support data-driven solutions that save lives. In the fight against cancer, we cannot manage what we cannot measure. Reliable cancer surveillance is not optional—it is a core public health responsibility.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Government Relations Director Cynthia Au at Cynthia.Au@Cancer.org or 808.460.6109.



Hawaii Medical Association

1360 South Beretania Street, Suite 200 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96814
Phone: 808.536.7702 • Fax: 808.528.2376 • hawaiimedicalassociation.org

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

Date: March 23, 2026

From: Hawaii Medical Association (HMA)

Elizabeth Ann Ignacio MD - Chair, HMA Public Policy Committee

Christina Marzo MD and Robert Carlisle MD, Vice Chairs, HMA Public Policy Committee

RE HB 1970 HD 1 RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII CANCER CENTER.

University of Hawaii Cancer Center; Hawai'i Tumor Registry; Appropriation.

Position: Strong Support

This measure would appropriate funds for the University of Hawaii Cancer Center Hawai'i Tumor Registry.

Maintaining robust cancer surveillance through the UH Cancer Center Tumor Registry is critical to tracking trends over time, identifying disparities across Hawaii's population, and evaluating the impact of public health interventions — all of which are essential to reducing cancer burden statewide and improving health equity for our diverse communities.

Data shared in early 2025 based on updated state surveillance indicates that over 9,000 Hawaii residents would be diagnosed with cancer in 2025, with more than 2,000 expected to die from the disease, representing an uptick in cases. This is a trend that the UHCC Tumor Registry's longitudinal surveillance made visible and actionable for prevention, early detection, and treatment planning across the islands.

Projections and trend data are vital to quantify the ongoing burden of cancer in Hawaii and guide resource allocation. HMA strongly supports sustained registry funding, informing healthcare strategies for increases in cases and careful evaluation of statewide prevention efforts.

Thank you for allowing the Hawaii Medical Association to testify in support of this measure.

2026 Hawaii Medical Association Public Policy Coordination Team

Elizabeth A Ignacio, MD, Chair • Robert Carlisle, MD, Vice Chair • Christina Marzo, MD, Vice Chair
Linda Rosehill, JD, Government Relations • Marc Alexander, Executive Director

2026 Hawaii Medical Association Officers

Nadine Tenn-Salle, MD, President • Jerald Garcia, MD, President Elect • Elizabeth Ann Ignacio, MD, • Immediate Past President
Laeton Pang, MD, Treasurer • Thomas Kosasa, MD, Secretary • Marc Alexander, Executive Director

REFERENCES AND QUICK LINKS

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network. *“New Study Shows Cancer Rates Rising in Women; Advocates Urge Hawaii State Lawmakers to Support Cancer Fight in 2025.”* American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, 17 Jan. 2025, www.fightcancer.org/releases/new-study-shows-cancer-rates-rising-women-advocates-urge-hawaii-state-lawmakers-support

University of Hawai'i Cancer Center. *“UH Cancer Center’s Hawai'i Tumor Registry Releases Updated Cancer Statistics.”* University of Hawai'i Cancer Center, 19 May 2022, <https://www.uhcancercenter.org/about-us/2022-news-articles/887-uh-cancer-center-s-hawai-i-tumor-registry-releases-updated-cancer-statistics>

2024 Hawaii Medical Association Officers

Elizabeth Ann Ignacio, MD, President • Nadine Tenn-Salle, MD, President Elect • Angela Pratt, MD, Immediate Past President
Jerris Hedges, MD, Treasurer • Thomas Kosasa, MD, Secretary • Marc Alexander, Executive Director

2024 Hawaii Medical Association Public Policy Coordination Team

Beth England, MD, Chair
Linda Rosehill, JD, Government Relations • Marc Alexander, Executive Director



**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education
Monday, March 23, 2026; 1:11 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 229
Via Videoconference**

**RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 1970, HOUSE DRAFT 2, RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII
CANCER CENTER.**

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

The Hawaii Primary Care Association (HPCA) is a 501(c)(3) organization established to advocate for, expand access to, and sustain high quality care through the statewide network of Community Health Centers throughout the State of Hawaii. The HPCA **SUPPORTS** House Bill No. 1970, House Draft 2, RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII CANCER CENTER.

By way of background, the HPCA represents Hawaii's Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). FQHCs provide desperately needed medical services at the frontlines to over 150,000 patients each year who live in rural and underserved communities. Long considered champions for creating a more sustainable, integrated, and wellness-oriented system of health, FQHCs provide a more efficient, more effective and more comprehensive system of healthcare.

This bill, as received by your Committee, would appropriate an unspecified amount of general funds for fiscal year 2026-2027, to support the ongoing work of the Hawaii Tumor Registry by:

- (1) Offsetting a reduction of federal funding;
- (2) Covering a mandatory minimum 20% cost sharing;
- (3) Establishing a tumor biorepository; and
- (4) Acquiring statewide pathology reporting software.

The appropriation would be expended by the University of Hawaii, and take effect on July 1, 3000.

Testimony on House Bill No. 1970, House Draft 2
Monday, March 23, 2026; 1:11 p.m.
Page 2

The HPCA recognizes that severe cutbacks in federal funding to higher learning institutions throughout the United States have taken a drastic toll on existing programs and opportunities. This is especially true for the State of Hawaii with its limited population size, geographic isolation, and workforce shortages.

The James A. Burns School of Medicine and the Cancer Research Center have especially found it difficult to obtain sufficient resources to continue much of their essential work. Now, with the changing priorities by federal funders, the situation threatens the viability of existing programs and research.

Because FQHCs are at the frontline in rural and isolated communities, we have partnered with both the American Cancer Society and the Cancer Research Center to assist in obtaining critical data for a variety of projects. We also serve as a conduit for relationship building with affected patient populations. Such partnerships are necessary to further all research activities and utilize the breakthroughs obtained for the benefit of our citizenry.

While the focus of FQHCs is on the provision of primary care to the most vulnerable populations in our State, the HPCA recognizes the importance of research on maladies confronting our patients. Medications and treatments available today were just a hope by patients in the recent past.

Ending research ends hope. Please keep hope alive.

For this reason, we respectfully urge your favorable consideration of this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Public Affairs and Policy Director Erik K. Abe at 536-8442, or eabe@hawaiiipca.net.

The Hawaii Tumor Registry (HTR), including its tumor biorepository, has been essential to advancing our NIH-funded research on lung cancer in Native Hawaiians who experience the highest lung cancer incidence and among the poorest survival outcomes in Hawai'i and the U.S. The HTR provides uniquely valuable, population-based data and biospecimens that enable research in a population that has been largely absent from national cancer genomics efforts.

Using HTR-linked tumor samples, we identified a distinct gene mutation landscape in Native Hawaiian lung cancer, including a markedly elevated tumor mutational burden (TMB) and key alterations in genes such as TP53, as well as potential NH patient specific highly tumor mutated genes (RBM5, JAK1, FAT2) and oncogenic amplifications (MYC, MUC16). Importantly, high TMB is a clinically actionable biomarker associated with improved response to immunotherapy. These findings suggest that Native Hawaiian lung cancer patients may have strong potential to benefit from immunotherapy-based treatments, offering a promising path to improve survival in a population with significant health disparities.

These results highlight the critical public health impact of the HTR in enabling discoveries that support precision medicine, reduce cancer disparities, and guide more effective, population-specific treatments. In addition, this NIH-funded research brings federal investment into Hawai'i, supporting workforce training, scientific innovation, and economic development. Continued support for the HTR is essential to sustain these benefits and to ensure that all communities in Hawai'i are represented in life-saving cancer research.

YOUPING DENG, PhD

Professor, Director of Bioinformatics Core
Department of Quantitative Health Sciences
John A. Burns School of Medicine
Co-Director, Genomics and Bioinformatics Shared Resource
University of Hawai'i Cancer Center
University of Hawai'i at Manoa
dengy@hawaii.edu

HB-1970-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/20/2026 12:26:39 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/23/2026 1:11:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Crissy T. Kawamoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair Michelle Kidani, and members of the Senate Committee on Education,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify as an individual in STRONG SUPPORT of appropriating State funds for the Hawai'i Tumor Registry.

The Hawai'i Tumor Registry provides the only comprehensive cancer surveillance system in Hawai'i. The information they collect and report is critical to understanding cancer trends in the state and identifying disparities — regardless of whether it is politically correct at the moment to recognize those. An understanding of all these factors is what allows those of us who are involved in cancer control and research, to address the areas of greatest need in our community. It is, without a doubt, of great benefit to public health for the people of Hawai'i.

Recent cuts to federal support for National Cancer Institute's cancer surveillance program are threatening HTR's ability to keep their nationally recognized, award-winning certified registrars on staff. Without the State's support at this critical juncture, these highly qualified staff would be subjected to reductions in force. And without these staff doing this important work, the State's ability to monitor cancer trends, detect needs and disparities, and respond accordingly will be greatly diminished.

I humbly ask that you put your full support behind the Hawai'i Tumor Registry — and public health in Hawai'i — by passing HB1970 HD2.

Mahalo,

Crissy Terawaki Kawamoto
Honolulu resident

HB-1970-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/20/2026 3:01:12 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/23/2026 1:11:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cheryl K. Okuma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

RE: Strong Support of HB1970 HD2: Relating to the University of Hawaii Cancer Center

Hearing Date: Monday, March 23, 2026; TIME: 1:11PM

Committee on Education

Chair Kim and committee members:

My name is Cheryl K. Okuma and I am in STRONG SUPPORT of HB1970 HD2 which would fund Hawaii's tumor registry, the cancer surveillance program in the state.

As a cancer survivor, with family members and friends who have battled or are battling cancer—we know that having a screening program is critical to our fight against this disease.

Federal cuts to the National Cancer Institute's program reduced Hawaii Tumor Registry funding by over 20%. Lack of state support, will adversely impact this Registry's functions and delay cancer case reporting.

The Hawai'i Tumor Registry is the state's only comprehensive cancer surveillance program.

It ensures all invasive cancer diagnoses are reported statewide. This database is valuable as it is informative in terms of prevention, screening, treatment access, and research.

I urge your committee to pass HB1970 HD2 to protect public health data.

Sincerely,

Cheryl K. Okuma

Wailuku, 96793

HB-1970-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/20/2026 5:45:11 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/23/2026 1:11:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dr Chloe Panizza	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Kim and committee members:

My name is Dr. Chloe Lozano and I am an Assistant Professor at the University of Hawaii Cancer Center. I am in STRONG SUPPORT of HB1970 HD2 which would fund Hawaii's tumor registry, the cancer surveillance program in the state.

I urge your committee to pass HB1970 HD2 to protect public health data.

Sincerely,

Chloe Lozano

Miliani, 96789

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

Monday, March 23, 2026 (1:11 Pm)

Individual Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 1970, HD2
RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII CANCER CENTER.

Aloha Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit an individual testimony. I am in **strong support** of House Bill 1970 HD2, which would fund the Hawai'i Tumor Registry, the cancer surveillance program in the state.

My name is Pallav Pokhrel, and I am a Professor at the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center. My testimony is submitted as an individual and not as a representative of the University of Hawai'i or the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center.

Cancer is the second leading cause of death in Hawai'i; nearly 7,500 Hawai'i residents are diagnosed with invasive cancer, and over 2,393 residents die from cancer. Over 66,000 Hawai'i residents are cancer survivors. Cancer surveillance in the state of Hawai'i is led by the Hawai'i Tumor Registry (HTR) at the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center. The HTR is the state's only comprehensive cancer surveillance program, and as one of 22 National Cancer Institute (NCI) cancer registries in the US, the HTR collects vital data on cancer diagnosis, treatment, and outcomes. Cancer surveillance is essential to understanding how, where, and in whom cancer is occurring – to ensure that all Hawai'i residents diagnosed with cancer benefit from early detection and treatment.

Due to federal cuts to the National Institutes of Health funding, the HTR faces over 20% reduction in federal funding. Furthermore, funding restrictions placed on the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center further jeopardize the ability of the HTR to continue its robust cancer surveillance that is critical to the health of Hawai'i residents. Funding for the HTR will support the ongoing work of the HTR and prevent gaps in cancer surveillance efforts.

Thank you.

Pallav Pokhrel, Professor, University of Hawai'i Cancer Center

HB-1970-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 7:06:15 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/23/2026 1:11:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cassie Pali	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Kim and Committee Members,

My name is Cassie Pali, and I am a cancer survivor and an advocate for others. I am in **strong support** of HB1970 HD2, which would fund Hawai'i's Tumor Registry, the cancer surveillance program for our state.

Having gone through this journey myself, I know how overwhelming and difficult it can be. I am barely on the other side, and this is something I will need to monitor every six months for the rest of my life. Along the way, I struggled not only with cancer, but also with navigating doctors, insurance, and access to the care I needed. What a patient needs should not be denied simply because it is expensive. Access to care and assistance is a basic right, especially when we are paying into the very systems meant to support them.

I also see so many cancer patients struggling to get the help they need, and I will continue to advocate for them to speak up for themselves and receive the care they deserve. Early detection is critical. My cancer was detected late, but I was able to share my results with family members. Because of that, they were also diagnosed, and theirs was caught so early that they did not have to go through all that I endured, chemotherapy, surgeries, medications, and infections. That is what truly saves money, suffering, and lives.

I urge your committee to pass HB1970 HD2 to protect public health data and support cancer patients and families across Hawai'i.

Sincerely,
Cassie Pali

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

Monday, March 23, 2026 (1:11 pm)

Individual Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 1970, HD2
RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII CANCER CENTER.

Aloha Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit an individual testimony. I am in **strong support** of House Bill 1970 HD2, which would fund the Hawai'i Tumor Registry, the cancer surveillance program in the state.

My name is Izumi Okado, and I am an Assistant Professor/Researcher the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center. My testimony is submitted as an individual and not as a representative of the University of Hawai'i or the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center.

Cancer is the second leading cause of death in Hawai'i; nearly 7,500 Hawai'i residents are diagnosed with invasive cancer, and over 2,393 residents die from cancer. Over 66,000 Hawai'i residents are cancer survivors. Cancer surveillance in the state of Hawai'i is led by the Hawai'i Tumor Registry (HTR) at the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center. The HTR is the state's only comprehensive cancer surveillance program, and as one of 22 National Cancer Institute (NCI) cancer registries in the US, the HTR collects vital data on cancer diagnosis, treatment, and outcomes. Cancer surveillance is essential to understanding how, where, and in whom cancer is occurring – to ensure that all Hawai'i residents diagnosed with cancer benefit from early detection and treatment.

Due to federal cuts to the National Institutes of Health funding, the HTR faces over 20% reduction in federal funding. Furthermore, funding restrictions placed on the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center further jeopardize the ability of the HTR to continue its robust cancer surveillance that is critical to the health of Hawai'i residents. Funding for the HTR will support the ongoing work of the HTR and prevent gaps in cancer surveillance efforts.

Thank you.

Izumi Okado, PhD, Assistant Professor, University of Hawai'i Cancer Center

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

Monday, March 23, 2026 (1:11 Pm)

**Individual Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 1970, HD2
RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII CANCER CENTER.**

Aloha Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committees:

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 1970 HD2, which aims to fund the Hawai'i Tumor Registry (HTR), the state's cancer surveillance program.

My name is Ian Pagano, and I am a biostatistician at the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center. I am submitting this individual testimony, not as a representative of the University of Hawai'i or the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center. As a biostatistician, I rely on HTR data to analyze cancer trends and outcomes across our state's diverse population.

Cancer is a major public health issue in Hawai'i. It ranks as the second leading cause of death, with nearly 7,500 residents diagnosed with invasive cancer and over 2,393 losing their lives to the disease. Remarkably, over 66,000 Hawai'i residents have survived cancer.

The Hawai'i Tumor Registry (HTR), led by the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center, serves as a pivotal component in cancer surveillance within the state. As the sole comprehensive cancer surveillance program in Hawai'i, the HTR diligently collects crucial data on cancer diagnoses, treatments, and outcomes. These data are indispensable for comprehending the patterns and trends of cancer in the state, thereby facilitating early detection and treatment for all Hawai'i residents diagnosed with the disease.

However, the HTR faces significant challenges due to federal funding cuts to the National Institutes of Health. These cuts have resulted in a substantial reduction of over 20% in federal funding for the HTR. Furthermore, funding restrictions imposed on the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center further jeopardize the HTR's ability to continue its robust cancer surveillance efforts, which are crucial for the health and well-being of Hawai'i residents.

I request the Committee's support for House Bill 1970 HD2 and appropriate the necessary state funds to ensure the continued operation of the Hawai'i Tumor Registry. Without this support, critical cancer surveillance could be compromised, jeopardizing early detection, research, and improved survival rates for all Hawai'i residents.

Thank you very much.

Ian Pagano
University of Hawai'i Cancer Center

HB-1970-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 2:58:47 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/23/2026 1:11:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Annette M David	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

RE: Strong Support of HB 1970 HD2: Relating to the University of Hawaii Cancer Center

Hearing Date: Monday, March 23, 2026

Committee on Education

Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani and committee members:

My name is Dr. Annette M. David, and I am a cancer survivor and a cancer prevention and control advocate. I am in STRONG SUPPORT of HB1970 HD2 which would fund Hawaii's tumor registry, the cancer surveillance program in the state.

Good surveillance underpins prevention and control efforts. Here in Guam, I and other advocates worked diligently to ensure that tobacco tax revenues would be used to fund the Guam Cancer Registry. I published an account of this experience in the Journal of Cancer Policy in 2017.

Passed in 2010, [Public Law 30-80](#) in Guam increased tobacco taxes and earmarked 1% of this revenue specifically for the [University of Guam](#) Cancer Registry (GCR), providing a sustainable funding source for data collection. This tax, along with the 15% dedicated to the Cancer Trust Fund, helps fund cancer screening, treatment, and research efforts, supporting the island's health infrastructure against tobacco-related illnesses.

Hawaii's Cancer Registry needs sustainable funding support to permit the vital function of monitoring cancer incidence, prevalence and mortality. I urge your committee to pass HB1970 HD2 to protect public health data.

Sincerely,

Annette M. David, MD, MPH, FACOEM

TAmuning, GU 96931

HB-1970-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 3:23:20 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/23/2026 1:11:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
thomas wills	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Date: March 21, 2026

To: COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair

Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

Members of the Senate Committee on Education

Re: HB 1970, HD2, Relating to University of Hawaii Cancer Center, Hawaii Tumor Registry

I am expressing my **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 1970 HD 2. I am a faculty member in the Cancer Prevention Program at the University of Hawaii Cancer Center. In planning and implementation of our prevention activities, we rely heavily on data from the Hawai'i Tumor Registry, firstly because it provides comprehensive and accurate data on cancer in Hawaii, also because we can obtain data useful for targeting of prevention programs, for example data on the particular elevation of cancer among Native Hawaiian women, for whom we are conducting smoking cessation programs.

The Hawaii Tumor Registry plays a critical role for tracking cancer incidence and outcomes across the diverse population of Hawaii. Its data directly inform prevention strategies, support early detection efforts, and enable researchers and clinicians to better understand cancer trends affecting our communities. Continued funding is essential to maintain high quality data collection and ensure that Hawaii's cancer burden is accurately represented.

We emphasize that data from the Tumor Registry are important for cancer screening programs. Current screening programs are bringing benefits through enabling more accurate screening for breast cancer and through identifying early-stage lung cancer, which is more treatable than late-stage lung cancer.

The Hawaii Tumor Registry is the only source of comprehensive data for all types of cancer in Hawaii. The activities of this vital resource have been adversely by budget cuts from the current administration in Washington. This bill will enable continuing surveillance of cancer trends in Hawaii. For this reason I am registering my **STRONG SUPPORT** for HB1970 HD2.

Thomas A. Wills, Ph.D.

HB-1970-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 4:25:41 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/23/2026 1:11:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jami Fukui	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in strong support of continued funding for the Hawai‘i Tumor Registry. As a citizen of Hawai‘i and a researcher and medical oncologist focused on breast cancer, I have seen firsthand how essential high-quality, population-based cancer data is to advancing science, improving patient outcomes, and addressing disparities across our islands.

The Hawai‘i Tumor Registry is one of the most valuable public health resources we have. Its long-standing, comprehensive data collection allows researchers to identify trends in cancer incidence, survival, and risk factors across diverse populations. In a state as unique as ours—home to Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and many Asian communities—this level of detail is critical. Breast cancer does not affect all groups equally, and without the registry, we would lack the evidence needed to understand and respond to these differences in meaningful ways.

In my own work, registry data has helped guide research questions, validate findings, and ensure that studies reflect real-world patterns in Hawai‘i. It supports everything from early detection strategies to survivorship care planning. Just as importantly, it informs policymakers and healthcare providers, enabling smarter decisions about resource allocation, screening programs, and community outreach.

Sustained investment in the Hawai‘i Tumor Registry is not just an investment in data—it is an investment in the health and well-being of our communities. By supporting this bill, you are ensuring that researchers, clinicians, and public health leaders have the tools they need to reduce the burden of cancer and move us closer to a future where fewer families are affected by this disease. I respectfully urge your support.

Thank you,

Jami Fukui, MD, Breast medical oncologist, Associate Professor and Researcher

HB-1970-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 3:27:32 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/23/2026 1:11:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Unhee Lim	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1970 and urge the EDU Committee to pass this important bill of statewide concern.

Unhee Lim

HB-1970-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 5:19:39 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/23/2026 1:11:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Hausler	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

RE: Strong Support of HB 1970 HD2: Relating to the University of Hawai‘i Cancer Center

Hearing Date: Monday, March 23, 2026; TIME: 1:11PM

Committee on Education

Chair Kim and committee members:

My name is Jennifer Ikeda Hausler and I was a former caretaker. I am in **STRONG SUPPORT of HB1970 HD2** which would fund Hawai‘i's tumor registry, the cancer surveillance program in the state.

My late husband was tracked by the tumor board when he was first diagnosed at age 27 and I believed it helped him live a little longer until he passed away 6 years later. We were able to have another child.

I urge your committee to pass HB1970 HD2 to protect public health data.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Ikeda Hausler

Pearl City, 96782

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF
H.B. 1970, H.D. 2
Relating to the University of Hawaii Cancer Center
Thirty-Third Legislature, 2026**

Submitted by:
John Shepherd, PhD
Private Citizen
Honolulu, Hawaii

Note: The views expressed in this testimony are solely my own and do not represent the official position of the University of Hawaii, the University of Hawaii Cancer Center, any program I direct, or any other institution or organization with which I am affiliated.

Position: SUPPORT

To the Members of the Committee:

I submit this testimony as a private citizen in strong support of H.B. 1970, H.D. 2, which would appropriate state funds to the University of Hawaii Cancer Center (UHCC) to sustain the operations of the Hawaii Tumor Registry (HTR). I have spent more than two decades conducting cancer research in Hawaii, including work that depends directly on the HTR as foundational infrastructure, and I believe the case for this appropriation is compelling and urgent.

The Hawaii Tumor Registry Is Critical Research Infrastructure

For over fifty years, the HTR has been a cornerstone of cancer surveillance in Hawaii and a nationally recognized leader within the National Cancer Institute's Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results (SEER) program. Its value extends far beyond data collection. The HTR provides the foundational linkage infrastructure that makes population-based cancer research in Hawaii possible. Without it, there is no reliable mechanism to connect screening outcomes, clinical data, and long-term health trajectories for Hawaii's uniquely diverse and geographically dispersed population.

Personal Experience: Research That Depends on the Hawaii Tumor Registry

In my personal research capacity, I have worked extensively with the Hawaii Pacific Islands Mammography Registry (HIPIMR), a population-based mammography registry serving Hawaii and the U.S.-Affiliated Pacific Islands. The scientific integrity of this work depends fundamentally on linkage with the HTR. That linkage enables researchers to validate screening outcomes, track cancer incidence and stage at detection, and assess the long-term impact of mammography practices on mortality across populations that are profoundly underrepresented in national research. The federally funded studies I have been involved with, including work on breast cancer disparities, AI-assisted screening detection, and early detection in underserved Pacific Island communities, all rely on the continued operation of the HTR. A disruption to the registry is not an administrative inconvenience; it is a direct threat to the scientific validity and continuity of this research.

The Funding Crisis Is Real and Urgent

As described in H.B. 1970, H.D. 2, the HTR currently faces a twenty-one percent reduction in federal funding as a result of broader National Institutes of Health budget constraints. This shortfall is compounded by restrictions on institutional resources at the UHCC, threatening the ability to meet the mandatory twenty percent cost-sharing requirement under the federal SEER contract. If the cost-share requirement cannot be met, Hawaii risks losing its SEER membership entirely, an outcome that would set back decades of investment in cancer surveillance infrastructure and permanently impair our state's ability to monitor, understand, and address cancer in our communities.

State Investment Is Essential and Well-Justified

H.B. 1970, H.D. 2 takes a targeted and fiscally sound approach by directing appropriations to offset the federal reduction, meet the cost-share obligation, support the tumor biorepository, and fund statewide pathology reporting software. Each of these investments directly protects the registry's operational capacity and its value to the state. The HTR has earned its recognition as a top-performing cancer registry in the United States and across North America. Its contributions to landmark federal legislation, including the Childhood Cancer STAR Act of 2018 and the National Firefighter Registry for Cancer, demonstrate that this registry punches well above its weight on the national stage. Hawaii has an extraordinary asset in the HTR. This bill ensures we do not lose it.

I respectfully urge the Committee to pass H.B. 1970, H.D. 2. The health of Hawaii's residents and the integrity of our cancer research enterprise depend on it. I am available to answer any questions the Committee may have.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

John Shepherd, PhD

Honolulu, Hawaii

Affiliations listed for identification purposes only:

Chief Scientific Officer, University of Hawaii Cancer Center

Director, Hawaii Pacific Islands Mammography Registry

HB-1970-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 11:30:31 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/23/2026 1:11:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Owen Chan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the Committee on Education:

My name is Owen Chan, and I am writing to provide my strong support of HB1970 HD2.

I am a practicing pathologist in our community and also co-direct the Pathology Core at the UH Cancer Center. I am testifying in full support of HB1970 HD2 for state funding support for the University of Hawai‘i Cancer Center Hawai‘i Tumor Registry (HTR).

Whenever a patient in the state of Hawai‘i has a biopsy or an organ removed (for example, because of cancer), the tissue is preserved in blocks of paraffin wax. Microscopic slides to be read by pathologists for a diagnosis are made from these tissue blocks. Afterwards, these tissue blocks are then stored at the hospital labs for ten years.

After ten years, all of these blocks of tissue from hospital labs from all over the state are then sent to the UH Cancer Center HTR, serving as the final, centralized, storage facility in Hawai‘i. From this, one can realize how valuable the HTR is as a research source.

The HTR is unmatched in the volume and diversity of tissue types that would enable research that is representative of people from our state. In fact, mainland research institutions make requests to our HTR for their research projects due to our unique demographics.

The HTR provides unrivaled research value. However, it does require the financial resources to maintain this continually growing collection of tissue specimens. I urge you to consider to support this irreplaceable research resource.

Mahalo,

Owen Chan, MD, PhD

HB-1970-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 7:14:48 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/23/2026 1:11:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daryl Kurozawa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

RE: Strong Support of HB 1970 HD2: Relating to the University of Hawaii Cancer Center

Hearing Date: Monday, March 23, 2026; TIME: 1:11PM

Committee on Education

Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani and committee members:

My name is Daryl Kurozawa and I am an advocate for UH Cancer Center's Community Advisory Board. I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB1970 HD2 which would fund Hawaii's tumor registry, the cancer surveillance program in the state.

As a surgeon based on Hawai'i Island I have experienced first hand the importance of the Hawai'i Tumor Registry. Information from the registry allows providers to offer consistent and improved cancer care. The tumor registry tracks cancer treatments and short term and long term outcomes. This information is vital to care and survival for cancer patients in Hawai'i.

Due to the federal cuts to the National Cancer Institute's SEER program, funding for the Hawai'i Tumor Registry will decrease by over 20%. This change is significant and will result in the loss many expert staff. Services such as cancer case reporting and vital functions such as the state's tumor biorepository and the rebuild of electronic pathology reporting will be at risk. Please join us in supporting funding for the Hawai'i Tumor Registry.

I urge your committee to pass HB1970 HD2 to protect public health data.

Sincerely,

Daryl Kurozawa, MD

Kealahou, Hawaii

HB-1970-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 7:26:59 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/23/2026 1:11:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert Smitson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani and committee members:

My name is Robert Smitson and I am a physician and chief medical officer at Castle. I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB1970 HD2 which would fund Hawaii's tumor registry, the cancer surveillance program in the state.

I urge your committee to pass HB1970 HD2 to protect public health data.

Sincerely,

Robert Smitson

96816

HB-1970-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 7:35:04 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/23/2026 1:11:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Xiaoping Wang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

RE: Strong Support of HB1970 HD2: Relating to the University of Hawaii Cancer Center

Hearing Date: Monday, March 23, 2026; TIME: 1:11PM

Committee on Education

Chair Kim and committee members:

My name is Xiaoping Wang and I am a researcher studying breast cancer. I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB1970 HD2 which would fund Hawaii's tumor registry, the cancer surveillance program in the state.

My research has shown that Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) breast cancer patients have the highest breast cancer incidence and mortality rates among all racial and ethnic groups in Hawaii. There is an urgent need to understand why these disparities exist and how we can reduce breast cancer mortality in these underserved and understudied populations. The Hawaii Tumor Registry (HTR) has been essential for this work by providing access to patient tumor samples and critical data needed to study cancer disparities in our state. Without the Tumor Registry's support and resources, it would not be possible for researchers like us to conduct studies aimed at reducing breast cancer disparities and improving outcomes for NHPI patients.

Continued support for the HTR is critical for understanding cancer disparities, guiding public health policy, and improving cancer outcomes for the people of Hawaii.

I respectfully urge your committee to pass HB1970 HD2 to protect this critical public health data resource and support cancer research and cancer prevention efforts in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Xiaoping Wang, PhD

3029 Lowrey Ave., Apt. Q2226

Honolulu, HI, 96822

HB-1970-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 10:58:34 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/23/2026 1:11:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lynne Wilkens	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am strongly supportive of state support of the Hawaii Tumor Registry. By statute, cancer cases are reportable to the HTR (HRS 324-21). This registry is essential for the healthcare system and researchers to understand to which cancers the population of Hawaii is most vulnerable to and requires the attention to mitigate and manage this risk. There are cancers that are higher in Hawaii than the rest of the US and require unique solutions. Cancers of the liver, stomach and thyroid cancer are examples of this. We have been fortunate that funds from the National Cancer Institute, complemented with University of Hawaii Cancer Center funds, has covered the vast majority of costs of the HTR for the past several decades. However, as federal and UH funds are becoming much less secure, state support of the the HTR is critical.

HB-1970-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 12:05:32 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/23/2026 1:11:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anamalia Su'esu'e	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee members,

My name is Ana Su'esu'e and I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB1970: Relating to University of Hawaii Cancer Center.

Cancer touches nearly every family across the U.S., and especially here in Hawai'i. My father passed away from cancer in 2020, and I have lost several other family members to this disease, losses that make this issue deeply personal for me. If we are serious about continuing the fight against cancer, we must support the research and data systems that help our medical community understand how to prevent, detect, and treat it more effectively.

The tumor registry is a critical tool for doctors and researchers to understand how cancer affects different populations, and it is especially vital for underserved communities like Pacific Islanders, who experience disproportionately high cancer mortality. Sustained cancer surveillance allows us to see where cancer is occurring, who is most affected, and how to ensure earlier detection and better outcomes for everyone. I strongly urge the Legislature to pass HB1970 to protect public health and advance cancer equity in Hawai'i.

Sincerely,

Anamalia Su'esu'e

Volcano, 96785

Lynda Asato
Honolulu, HI 96817

RE: Strong Support of HB 1970 HD2: Relating to the University of Hawaii Cancer Center
Hearing Date: Monday, March 23, 2026; TIME: 1:11PM
Committee on Education

Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani and committee members:

My name is Lynda Asato and I am in STRONG SUPPORT of HB1970 HD2: Relating to University of Hawaii Cancer Center. I am a survivor of three breast cancer recurrences, and I rely on the UH Cancer Center to continue the life-saving programs, research, and community resources that have supported me and so many others. Cancer has also deeply affected my family, with multiple relatives being impacted by this disease. The cancer that runs in my family are all different, from colorectal cancer to breast cancer and more. These different cancers should continue to be tracked and documented to understand the various cancer occurrences in Hawaii and what clinical trials to figure out why there may be more cancer prevalence in one type of cancer than others.

This work is not abstract to us—it's personal.

I currently serve on the UH Cancer Center's Patient Advisory Council and multi-cancer survivor, where I see firsthand how vital the Center's data, research, and patient-focused programs are for Hawai'i's diverse communities. Continued funding is essential to ensure that local patients receive care informed by accurate data and research that reflects the people of Hawai'i.

Why HB 1970 is Urgently Needed:

- Federal cuts to the National Cancer Institute's SEER program reduced Hawaii's Tumor Registry (HTR) funding by over 20%.
- Researchers depend on the HTR database to track progress in reducing cancer deaths and incidence.

I urge the Legislature to pass HB1970 HD2 to retain and make visible the gains made by our public health system and to demonstrate how this state's UH Cancer Center advances cancer research. We will overcome cancer someday.

Sincerely,
Lynda Asato
Honolulu, 96817

Written testimony

RE: Strong Support of HB 1970 HD2: Relating to the Hawaii Tumor Registry

Hearing Date: Monday, March 23, 2026; TIME: 1:11PM

Committee on Education

Chair Kim and committee members:

My name is Loic Le Marchand and I am a cancer researcher at the University of Hawaii Cancer Center. I am in STRONG SUPPORT of HB1970 HD2 which would fund Hawaii's Tumor Registry, the cancer surveillance program in the state.

I have been working at UH Cancer Center for almost 43 years and I have witnessed the essential roles that the Hawaii Tumor Registry (HTR) plays in cancer surveillance, cancer research and cancer prevention in our state. HTR has been critical in identifying the cancer disparities that exist in Hawaii from the high risk of breast and lung cancer in Native Hawaiians, to the high risk of stomach and colorectal cancer in Japanese Americans, the high risk of thyroid cancer in Filipinos and the high risk for cervical cancer in Pacific Islanders. In existence since 1960, HTR has also been essential in identifying cancer trends in Hawaii, such as the increasing breast cancer incidence rates in Japanese Americans and the lack of substantial decrease in breast cancer mortality in Native Hawaiians.

HTR has been part of the National Cancer Institute Surveillance, Epidemiology and End Results Program of the National Cancer Institute since 1972. HTR has been one of its premier registries, having received multiple awards for the quality of its data. Unfortunately, NCI is cutting funding for research and registries.

Many state registries in the nation are financially supported by their state. It is critical that the HI state legislature provide substantial funding so that HTR can continue to function and provide data to the state administration and anyone engaged in the fight against cancer.

I urge your committee to pass HB1970 HD2 to protect these critical public health data.

Sincerely,

Loic Le Marchand

Kaneohe, HI 96744

LATE

HB-1970-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 12:33:42 AM
Testimony for EDU on 3/23/2026 1:11:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Josh Fowler	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT

HB1970 HD2 provides critical funding to sustain Hawai‘i’s cancer surveillance system, which informs prevention, treatment, and public health policy.

Bill Identification

HB1970 HD2 – Relating to the University of Hawai‘i Cancer Center
Committee on Education
March 23, 2026, 1:11 PM

Chair Kim and Members of the Committee:

My name is Josh Fowler, a resident of Kapolei. I am writing in **strong support** of HB1970 HD2.

- **Cancer remains a major public health burden in Hawai‘i.**
It is the second leading cause of death in the state, with thousands of new cases and deaths each year. Effective response depends on accurate, statewide data.
- **The Hawai‘i Tumor Registry is the State’s primary cancer data system.**
It is the only comprehensive program that collects and tracks all invasive cancer diagnoses across Hawai‘i. This data supports prevention strategies, screening efforts, treatment planning, and research.
- **Data quality directly affects policy and outcomes.**
Hawai‘i has a uniquely diverse population. Without consistent, high-quality data collection, disparities in cancer incidence and outcomes may go unmeasured and unaddressed.
- **Federal funding reductions create a gap that must be addressed.**
Cuts to the National Cancer Institute’s Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results (SEER) program have reduced support for the Hawai‘i Tumor Registry by more than twenty percent. Without state funding, the program’s continuity is at risk.
- **Loss of the registry would have statewide consequences.**
Public health agencies, providers, and researchers rely on this data to make informed decisions. Disruptions would reduce the State’s ability to track trends, allocate resources, and evaluate outcomes.

Conclusion

HB1970 HD2 sustains a core public health function that supports cancer prevention, early detection, and treatment statewide. I respectfully urge the Committee to pass this measure.

Sincerely,

Josh Fowler

Kapolei, Hawai'i 96707

LATE

To: Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Education

RE: Strong Support of HB 1970 HD2: Relating to the University of Hawaii Cancer Center

Hearing: Monday, March 23, 2026; TIME: 1:11PM
Committee on Education

Dear Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and Committee Members:

My name is Michelle Hashimoto, a current Pu'unui resident, 1988 graduate of Moanalua High School, 1992 graduate of University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, current staff of the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center ... and long-time cancer fighter in my community. My two young adult kids went to Ma'ema'e Elementary School, Kawanakoa Middle School, Roosevelt High School / McKinley High School, and Honolulu Community College, Kapiolani Community College, and the University of Hawai'i at West O'ahu. I am also an advocate for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network and the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center. I am writing in STRONG SUPPORT of **HB 1970 HD2**: Relating to the University of Hawaii Cancer Center which would fund the **Hawai'i Tumor Registry** (HTR), the cancer surveillance program in the state.

*As a caregiver for my father who battled cancer, a concerned parent of two young adults, and an active community member, I am in STRONG SUPPORT of **HB1970 HD2** : Relating to University of Hawaii Cancer Center.*

Cancer is the second leading cause of death in Hawai'i, with over 9,700 new cases and over 2,400 deaths each year. Sustained cancer surveillance is essential to understanding how, where, and in whom cancer is occurring—and to ensure all patients benefit from early detection and treatment.

Why HB 1970 is Urgently Needed

- Federal cuts to the National Cancer Institute's SEER program reduced HTR's funding by over 20%.
- Without state support, HTR may be forced to lay off expert staff, delay cancer case reporting, and curtail vital functions. I can speak firsthand that each and every staff is essential.
- The bill will restore essential capacity by offsetting federal funding losses; meeting federal cost-sharing requirements; sustaining the state's tumor biorepository; and rebuilding electronic pathology reporting infrastructure across hospitals and labs.

My 86-year old father was diagnosed with esophageal cancer a few months before his passing. My father went into cancer remission before passing from health issues including Parkinson's Disease. Please know that through research studies, lifesaving findings help folks like my father

get diagnosed earlier as well as have more treatment options and **better health outcomes**. Our families and friends need your support today and ... for our future. We cannot lose the **Hawai'i Tumor Registry**, our state's vital resource. No one can dispute good local data.

I humbly ask for your **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 1970 HD2. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Michelle Hashimoto
2533 Stream Drive
Honolulu, HI 96817 / (808) 741-5854