

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Senator Jill N. Tokuda, Chair

Senator Norman Sakamoto, Vice Chair

DATE: Thursday, April 2, 2009
TIME: 1:15 p.m.
PLACE: Conference Room 225

Re: **SCR 155 - SUPPORTING HAWAII'S CONTINUED PARTICIPATION IN THE WESTERN INTERSTATE COMMISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION (WICHE) AND THE EDUCATIONAL AND OTHER BENEFITS PROVIDED THROUGH FORTY YEARS OF HAWAII'S MEMBERSHIP IN WICHE.**

Chair Tokuda, Vice Chair Sakamoto and members of the Senate Committee on Higher Education.

My name is Roy Ogawa and I would like to thank the Committee for this opportunity to provide written testimony in support of SCR 155. I am one of three Commissioners from the State of Hawaii and the past Chair of the 15 state Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education. I support this resolution as it recognizes that WICHE has done and continues to do much more than operate a professional student exchange program which it has run effectively for decades to support Hawaii students in obtaining professional degrees in programs that are unavailable in Hawaii. It has also gone forward with developing and supporting both undergraduate and graduate exchange programs with little cost to the state other than its membership dues. The University of Hawaii has also participated in and supported these programs in accepting exchange students at reduced out of state tuition fees. Last year the Community Colleges consented to participation in the exchange programs.

WICHE has also gained national recognition with its research and policy work, through private funding and grants, which allows it to assist students, policymakers, educators, and institutional, business and community leaders throughout the West and beyond. I wholeheartedly support this resolution because it recognizes the important work of WICHE and its dedicated staff of professionals in improving access to higher education and developing a successful educated workforce. Improvements can continue to occur even in these difficult economic times with the continuing support of the Legislature and the University of Hawaii. Thank you very much.