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TO: HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
FROM: PAM LICHTY
RE: HCR 119/HR 101
URGING THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII TO BEGIN REBUILDING THE SCHOOL
OF PUBLIC HEALTH BY 2012 – **IN STRONG SUPPORT**

Aloha Chair Chang, Vice Chair Bertram and members of the Committee. My name is Pam Lichty and I'm testifying today as an alumna of the UH School of Public Health. I earned my Masters of Public Health in Health Services Administration and Planning in 1987.

Like many other graduates, I was distressed to see the school lose its accreditation and was among many who attended countless meetings and wrote dozens of letters to prevent it from closing.

Ever since it closed in 1999, we have been repeatedly assured by several successive administrations that they would bring back a full School of Public Health.

The reasons this is needed are very well articulated in the resolution. I add my voice to those who are calling for the reestablishment of this critical link in health services training in Hawai'i and throughout the Pacific basin. Please pass out HCR 119 and HR 101.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify today.

March 11, 2008

Testifier: James R. Rarick, MPH

Bill: HCR 119 & HR 101, Urging the University of Hawaii to Rebuild the School of Public Health by 2012.

Committee: House Higher Education

Aloha Representative Chang and HED Committee Members:

I am currently the President of the Hawaii Public Health Association (HPHA), on whose behalf I am submitting this testimony in strong support for **HR 101** and **HCR 119**, Urging the University of Hawaii to Rebuild the School of Public Health by 2012. I am also one of the last individuals to graduate from the former UH School of Public Health just prior to loss of its accreditation as a School of Public Health.

The existence of a well trained Public health workforce helps protect individuals, families and communities from serious health threats—ranging from chronic diseases such as diabetes to re-emerging and emerging communicable diseases such as bird flu—threats to our community's health that are oftentimes preventable. However, according to the American Public Health Association (APHA), this workforce is facing critical challenges, namely a precipitous decline in numbers and resources. The number of public health workers declined to 158 workers per 100,000 Americans in 2000, as compared to 220 workers per 100,000 Americans in 1980. Within the next few years, state and federal public health agencies could lose up to half of their workforce to retirement, the private sector and other opportunities. This problem will be further compounded by the fact that some four out of five public health employees lack formal public health training.

Last year the HPHA hosted the 4th Pacific Global Health Conference (PGHC) at the East West Center, which featured a full day dedicated to workforce training and development issues. The public health workforce crisis is now a global problem, as recognized by the World Health Organization, which has acknowledged a world-wide health workforce crisis by designating the decade of 2006-2015 as "Working Together for Health" to address the issues of health workforce shortages and the need to frame policies and actions for human resources for health within the context of equity and health. The former UH SPH trained many of the leaders who make up the backbone of the public health infrastructure not just within Hawaii but also in the Asia & Pacific region. Many of these individuals will also be retiring soon, leaving a significant void in the public health workforce in the Pacific Region. In his keynote address at the 2007 PGHC, Dr. Greg Dever, Director of Hospital & Clinical Services for the Ministry of Health, Republic of Palau, noted that the U.S.-affiliated Pacific Islands (USAPIs) in particular are struggling with the twin disparities of health workforce shortages and a currently under-trained health workforce. When the school lost its PH accreditation in 1999 it not only had a negative impact on Hawaii's public health workforce, it was also a serious blow for in the US-Pacific, an area that is already carrying a heavy burden in terms of both chronic and communicable diseases, and the threat of natural disasters. Hawaii's own healthcare system has increasingly shared this burden as citizens of the USAPIs, particularly the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of the Marshall Islands, have migrated to Hawaii seeking better healthcare services.

The HPHA has been encouraged by the Department of Public Health Sciences steady progress towards rebuilding the School of Public Health, which includes expansion of public health training specializations and faculty, the recent CEPH re-accreditation, and increased collaboration with the community and other UH programs. The HPHA strongly supports the need to continue this momentum and fully rebuild the SPH, and we strongly urge your support for HR 101 and HCR 119 as an important step towards making this a reality and helping to reverse the serious decline in our public health workforce.

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Rep. Jerry L. Chang, Chair

Rep. Joe Bertram, III, Vice Chair

DATE: Tuesday, March 11, 2008

TIME: 2:15 p.m.

PLACE: Conference Room 309

RE: HCR 119/HR 101 Urging the University of Hawaii to begin rebuilding the School of Public Health by 2012

My name is Betty Sestak and I am Public Policy Chair, American Association of University Women and an alumnus of the UH School of Public Health. I am in **strong support** of this resolution.

There have been over 3,500 graduates of the UHSPH since its beginnings in 1969 and these PH professionals have played vital roles in promoting & protecting the public health of Hawaii, Asia, the Pacific, and the US. Hawaii is now facing significant current and emerging public health issues that require a strong and skilled workforce to help address them. Studies have shown that a substantial percentage of the existing DOH PH workforce, especially those in leadership and mid-level management positions, has retired or is on the verge of exiting the workforce to retire. Hawaii is facing a health workforce crisis that will be even more critical, if PH training & education is not reinstated. Now is the time to make plans for the increasing public health problems that are becoming more and more important and Hawaii is increasingly on the forefront of those problems.

The UH Administration is urged to begin the rebuilding the SPH by 2012, by working with the Department of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and other key public health partners to collaborate on the rebuilding of the SPH, by no later than 2012.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony.

HEDtestimony

From: Jane Do [chungjae@hawaii.edu]
Sent: Monday, March 10, 2008 2:52 PM
To: HEDtestimony
Subject: testimony-HCR 119/HR 101 Urging the University of Hawaii to begin rebuilding the School of Public Health by 2012

Higher Education Committee
Tuesday, March 11, at 2:15 PM
Room 309

HCR 119/HR 101 Resolution Title: Urging the University of Hawaii to begin rebuilding the School of Public Health by 2012

Dear members of the Higher Education Committee,

My name is Jane Chung-Do and I am testifying in support for HCR 119/HR 101 Urging the University of Hawaii to begin rebuilding the School of Public Health by 2012. I am currently in my last semester as a Public Health student at UH and will be continuing on to earn my DrPH in Public Health. I believe that Public Health plays a vital role in promoting & protecting the health of Hawaii, Asia, the Pacific, and the US.

For example, 1 in 4 child in Hawaii is obese. Diabetes and other cardiovascular diseases are on the rise in our State. In addition, youth violence is increasing in our schools, while the aging population is steadily increasing. These are concerns that only trained public health professionals can appropriately address. Hawaii's diverse populations and environment creates unique and diverse health needs, making it essential to train professionals in Hawaii.

The Department of Public Health Sciences has made significant strides towards the rebuilding of education, research, and training since the closure of the School in 2000 and have graduated well-qualified professionals. However, most public health professionals in Hawaii are in their 40s and 50s and approaching retirement. University of Hawaii needs to continuing training future public health professionals in innovative and comprehensive methods. To do this, the School of Public Health must be rebuilt. Currenly, students can choose from 2 specializations in Social and Behavioral Health or Epidemiology.

However, International Health, Biostatistics, and Environmental Health are not offered as they are in other Public Health training.

Without a fully accredited School of Public Health , Hawaii is ineligible to receive maximum federal Public Health research and educational funding. Please support this resolution and support the future of Hawaii's people. Without our health, we cannot enjoy this beautiful place we call home.

Thank you,
Jane Chung-Do

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