

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education
January 29, 2008 at 2:40 pm

by

Karen C. Lee

Interim Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, University of Hawai'i System

HB 2585 – Relating to Graduate Loan Programs

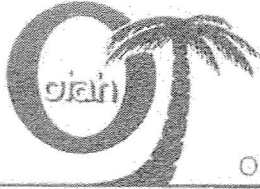
Chair Chang, Vice Chair Bertram, and Members of the Committee:

The purpose of HB 2585 Relating to Graduate Loan Programs, is to establish a five-year pilot loan program and special fund for qualified students in the areas of physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech language pathology, and school psychology. Qualified individuals must also agree to work in those fields in the State of Hawai'i for at least three years after completion of the graduate program.

The University of Hawai'i appreciates the intent of the Legislature to provide financial support to students who wish to become rehabilitation therapists and incentives to work in the State of Hawai'i. However, the University cannot support this bill because of the extensive administrative hardship this will place on our various offices to track non-UH students in their programs and beyond graduation over three years, and to administer such a loan. With our current capacity of staffing and resources, we would not be able to develop and maintain such a program at the appropriate level.

The private banking and loan industry sector may be a more appropriate place in which to initiate such a program. With limited resources, the University would not be able to adequately administer the program as would a private corporation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION OF HAWAII

1360 S. Beretania St., Suite 301, Honolulu, Hawaii 96814

**Written Testimony by:
Virginia Tully, OTR, MBA**

**HB 2585, Relating to Graduate Loan Programs
House HED Committee
Tuesday, January 29, 2008
Room 309, 2:30 pm**

Position: Support Intent

Chair Chang and Members of the House HED Committee:

I am Virginia Tully, OTR, and President of OTAH. The Occupational Therapy Association of Hawaii (OTAH) represents 507 occupational therapists (OTs) licensed in Hawaii. OT's work in many settings throughout the State, including hospitals, schools, and prisons, to private facilities and community programs. We work with very young children, ages 0-3, as well as school aged children, adults, and the elderly, seeking to restore or develop social-emotional, physical, cognitive, communication and adaptive behavior challenges.

Through understanding of the effect of the consumer's disability, illness and impairment, the occupational therapist develops a program that will promote development and establish needed skills to be independent in daily living activities. Daily living skills include self-care such as bathing, dressing, and skills required for learning, work or social interaction. Often times, OTs must design/fabricate special devices or suggest modification to the home environment.

Rehabilitation of traumatic brain injuries is a long-term process. Families, educators, and general public continue to need education about traumatic brain injury and its residual effects on the individual's ability to be independent at home and in the community.

There are Hawaii students interested in OT or PT education but find the cost prohibitive. Thus, they often enroll in another health care related program in Hawaii. The forgiving of X % of the loan is a good incentive to interested students.

Currently, OT and PT professions require a Master's degree at entry. Upon completion of the educational requirements of a program, students must complete a clinical internship. This can be up to 6 months after completion of the educational program. After completing the clinical internship, OTs must take a nationally administered certification examination. Hawaii state law requires successful completion of the certification examination before employment.

Allowing 6 months after graduation to begin repayment may be too soon. It depends as to when the school graduates the student. These cases may fall in the exception to the rule. Rather than 6 months after graduation, consider 6 months after initial employment as an occupational therapist (OTR).

On page 2, lines 21-22, and page 3, lines 1-4, it states that programs are "approved by the board of physical therapy, the director of commerce and consumer affairs, and the board of speech pathology....." Occupational therapy doesn't have a board under DCCA. We propose the amended language: "graduation from an accredited occupational therapy educational program recognized by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. I can be reached at 544-3336 if further information is needed.



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January 28, 2008

Representative Jerry L. Chang, Chair
Representative Joe Bertram III, Vice Chair
Committee on Higher Education
Twenty-fourth Legislature
State Capitol
415 S. Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Subject: In support of House Bill (HB) 2585

Dear Representative Chang, Representative Bertram and Committee on Higher Education:

I am the parent of a child with autism spectrum disorder. I am writing in strong support of HB 2585, relating to Rehabilitative and Related Services Graduate School Loan Program.

My child received early intervention services through Easter Seals Hawaii. Early intervention services assist children between birth and age three reach age appropriate developmental skills and aid families in achieving their goals for their children. These services are provided by physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists, and special educators. My child and family have benefited from the services of highly qualified and dedicated professionals who support my child's development.

I support this bill as it will improve opportunities for students to earn graduate degrees in physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech-language pathology, or school psychology and return to Hawaii to work. The bill will allow students to borrow up to \$10,000 per academic year. The total loan will be forgiven if the student returns to Hawaii and works for the State or non-profit agency or health care organization for at least three years after graduation. This bill will help increase the number of available therapists to serve Hawaii's children and adults with developmental delays or disabilities.

I ask you to support HB 2585.

Sincerely,

M. Suzanne Sylvester-Palumbo, DVM
Board of Directors
Easter Seals Hawaii



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 Twenty-fourth Legislature
 State Capitol
 415 S. Beretania Street
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Subject: In support of House Bill (HB) 2585

Dear Representative Chang, Representative Bertram and Committee on Higher Education:

I am the parent of a child with special needs. I am writing in strong support of HB 2585, relating to Rehabilitative and Related Services Graduate School Loan Program.

My child received early intervention services through Easter Seals Hawaii since my child was four months old. Early intervention services assist children between birth and age three reach age appropriate developmental skills and aid families in achieving their goals for their children. These services are provided by physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists, and special educators. My child and family have benefited from the services of highly qualified and dedicated professionals who support my child's development.

I support this bill as it will improve opportunities for students to earn graduate degrees in physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech-language pathology, or school psychology and return to Hawaii to work. The bill will allow students to borrow up to \$10,000 per academic year. The total loan will be forgiven if the student returns to Hawaii and works for the State or non-profit agency or health care organization for at least three years after graduation. This bill will help increase the number of available therapists to serve Hawaii's children and adults with developmental delays or disabilities.

I ask you to support HB 2585.

Sincerely,

Susan Berk
 Board of Directors
 Easter Seals Hawaii



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January 28, 2008

O'AHU
Adult Day Health Program
at Central Union Church

Assistive Technology
Program

Ewa Adult Day
Health Program

Representative Jerry L. Chang, Chair
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State Capitol
415 S. Beretania Street
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Family Support Services
Program

Subject: In support of House Bill (HB) 2585

Kailua Early Intervention
Program

Dear Representative Chang, Representative Bertram and Committee on Higher Education:

Kapolei Early Intervention
Program

On behalf of Easter Seals Hawaii and the thousands of families we have served over the past 62 years of our existence in the state, I am submitting testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** of the passage of HB 2585. The bill will allow students to borrow up to \$10,000 per academic year. The total loan will be forgiven if the student returns to Hawaii and works for the State or a non-profit agency or health care organization for at least three years after graduation.

O'ahu Support Services

Partnerships in Community
Living Program

Early Intervention services are *mandated* by federal law and waiting lists are not permitted – all identified infants/toddlers and families must be served within mandated timelines. The Department of Health (DOH) contracts private providers such as Easter Seals Hawaii to provide these services utilizing physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech language pathologists, special educators and social workers. One of the major challenges in providing these types of services is the limited number of qualified professionals available in Hawaii. The pool of therapists with the highest professional standards must be increased.

Sultan Early Intervention
Program

Youth Services Program

HB 2585 will improve opportunities for students to earn graduate degrees in physical therapy, occupational therapy (undergraduate okay), speech-language pathology, or school psychology and return to Hawaii to work. This bill will help increase the number of available therapists to serve Hawaii's children and adults with developmental delays or disabilities.

Waipahu Early Intervention
Program

KAUAI'

Kauai' Early
Intervention Program

Kauai' Support Services

Kauai' Youth Services

I would like to offer an amendment to the bill to allow an undergraduate degree in Occupational Therapy be included in the bill as a bachelor's degree is authorized to perform services in Hawaii. Also, I strongly suggest that the language be changed to ensure that employment requirements include any state agency, a nonprofit providing services under a state contract, and a nonprofit healthcare organization.

HAWAII'

Hilo Early
Intervention Program

Hilo Support
Services Program

Hilo Youth Services

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 2585. I can also be reached at 536-1015, for any further questions or comments.

MAUI COUNTY

Adult Day Health Program
at Hale Hauoli

Support Services Program

Partnerships in Community
Living Program

Youth Services

Sincerely,

Norman T. Kawakami,
Sr. VP of Operations



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January 28, 2008

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Subject: In support of House Bill (HB) 2585

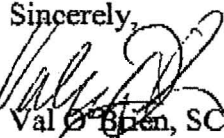
Dear Representative Chang, Representative Bertram and Committee on Higher Education:

I am the parent of a child with CMV who is deaf and multi-handicapped. I am writing in strong support of HB 2585, relating to Rehabilitative and Related Services Graduate School Loan Program.

My child received early intervention services through Easter Seals Hawaii since my child was eight months old. Early intervention services assist children between birth and age three reach age appropriate developmental skills and aid families in achieving their goals for their children. These services are provided by physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists, and special educators. My child and family have benefited from the services of highly qualified and dedicated professionals who support my child's development.

I support this bill as it will improve opportunities for students to earn graduate degrees in physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech-language pathology, or school psychology and return to Hawaii to work. The bill will allow students to borrow up to \$10,000 per academic year. The total loan will be forgiven if the student returns to Hawaii and works for the State or non-profit agency or health care organization for at least three years after graduation. This bill will help increase the number of available therapists to serve Hawaii's children and adults with developmental delays or disabilities.

I ask you to support HB 2585.

Sincerely,

 Val O'Brien, SCMD.
 Marketing Director, Kamehameha Investment
 Board of Directors
 Easter Seals Hawaii



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I am a member of the Board of Directors of Easter Seals Hawaii. I am writing in strong support of HB 2585, relating to Rehabilitative and Related Services Graduate School Loan Program.

Early intervention services assist children between birth and age three reach age appropriate developmental skills and aid families in achieving their goals for their children. Easter Seals Hawaii has provided early intervention services for over 60 years, utilizing physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists, and special educators. One of the major challenges in providing these types of services is the limited number of qualified physical therapists, occupational therapists, and speech-language pathologists available in Hawaii. The pool of therapists with the highest professional standards must be increased.

I support this bill as it will improve opportunities for students to earn graduate degrees in physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech-language pathology, or school psychology and return to Hawaii to work. The bill will allow students to borrow up to \$10,000 per academic year. The total loan will be forgiven if the student returns to Hawaii and works for the State or a non-profit agency or health care organization for at least three years after graduation. This bill will help increase the number of available therapists to serve Hawaii's children and adults with developmental delays or disabilities.

I ask you to support HB 2585.

Sincerely,

Francis Liu, MD
Board of Directors
Easter Seals Hawaii



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I ask you to support HB 2585.

Sincerely,

Rhonda S. Black
Professor of Special Education, University of Hawaii
Board of Directors
Easter Seals Hawaii

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Subject: In support of House Bill (HB) 2585

Dear Representative Chang, Representative Bertram and Committee on Higher Education:

I am a member of the Board of Directors of Easter Seals Hawaii. I am writing in strong support of HB 2585, relating to Rehabilitative and Related Services Graduate School Loan Program.

Early intervention services assist children between birth and age three reach age appropriate developmental skills and aid families in achieving their goals for their children. Easter Seals Hawaii has provided early intervention services for over 60 years, utilizing physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists, and special educators. One of the major challenges in providing these types of services is the limited number of qualified physical therapists, occupational therapists, and speech-language pathologists available in Hawaii. The pool of therapists with the highest professional standards must be increased.

I support this bill as it will improve opportunities for students to earn graduate degrees in physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech-language pathology, or school psychology and return to Hawaii to work. The bill will allow students to borrow up to \$10,000 per academic year. The total loan will be forgiven if the student returns to Hawaii and works for the State or a non-profit agency or health care organization for at least three years after graduation. This bill will help increase the number of available therapists to serve Hawaii's children and adults with developmental delays or disabilities.

I ask you to support HB 2585.

Sincerely,

Harvey E. Henderson, Jr.
 Board of Directors
 Easter Seals Hawaii



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Representative Joe Bertram III, Vice Chair
Committee on Higher Education
Twenty-fourth Legislature
State Capitol
415 S. Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Subject: In support of House Bill (HB) 2585

Dear Representative Chang, Representative Bertram and Committee on Higher Education:

I am a member on the Hawaii 3-5 Transition Task Force which has studied the feasibility of extending Early Intervention Services beyond the current age limit of three years. I am writing in strong support of HB 2585 relating to Rehabilitative and Related Services Graduate School Loan Program.

Early intervention services assist children between birth and age three reach age appropriate developmental skills and aid families in achieving their goals for their children. These services are provided by physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists, and special educators. The 3-5 Task Force is exploring the viability of providing similar services for children between the ages of 3-5 years. The 3-5 Task Force confirmed that one of the major challenges in providing these types of services is the limited number of qualified physical therapists, occupational therapists, and speech-language pathologists available in Hawaii. The pool of therapists with the highest professional standards must be increased.

I support this bill as it will improve opportunities for students to earn graduate degrees in physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech-language pathology, or school psychology and return to Hawaii to work. The bill will allow students to borrow up to \$10,000 per academic year. The total loan will be forgiven if the student returns to Hawaii and works for the State or a non-profit agency or health care organization for at least three years after graduation. This bill will help increase the number of available therapists to serve Hawaii's children and adults with developmental delays or disabilities.

I ask you to support HB 2585.

Sincerely,

Karen L. Jayne
Executive Director
Imua Family Services