



**TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2026**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

H.B. NO. 2416, RELATING TO A MARITIME YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP PATHWAY PROGRAM.

BEFORE THE:

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

DATE: Friday, February 6, 2026

TIME: 2:05 p.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 309

TESTIFIER(S): Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or
Candace J. Park, Deputy Attorney General

Chair Garrett and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General provides the following comments.

This bill requires the University of Hawai'i, Honolulu Community College, to conduct a study on, develop, and report on a plan for a state-sponsored Maritime Youth Apprenticeship Program serving individuals sixteen to twenty-four years of age.

This bill implicates article X, section 6, of the Hawai'i Constitution, which gives the Board of Regents of the University of Hawai'i "exclusive jurisdiction over the internal structure, management, and operation of the university." Section 6 further provides: "This section shall not limit the power of the legislature to enact laws of statewide concern. The legislature shall have the exclusive jurisdiction to identify laws of statewide concern." We recommend an amendment that adds a statement identifying this bill as a law of statewide concern.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education
February 6, 2026 at 2:05 p.m.

By

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

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

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

The University of Hawai'i supports the intent of HB 2416, which directs Honolulu Community College (HonCC), 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. However, the University offers the following comments and proposed amendments to ensure the study is feasible and successful.

The current draft of HB 2416 presents several operational hurdles:

- The University cannot absorb the costs of a comprehensive statewide study without a specific appropriation. A study of this scope requires dedicated project management, industry data analysis, and travel for neighbor island stakeholder engagement.
- 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.
- Although HonCC is one of several community colleges that conducts career and technical education, it no longer has a Small Vessel Fabrication and Repair program, having closed the program several years ago. Furthermore, HonCC no longer operates or has access to the Marine Education Training Center on Sand Island. It is now operated daily by the Polynesian Voyaging Society. In fact, Windward Community College (WCC) is currently participating in youth pre-apprenticeship maritime work with Kailua High School and maritime partners on O'ahu.

To address these challenges, the University of Hawai'i respectfully requests the following amendments:

- 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 suggests an appropriation to cover the costs of a temporary project coordinator, data consultants, and statewide industry workshops.
- Amend Section 2(b) to have the UHCC System to lead the study together with participation by HonCC and WCC.
- Amend Section 2(b) to state that a successful study would 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.
- Acknowledge the existing youth pre-apprenticeship work of Kailua High School, WCC, and maritime partners to ensure the statewide plan builds upon current momentum rather than duplicating effort.

The University of Hawai'i supports the intent of HB 2416, 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 OF TINA YAMAKI, MANAGING DIRECTOR
HAWAII TRANSPORTATION ASSOCIATION
FEBRUARY 5, 2026**

HB 2416 RELATING TO A MARITIME YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP PATHWAY PROGRAM.

Aloha Chair Garrett and members of the House Committee on Higher Education. I am Tina Yamaki, Managing Director of the Hawaii Transportation Association and I appreciate this opportunity to testify.

The Hawaii Transportation Association (HTA Hawaii) was founded in 1938 and incorporated in 1963, and is a private, non-profit trade organization dedicated to the service and assistance to the commercial ground transportation industry in the State of Hawaii. Our members include family owned small and medium sized businesses, independent owner operators, and national motor carriers range from delivery services to passenger carriers - as well as allied industry partners.

HTA Hawaii supports HB 2416. This measure 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; requires a report to the Legislature with recommendations on program structure, resource needs, proposed legislation and implementation options; and appropriates moneys.

Hawaii's economy, food security, energy supply, and overall cost of living are directly tied to maritime transportation. As an island state surrounded by water, we depend on shipping for the vast majority of our essential goods including food, fuel, construction materials, medical supplies, and consumer products. A strong, skilled maritime workforce is not optional for Hawaii - it is critical infrastructure.

However, the maritime sector, like many trades, faces workforce challenges. There is an urgent need to build a pipeline of local workers who understand maritime operations and can move into careers in vessel operations, port services, maintenance, logistics, and related skilled trades. Without deliberate workforce development, Hawaii risks increased reliance on out-of-state labor and potential disruptions in this vital sector.

This bill takes an important and practical step by focusing first on planning and coordination. By leveraging Honolulu Community College's expertise and partnering with maritime employers and state agencies, this measure ensures that any apprenticeship model developed will be aligned with real industry needs, safety standards, and career pathways. We hope that programs like this will also be expanded to transportation.

A Maritime Youth Apprenticeship Program would introduce young people to high-demand, family-sustaining careers that do not always require a traditional four-year degree; provide structured, hands-on learning combined with classroom instruction; strengthen workforce readiness in critical sectors that support Hawaii's supply chain and port operations; and create upward mobility opportunities for local youth, particularly those seeking alternatives to conventional academic routes.

Targeting individuals ages 16 to 24 is especially important, as early exposure and work-based learning significantly improve long-term career attachment and skill development.

The required report to the Legislature including recommendations on program structure, resource needs, and potential legislation will provide policymakers with the information necessary to design an effective and sustainable program. Appropriating funds for this planning effort reflect the State's recognition that maritime workforce development is an investment in economic resilience and public well-being.

HB 2416 supports workforce development, economic stability, and Hawaii's long-term self-sufficiency. For an island state whose lifeline runs through its harbors, strengthening the maritime workforce is both strategic and necessary.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB 2416.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.



February 6, 2026

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Rep. Andrew Takura Garrett, Chair; Rep. Terez Amato, Vice Chair; and Committee Members
Public Hearing, February 6, 2026, 2:05 p.m. – Conference Room 309, State Capitol

**Testimony of William F. Anonsen, Managing Partner/Principal of The Maritime Group
In Support of HB 2416 - Relating to a Maritime Youth Apprenticeship Pathway Program**

Aloha, my name is William F. Anonsen, the Managing Partner/Principal of The Maritime Group, and I am submitting testimony in strong support of HB 2416. I work closely with Hawai'i's maritime transportation, harbor, and logistics sectors and collaborate with industry, education, and public partners to strengthen our ports, supply chain resilience, and workforce development.

This measure helps address a critical and growing need in Hawai'i by building a reliable, local maritime workforce pipeline. Our maritime sector, including shipbuilding and repair, port and harbor operations, marine transportation, and ocean-based industries, is essential to the State's economic resilience and supply chain reliability. Yet we face persistent workforce shortages driven by an aging workforce and limited training pathways for young people.

In a multi-island state where nearly everything we depend on arrives by sea, a skilled maritime workforce is not optional; it is foundational to our economy and public safety. Developing homegrown talent strengthens our ports, improves emergency readiness, and creates family-sustaining careers that allow local youth to stay and thrive in Hawai'i.

I strongly support the bill's thoughtful, planning-first approach. Directing Honolulu Community College to conduct a comprehensive study and develop a statewide apprenticeship plan, rather than immediately mandating a program, ensures alignment with employer needs, industry-recognized credentials, paid hands-on training, and smart use of public-private partnerships. This measured strategy increases the likelihood of long-term success and fiscal responsibility.

Structured maritime apprenticeships will:

- Create clear career pathways for local youth
- Support high-wage, skilled trades
- Strengthen Hawai'i's supply chain and port resilience
- Expand access to practical, career-focused education

HB2416 is a pragmatic investment in Hawai'i's workforce, economy, and future.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify and for your consideration in support of this critical measure.

Respectfully submitted,

William F. Anonsen

Managing Partner/Principal

THE MARITIME GROUP

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

House Committee on Higher Education
February 6, 2026

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

The Hawai'i Harbors Users Group is in **support** of HB 2416, 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 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.

**Testimony to the House Committee on Higher Education
Representative Andrew Takuya Garrett, Chair
Representative Terez Amato, Vice Chair**

**Friday, February 6, 2026, at 2:05PM
Conference Room 309 & Videoconference**

RE: HB2416 Relating to Maritime Youth Apprenticeship Pathway Program

Aloha e Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato, 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 (HB2416) 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 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 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 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. 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.

HB-2416

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 2:50:08 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/6/2026 2:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Megan Blazak	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

As a constituent of House District 2, I support this measure.

HB-2416

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 12:25:07 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/6/2026 2:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry Support

2416 HB RELATING TO A MARITIME YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP PATHWAY PROGRAM.