

Date: March 24, 2008

To: SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS  
Senator Rosalyn Baker, Chair  
Senator Shan Tsutsui, Vice-Chair

From: Teresa Bill, Univ. Hawai'i Bridge to Hope Coordinator  
Ph: 956-8059

Re: HB2770, HD1, SD1 relating to Bridge to Hope  
Friday March 28, 2008 9:30 a.m.  
Conference Room 211 1 copy to Committee Clerk, room 210

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My name is Teresa Bill and. I am the Coordinator of the 10-campus University of Hawai'i Bridge to Hope program which works with the Dept. of Human Services. I **strongly support HB2770, HD1,SD1** amending the statute establishing Bridge to Hope to enable all First-to-Work participants to pursue post-secondary education as part of their work activities.

Although recent federal changes will rescinded the explicit prohibition on baccalaureate education effective Nov. 2008, HB2770, HD1, SD1 is still necessary to ensure that the academically supportive and successful programs offered by First-to-Work and Bridge to Hope are available to all clients, both TANF and TAONF. The State of Hawai'i acknowledged the importance of access to post-secondary education as an avenue to economic self-sufficiency when it created the Bridge to Hope program within DHS seven years ago. Additionally the statutory change is necessary for DHS to fund on-campus student employment for state-funded clients. Currently, TAONF clients are not eligible for subsidized on-campus student employment through First-to Work.

HB2770 does not require any additional funds. The Dept. of Human Services has implemented a temporary policy that allows post-secondary education activities, but the statute needs to be amended to ensure a full range of educational options for all First-to-Work participants and all categories of TANF & TAONF families.

I urge the legislature to stand behind its decision to include post-secondary education as part of First-to-Work activities as a strategy for self-sufficiency.

Please support HB2770 HD1, SD1 to give all First-to-Work participants access to education. I know Bridge to Hope students and former students have submitted testimony supporting this bill but could not be here in person. For these parents to take time to learn about the legislative process and submit testimony is a reflection of how strongly they feel.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Written Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
March 28, 2008 at 9:30 a.m.

by  
Virginia S. Hinshaw, Chancellor  
and  
Francisco Hernandez  
Vice Chancellor for Students  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

### **HB 2770, HD1, SD1 Relating to Bridge to Hope Program**

Chair Baker, Vice Chair Tsutsui and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i **supports HB2770, HD1, SD1** amending the state statute to ensure that all First-to-Work clients have continued access to a full range of post-secondary education opportunities. While the Dept. of Human Services has modified their education policy to accommodate both federal and state-funded participants, the statutory change is necessary to ensure that a full range of educational opportunities are always available.

The University has actively supported access to post-secondary education for welfare recipients since 2000 when legislation created the Bridge to Hope education program within the Dept. of Human Services. We now urge the legislature to make appropriate amendments to ensure that a full range of post-secondary education options are available, especially baccalaureate programs.

In addition to the support of President McClain and the system-wide UH Commission on the Status of Women, faculty and staff at every campus have given their time and full support to its implementation on our campuses.

Since Fall 2000, the University and the Department of Human Service have successfully partnered to maintain education as a work activity; reduce work requirements for full-time students, provide on-campus employment, and student support services for the needs specific to student parents.

This partnership has resulted in over 600 First-to-Work clients participating in on-campus Bridge to Hope employment and student services. With students in the educational pipeline moving from community colleges to baccalaureate campuses, over 150 students have earned Associate of Arts degrees at the community colleges and nearly 100 have earned Bachelor of Arts degrees. Popular and highly employable degrees include: Social Work, Nursing, Dental Hygiene, Teaching, Accounting, Software Technology, Counseling, Business Administration, Paralegal,

Office Management, various Health Sciences, etc. These graduates are now fully employed and no longer receive cash assistance.

The University strongly supports this program and believes that its passage will be a significant help for Hawai'i families seeking to move from welfare to self-reliance. We believe that providing educational opportunities to students on welfare is consistent with the University's Strategic Plan goals of access, service to the State and diversity.

# Jeanne Y. Ohta

1016 A Hind Iuka Drive  
Honolulu, HI 96821

March 28, 2008

To: Senator Rosalyn Baker, Chair  
Senator Shan Tsutsui, Vice Chair  
And Members of the Committee on Ways and Means

From: Jeanne Ohta

Re: HB 2770 HD1 SD1 Relating to Bridge to Hope Program  
Hearing: March 28, 2008, 9:30 a.m., Room 211

Position: SUPPORT

I am writing in support of HB 2770 HD1 SD1 Relating to Bridge to Hope program. This bill is also supported by the Hawaii Women's Coalition and is included in the coalition's 2008 Legislative Package.

This bill requests a change to the statute establishing the post-secondary education program called Bridge to Hope within the Department of Human Services. The change will allow all heads of households receiving financial assistance and participating in First-to-Work to participate in a full range of educational activities as part of their work activities.

The current statute is limited to TANF or federally funded clients. The statute needs to be amended to include all families; to ensure that while federal rules may change, the State of Hawaii can remain committed to providing a full range of post secondary activities.

It is important to provide access to Bridge to Hope to all families. The Institute of Women's Policy Research published a study in 2006, "Resilient and Reaching for More, Challenges and Benefits of Higher Education for Welfare Participants and their Children." The study found that higher education had a host of positive financial, social, and emotional effects on low-income women and their children.

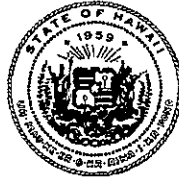
Besides the obvious improvement in earnings, participants said that education helped them overcome substance abuse, leave destructive relationships, and develop self-confidence and hope in a positive future. Many survey participants indicated that their children benefited as well, with improved study habits and better grades.

The study also indicates that communities benefit when low-income women complete higher education. Nearly two-thirds of degree holders in the study chose to stay in their communities after completing their degree and most indicated an increased level of community involvement since their exposure to higher education. As a result, the

benefits of higher education spilled beyond the confines of individuals and their families, and ultimately impacted larger communities.

This is a worthwhile measure that in the long-run would benefit the mothers, their children, and our state. Please pass this measure. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

LINDA LINGLE  
GOVERNOR



LILLIAN B. KOLLER  
DIRECTOR

HENRY OLIVA  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

March 28, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair  
Senate Committee on Ways & Means

FROM: Lillian B. Koller, Director

SUBJECT: **H.B. 2770, H.D. 1, S.D. 1 - RELATING TO BRIDGE TO HOPE PROGRAM**

Hearing: Friday, March 28, 2008, 9:30 a.m.  
Conference Room 211, State Capitol

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this bill is to expand the Bridge to Hope Program to enable all head of households receiving financial assistance and participating in the First-To-Work program to pursue a full range of educational activities as part of their work activities.

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) is in support of this bill as it will allow these educational opportunities to become available to our other financial assistance recipients. Currently, by statute, only recipients on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) are able to access the Bridge-To-Hope program. The proposed statutory change in H.B. 2770, H.D. 1, S.D. 1, is necessary to expand the Bridge-To-Hope program to other financial assistance recipients which the Department supports.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this bill.