

HEDtestimony

From: Shannon Wood [swood@hoku.com]
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To: HEDtestimony
Subject: HB 3025 - RELATING TO INCOME TAX CHECK-OFF

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
Rep. Jerry Chang, Chair
Rep. Joe Bertram III, Vice Chair

PUBLIC HEARING
3 pm
Thursday, January 31, 2008
Conference Room 309

HB 3025 - RELATING TO INCOME TAX CHECK-OFF
STRONGLY SUPPORT

Good afternoon, *Mr. Chair & Members* of the **Committee on Higher Education**. My name is Shannon Wood, a Kailua, O`ahu resident, speaking here today only as an individual on my own behalf and not representing any group or organization. I am, however, a graduate of the *University of Hawai`i*, a strong advocate for public education at all levels, and a sports fan who has supported a wide range of intercollegiate varsity sports activities at UH for nearly 30 years.

This bill would help support the *University of Hawai`i System* by establishing a check-off box on all state income tax return forms so that the average taxpayer can make a dedicated contribution to all ten campuses as well as to the intercollegiate athletic programs at *Manoa & Hilo*.

The bill is **not** an additional tax and it does **not** decrease revenues because it will be paid for out of income tax refunds. According to my research, as many as 65% of all personal income tax returns will have a refund credited to the taxpayer.

Furthermore, the check-off system has already been set up in the *Department of Taxation* for public financing of elections and the *State Library System*.

Granted, the check-off box will not generate huge sums of money nor will it ever supplant the responsibility of all taxpayers to support *UH*. In the first year or two, I doubt seriously if it will bring in more than \$300,000 - \$400,000, but that will still buy needed reference materials or new computers or even soap & paper towels.

The most important thing about this bill, however, is that it allows the average Hawai`i citizen the opportunity to personally *buy in* to support the *University of Hawai`i*. Right now, there is a strong disconnect - except, of course, for the football program - and that has been part of the problem over the years in getting support for needed improvements.

I urge that you pass out **HB 3025** unamended. *Mahalo*.

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