



# 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  
March 16, 2026 at 1:00 p.m.

By

Lui Hokoana

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

#### HB 2416 HD1 – RELATING TO A MARITIME YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP PATHWAY PROGRAM.

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

The University of Hawai'i supports HB 2416 HD1, which directs the University of Hawai'i Community College system, together with Honolulu Community College (HonCC) and Windward Community College (WinCC), to conduct a comprehensive study and develop a plan for a state-sponsored maritime youth apprenticeship program serving individuals sixteen to twenty four years of age, with one recommendation for an amendment.

The University is most appreciative that the current version of the bill has included an appropriation for the costs of the comprehensive statewide study. Such an appropriation would provide for a temporary project coordinator, data consultants, and statewide industry workshops necessary for such a study.

The University also appreciates and supports the amendments incorporated which direct the UHCC System lead the study together with participation by HonCC and WCC, as well as to require the Department of Education, Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism, and the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to provide the necessary workforce and enrollment data to support the findings.

One remaining challenge is that, as drafted, the bill takes effect July 1, 2026, with a report due in December 2026. This five-month window is insufficient to conduct meaningful statewide outreach, coordinate with multiple state agencies, and design a curriculum that meets federal apprenticeship standards.

The University of Hawai'i respectfully requests the following amendment:

Amend Section 3 to require the report prior to the 2028 Regular Session. This allows for a longer time for planning, stakeholder recruitment, and alignment with the academic calendar.

The University of Hawai'i supports the intent of HB 2416 HD1, as long as its passage

does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our BOR Approved Budget and that the operational concerns noted above are addressed.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education  
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair  
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair**

**Monday, March 16, 2026, at 1:00PM  
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference**

**RE: HB2416 HD1 Relating to a Maritime Youth Apprenticeship**

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

My name is Sherry Menor, President and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber"). The Chamber supports House Bill 2416 House Draft 1 (HB2416 HD1) which directs Honolulu Community College, in partnership with state agencies and maritime employers, to conduct a study and develop a plan for a statewide Maritime Youth Apprenticeship Program for individuals ages 16 to 24 and requires a report to the Legislature with recommendations on program structure, resource needs, proposed legislation and implementation options.

HB2416 HD1 aligns with our 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii: An Economic Action Plan, specifically under the policy pillar for the Maritime industry. This pillar emphasizes the necessity of building a skilled, local maritime workforce that supports resilient harbor operations, shipbuilding and repair, interisland transportation, and broader ocean-based economic activity. With Hawaii importing 85-90% of products and goods consumed, ensuring a healthy and strong workforce for the industry that transports our food and other essentials is an economic imperative. The need for this workforce will only grow as the state export capacity improves with investment in manufacturing and production.

The Chamber believes that study to identify and characterize existing maritime workforce pathways, identify gaps in these pathways, and develop proposals for improving these workforce pathways is a prudent strategy that reduces friction along this workforce pathway and retains young professionals interested in these careers. A robust pathway connects Hawaii's young professionals with high paying jobs and improves the State's economic security as an island chain that relies upon imports.

For these reasons, we respectfully ask to pass House Bill 2416 House Draft 1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii is the state's leading business advocacy organization, dedicated to improving Hawaii's economy and securing Hawaii's future for growth and opportunity. Our mission is to foster a vibrant economic climate. As such, we support initiatives and policies that align with the 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii that create opportunities to strengthen overall competitiveness, improve the quantity and skills of available workforce, diversify the economy, and build greater local wealth.



March 16, 2026

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

Sen. Donna Mercado Kim, Chair; Sen. Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair; and Committee Members  
Public Hearing, March 16, 2026, 1:00 p.m. – Conference Room 229, State Capitol

**Testimony of William F. Anonsen**

**Managing Partner/Principal of The Maritime Group**

**In Support of H.B. 2416 HD1, Relating to Maritime Youth Apprenticeship Pathway Program**

My name is William F. Anonsen, Managing Partner/Principal of The Maritime Group, and we respectfully submit this testimony in support of H.B. 2416 HD1. I previously testified in support of this measure and appreciate the thoughtful amendments reflected in the House Committee Report and the continued advancement of this important workforce initiative.

Hawai'i's maritime sector, including shipbuilding and repair, port and harbor operations, and marine transportation, is essential to the State's economic resilience, supply chain reliability, and emergency preparedness. In a multi-island state where most goods arrive by sea, maintaining a skilled maritime workforce is critical to Hawai'i's long-term stability. H.B. 2416 HD1 takes a prudent approach by directing the University of Hawai'i Community College System, in partnership with state agencies and maritime industry employers, to conduct a study and develop a plan for a statewide Maritime Youth Apprenticeship Pathway Program serving individuals ages sixteen to twenty-four.

This planning-first framework will help ensure that any future apprenticeship program aligns with industry workforce needs, supports career and technical education pathways, and incorporates paid on-the-job training and mentorship opportunities.

A well-designed maritime apprenticeship pathway would create meaningful career opportunities for local youth, provide industry-recognized training, and strengthen the long-term resilience of Hawai'i's ports, maritime services, and supply chain infrastructure. From my work with maritime operators and workforce partners statewide, there is broad recognition that rebuilding Hawai'i's maritime talent pipeline is both urgent and necessary. This measure represents a thoughtful and fiscally responsible step toward that goal.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony and for your leadership in supporting Hawai'i's maritime workforce development.

Respectfully submitted,

*William F. Anonsen*

William F. Anonsen  
Managing Partner/Principal  
THE MARITIME GROUP

**HB-2416-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 2:32:05 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/16/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
M. Leilani DeMello	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I KĀKO‘O this bill in hopes that our young adults have more avenues of success provided to them. We need our most precious resource here, in Hawai‘i, and they need to have the ability to earn a wage that allows for that.

Mahalo,

M. Leilani DeMello

‘Ōla‘a, Puna, Hawai‘i

**HB-2416-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/14/2026 7:31:10 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/16/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tiffany Ing	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TO: Aloha Chair and Members of the House Committee

SUBJECT: In STRONG support of HB 2416

I am a kumu at Hālau Kū Māna New Century Public Charter School, where I work with high school seniors as they apply for colleges or seek out a career.

Every year, I work with at least one or two students who are interested in pursuing a job in the maritime industry. As there are currently no institutions of higher learning in maritime in Hawai‘i, most of our students enroll at the California Polytechnic State University Maritime Academy or Tongue Point. These are fine schools. But it makes more sense to train in the waters of Hawai‘i and learn from professionals who have worked in Hawai‘i if students will eventually earn jobs that are located in Hawai‘i.

Furthermore, HB 2416 will provide opportunities for students as young as sixteen years old, so they will have even more time to gain the experience, skills, and knowledge needed to be successful in this field and build relationships with mentors here in Hawai‘i. At Hālau Kū Māna, because of our ‘āina-based and project-focused curriculum, by the time many are in the sixth grade, they already know that they want a job working in the kai. They thrive there. They have found their purpose. Imagine the added potential of the students entering this program because they have an additional two to three years of experience, interning, schooling, and mentoring right here in Hawai‘i.

HB 2416 will also mean more jobs for those in the maritime industry. Mahalo for the opportunity to present my testimony in strong support of HB 2416.

Tiffany Lani Ing

Mānoa, O‘ahu, Hawai‘i



Testimony in **SUPPORT** for HB 2416 HD1,  
Relating to a Maritime Youth Apprenticeship Pathway Program

Senate Committee on Education  
March 16, 2026

Aloha Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and members of the committee,

The Hawai'i Harbors Users Group is in **support** of HB 2416 HD1, relating to a maritime youth apprenticeship pathway program. This bill directs Honolulu Community College, in partnership with state agencies and maritime employers, to study and develop a plan for a statewide Maritime Youth Apprenticeship Program for individuals ages 16 to 24, requires a report to the Legislature with recommendations on program structure, resource needs, proposed legislation, and implementation options, and appropriates funds for that work.

HHUG represents maritime businesses and stakeholders who rely on a skilled, reliable, and locally based workforce to keep Hawai'i's ports operating safely and efficiently. One of our core priorities is expanding workforce development within the maritime sector, and this measure takes an important step toward building sustainable training pipelines for future generations of mariners, shipyard workers, port operators, and marine service professionals.

By bringing together Honolulu Community College, state agencies, and private-sector employers, HB 2416 HD1 encourages thoughtful collaboration between educators and industry to ensure that training pathways align with real-world needs. The bill's focus on curriculum development, paid on-the-job learning opportunities, mentorship, industry-recognized credentials, and implementation planning will help ensure that any future program is both practical and responsive to Hawai'i's unique maritime economy.

Investing in a strong local workforce strengthens supply-chain reliability, supports economic resilience, and helps retain young residents by connecting them to stable, high-wage careers rooted in our island communities. HHUG believes this study and planning effort will provide lawmakers with the data and recommendations needed to make informed decisions about how best to grow Hawai'i's maritime workforce over the long term.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this important measure.



# HAWAII PORTS MARITIME COUNCIL

affiliated with

Maritime Trades Department

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR and CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATION

606 Kalihi Street Honolulu, Hawaii 96819

TELEPHONE: (808) 845-5222

FAX: (808) 841-1191

Member Unions:

March 16, 2026

**LATE**

*Hawaii Government  
Employees Association,  
AFSCME Local 152*

Senate Committee on Education  
Honorable Donna Mercado Kim, Chair  
Honorable Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair  
Members of the Committee on Education

*Hawaii Pilots Association,  
MM&P Pilots Division*

*Inlandboamens' Union  
of the Pacific*

RE: HB2416 HD1 RELATING TO MARITIME YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP  
PATHWAY PROGRAM

*International Brotherhood of  
Boilermakers, Iron Ship  
Builders, Blacksmiths,  
Forgers and Helpers  
Lodge 627*

Dear Chair, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee:

*International Brotherhood of  
Electrical Workers Local 1186*

*International Brotherhood of  
Electrical Workers Local 1260*

*International Longshore and  
Warehouse Union Local 142*

*International Union of  
Elevator Constructors  
Local 126*

The Hawaii Ports Maritime Council strongly supports HB2416 HD1. The maritime industry is the lifeline of the State of Hawai'i with over 90% of imported goods transported on cargo vessels. Our members operate these vessels across the Deck, Engine, and Steward departments. Their work is unique and demanding, requiring long hours at sea, specialized technical skills, and the ability to respond safely to challenging conditions. They undergo strict national and international training, including safety courses, job-specific instruction, exams, and U.S. Coast Guard credentialing. This bill will create structured maritime youth apprenticeship pathways, addressing labor shortages and preparing the next generation to meet the high standards our industry requires.

*Ironworkers Union  
Stabilization Fund  
Local 625*

By investing in pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs, Hawai'i can provide youth with meaningful career opportunities, technical skills, and federally recognized credentials. Supporting HB2416 HD1 strengthens both Hawai'i's workforce and the safety and reliability of its maritime operations.

*Laborers' International Union  
of North America Local 368*

*Marine Engineers'  
Beneficial Association*

Therefore, the Hawaii Ports Maritime Council appreciates your consideration and strongly urges passage of HB2416 HD1.

*Marine Firemen,  
Watertenders, Oilers & Wipers*

Respectfully,

*Masters, Mates and Pilots,  
Offshore Division*

*Sailors' Union of the Pacific*

Randy Swindell  
President

*Seafarers International Union*

*Sheet Metal Workers Local 293*

*United Food and Commercial  
Workers International Union  
Local 480*



**WAIANAЕ COAST  
COMPREHENSIVE  
HEALTH CENTER**

**Monday, 03-16-26 1:00PM**  
**State Capitol, Conference Room 229**

**LATE**

**Senate Committee on Education**

**To:** Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair,  
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

**From:** Ian Ross  
Public Affairs Director  
ianross@wcchc.com | (808) 697-3457

**RE: SUPPORT FOR HOUSE BILL 2416 - RELATING TO A MARITIME YOUTH  
APPRENTICESHIP PATHWAY PROGRAM**

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Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center (WCCHC) **supports** H.B. 2416 H.D.1, which directs the University of Hawai'i Community College System, in partnership with state agencies and maritime employers, to conduct a study and develop a plan for a statewide Maritime Youth Apprenticeship Program for individuals ages 16 to 24.

Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center (WCCHC) is a Federally Qualified Health Center dedicated to improving the health and well-being of the West O'ahu community by providing accessible and affordable medical care. We serve over 36,000 patients annually with clinics spanning from Wai'anae to Waipahu. With 53 years of service, WCCHC is committed to providing comprehensive healthcare that supports the whole person and improves long-term health outcomes for the communities we serve.

Increasing workforce development opportunities is critical to strengthening Hawai'i's economy. Many sectors across the state are facing workforce shortages driven by an aging workforce and limited training pipelines. At the same time, many local youth lack access to hands-on career pathways that lead to stable, family-sustaining jobs.

WCCHC is a learning center, and as a part of our mission we support health career training to ensure a better future for our community. However, we acknowledge that not everyone can work in healthcare. We broadly support programs that provide residents with a career pathway to stable jobs. A maritime career is one such path. For this reason, we recognize this measure offers a step toward strengthening Hawai'i's workforce development system and expanding opportunities for young people across the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.



# Seafarers

International Union

Atlantic, Gulf, Lakes and Inland Waters

606 Kalihi Street, Honolulu, HI 96819-4061 - (808) 845-5222  
WWW.SEA-FARERS.ORG

**LATE**

DAVID HEINDEL  
PRESIDENT

Senate Committee on Education  
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair  
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair  
Members of the Committee on Education

AUGUSTIN TELLEZ  
EXECUTIVE  
VICE-PRESIDENT

March 16, 2026

TOM ORZECZOWSKI  
SECRETARY-TREASURER

RE: Testimony in Support of HB2416 HD1 – Relating to the Maritime Youth Apprenticeship Pathway Program

GEORGE TRICKER  
VICE PRESIDENT

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

DEAN CORGEY  
VICE PRESIDENT

On behalf of the Seafarers International Union, we express our strong support for HB2416 HD1. We represent hardworking men and women who operate vessels serving the entire Hawai'i community. The ocean is our highway and the lifeline to the State of Hawai'i. Our members work in the Deck, Engine, and Steward departments, performing demanding jobs that require extensive training, technical skill, and strict safety standards. They are also required to regularly renew their training and credentials to ensure ongoing safety and compliance with national and international standards. Our members routinely serve five-month rotations at sea, often twice each year, requiring long separations from their Ohana and loved ones in order to keep Hawai'i's supply chain moving.

JOSEPH T. SORESI  
VICE PRESIDENT

BRYAN POWELL  
VICE PRESIDENT

JOE VINCENZO  
VICE PRESIDENT

PAT VANDEGRIFT  
VICE PRESIDENT

HB2416 HD1 will help build a structured pathway for young people to enter the maritime workforce through youth apprenticeship opportunities. These programs will help address workforce shortages while preparing the next generation with the skills, training, and credentials required to meet the high standards of our industry.

SAM SPAIN  
VICE PRESIDENT

We believe investing in maritime youth apprenticeship programs strengthens Hawai'i's workforce and supports the continued safety and reliability of the state's maritime transportation system.

KAREN HORTON-GENNETTE  
UIW NATIONAL DIRECTOR

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the passage of HB2416 HD1.

Sincerely,

Hazel Galbiso  
Port of Honolulu

**HB-2416-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/15/2026 7:20:43 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/16/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kristi Desaucido	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony in Support of HB2416 HD1  
Relating to a Maritime Youth Apprenticeship Pathway Program**

Aloha,

I support HB2416 HD1. I work at a Hawaiian-focused charter school that partners with Honolulu Community College, and we see how valuable career pathways and hands-on learning opportunities are for our students.

Many of our students are interested in ocean-related careers and maritime work. Each year we have students who want to pursue this path, but because there are so few youth programs in Hawai‘i, some of them end up going to places like Oregon to participate in maritime training programs.

Creating a Maritime Youth Apprenticeship Pathway here in Hawai‘i would open important opportunities for our students to gain skills and experience while staying connected to their home and communities. Expanding marine apprenticeship opportunities would be a meaningful step for many of our youth who want to work in maritime fields.

Mahalo for your consideration and for supporting opportunities for Hawai‘i’s students.

**HB-2416-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/15/2026 9:44:19 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/16/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Phillippe Fernandez-Brennan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Monday, March 16, 2026, 1:00 PM

Conference Room 2290 & Videoconference

March 15, 2026

Dear Committee Members Kila, Amato, Chun, Evslin, Garrett, Kahaloa, Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Kitagawa, Lowen, Marten, Miyake, Morikawa, Poepoe, Takayama, Tam, and Tarnas,

My name is Phillippe Fernandez-Brennan, and I serve as the Curriculum and Assessment Coordinator and Kumu of Traditional Hawaiian Arts at Hālau Kū Māna Public Charter School. I am testifying as an individual and do not represent any institution.

I strongly support HB2416 HD1, which requests the University of Hawai‘i Community College System, in partnership with state agencies and maritime employers, to conduct a study and develop a plan for a statewide Maritime Youth Apprenticeship Program for individuals ages 16 to 24.

This bill represents an important step toward strengthening Hawai‘i’s maritime workforce while providing meaningful career pathways for our youth. A maritime apprenticeship program would allow young people to gain hands-on experience, industry training, and mentorship while still in their formative years. Beginning opportunities as early as age sixteen ensures that students who are interested in maritime careers can enter a structured pathway that connects education, cultural knowledge of the ocean in Hawai‘i, and professional training.

For many of our haumāna, especially those deeply connected to the ocean and traditional Hawaiian practices, this program would provide an opportunity to remain in Hawai‘i while developing valuable skills. Learning from maritime professionals who are familiar with Hawai‘i’s waters, conditions, and cultural context strengthens both workforce development and stewardship of our marine environment.

Developing talent through a statewide apprenticeship program helps ensure that Hawai'i's maritime sector continues to be supported by individuals who understand the unique relationship between our Hawai'i communities and culture while centering ocean stewardship .

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

Sincerely,

Phillippe R. Fernandez-Brennan, Ph.D.  
pfgalici@hawaii.edu

**HB-2416-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/15/2026 11:55:22 AM

Testimony for EDU on 3/16/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaulana Lani	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Subject:** Testimony in Support of HB2416 – Relating to a Maritime Youth Apprenticeship Pathway Program

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kaulana Lani, and I am writing in strong support of **HB2416**, which directs the University of Hawai‘i Community College System to develop a statewide Maritime Youth Apprenticeship Pathway Program.

As a young person growing up in Hawai‘i, I have seen how important it is for youth to have meaningful pathways into careers that connect them to their community, culture, and the land and ocean that sustain us. Hawai‘i is an island state that relies heavily on maritime industries for transportation, commerce, and environmental stewardship, yet many young people are not aware of the career opportunities available within this field.

A Maritime Youth Apprenticeship Program would give students ages 16 to 24 the chance to explore careers in maritime industries through hands-on learning, mentorship, and real-world experience. Programs like this can provide direction for youth who may not see a clear path after high school while also strengthening Hawai‘i’s workforce in industries that are vital to our state.

This type of program would also encourage young people to build skills in navigation, marine engineering, vessel operations, logistics, and ocean stewardship. These are not only valuable career skills but also ways for youth to develop responsibility, discipline, and pride in contributing to Hawai‘i’s future.

Investing in apprenticeship pathways is an investment in Hawai‘i’s youth. When young people are given opportunities to learn practical skills and connect with mentors in their community, they are more likely to stay engaged, pursue productive careers, and contribute positively to our islands.

I respectfully urge the Legislature to support HB2416 and take this important step toward creating new opportunities for Hawai‘i’s next generation.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Me ka ha'aha'a,  
**Kaulana Lani**

**HB-2416-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/15/2026 12:18:05 PM

Testimony for EDU on 3/16/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Darren Yamabe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please vote yes for HB 2416. I work for a public Charter School in Honolulu. We have students from grades 6 through 12 so this bill would benefit our students who are interested in the maritime industry. This would be an excellent opportunity for our students (and we have many who love the ocean) to stay in Hawai'i, learn in our Kai, and from Kumu who know Hawai'i and it's surrounding waters. Mahalo, Darren