



HB2706 RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM
House Committees on Higher Education and Health

February 5, 2008
Room:309

9:00am

Aloha Chairpersons Chang and Green and members of the committees. My name is Clyde Namuo, Administrator of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs. The Office of Hawaiian Affairs **strongly supports HB 2706.** Our interest in this legislation is primarily based on the expected demand for registered nurses by 2020 and disparity of supply of 13.8%. OHA recognizes and supports incentives for students to seek a nursing education and, upon graduating, to practice nursing in Hawaii.

OHA supports additional forms of credit that reward employment in rural communities. An example of such is an increase of waiver an additional one-tenth for each year post-graduation of the first five years for serving in a rural community, another example is assisting nurses who live in the communities where they serve with home or rental loans or credits.

In addition to financial incentives, the pending crisis can benefit from nurses prepared to work in rural communities. Programs, instruction and instructors that prepare students for the unique island approach to wellness, the special challenges of socio-economic diverse populations that assure that nurses will seek out and stay in rural service. An example is 'IKE AO PONO, an innovative cultural program at the School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene.

As of Spring 2008, the program has graduated 60 RNs and as supports 60-75 Hawaiian and Pacific Island undergraduate & graduate nursing students per semester, and the first Native Hawaiian to graduate a PhD in Nursing from the SONDH now directs a community college program - many 'IKE AO PONO graduates desire to return to work in home communities, rural communities and underserved communities. These numbers represent a remarkable

transformation and contribution to the nursing profession and
culturally competent health care
in Hawaii - all committing to work in their home.

OHA urges your support for HB2706. Mahalo nui loa for the
opportunity to present testimony.

House Committees on Higher Education and Health
February 5, 2008 at 2:00 pm

by

Karen C. Lee

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

HB 2706– Relating to the University of Hawai'i System

Chair Chang, Chair Green, Vice Chair Bertram, Vice Chair Mizuno, and Members of the Committees:

The purpose of HB 2706 is to establish a student loan forgiveness program to provide nursing health care to underserved areas of the State of Hawai'i.

The University of Hawai'i appreciates the intent of the Legislature to provide financial support through a loan forgiveness program to students who wish to become nurses in the State of Hawai'i . However, the University opposes this bill because of the extensive administrative hardship this will place on our various offices, in particular our financial aid offices and general accounting office, to track students after graduation and to administer such a loan. With our current mission as an educational institution and our capacity of staffing and resources, we would not be able to develop and maintain such a program.

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.

Furthermore, the University does not believe that this type of incentive directly relates to the State's nursing shortage. At this point, we have more students than spaces available in our nursing programs across the UH system, and this bill would not alleviate the demand.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.