

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 2092

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 06 2008

RE: S.B. No. 2672
S.D. 1

Honorable Colleen Hanabusa
President of the Senate
Twenty-Fourth State Legislature
Regular Session of 2008
State of Hawaii

Madam:

Your Committee on Education, to which was referred S.B. No. 2672 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO GRADUATE LOAN PROGRAMS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to establish a graduate school loan program and corresponding special fund for qualified individuals in the areas of occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech language pathology, and school psychology who agree to work in Hawaii for a specified number of years after completion of their graduate program.

This measure also provides a loan forgiveness schedule for individuals who maintain approved employment and appropriate funds for the program.

Testimony in support of this measure was submitted by the State Council on Developmental Disabilities, the Center on Disability Studies, the Hawaii Chapter, American Physical Therapy Association, the Occupational Therapy Association of Hawaii, ALOHA Special Technology Access Center, the Hawai'i Early Intervention Coordinating Council, the Hawaii Speech-Language-Hearing Association, Easter Seals Hawai'i, and thirty-three individuals. Testimony in opposition of this measure was submitted by the Department of Budget and Finance and the University of Hawaii System.



Your Committee finds that the current workforce cannot support the growing need for licensed and qualified rehabilitative and related services professionals in the State. Unfortunately, accredited programs for all of these fields are not available in the State; therefore, we must look to qualified individuals from outside of the State or local residents who have been educated and trained outside of the State to return to Hawaii to provide necessary services. Your Committee finds that the provision of assistance to individuals enrolled in graduate programs in physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech language pathology, and school psychology is a viable option for growing the required workforce. The Hawaii Educator Loan Program, administered by the University of Hawaii, has been successful in attempting to recruit teacher candidates to teach in critical needs areas in the Department of Education. Your Committee believes that the establishment of a similar program for rehabilitative and related services professionals may also prove successful.

Based on testimony submitted, your Committee acknowledges that the cost of administering this type of program is ambiguous, particularly due to the fact that it can encompass students in graduate programs all across the country. Your Committee believes that these expenses should be provided for and not unfairly borne by the Center on Disability Studies of the University of Hawaii.

Accordingly, your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Including a provision that specifies a portion of funds appropriated shall be used for administrative costs of the Rehabilitative and Related Services Graduate School Loan Program; and
- (2) Making technical, non-substantive changes for purposes of clarity and style.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Education that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 2672, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 2672, S.D. 1, and be referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.



Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Education,

Norman Sakamoto

NORMAN SAKAMOTO, Chair



