

JAN 26 2009

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO TUITION WAIVERS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that there is a need to
2 require the University of Hawaii system to provide higher
3 education tuition waivers to all enrolled students who are
4 "native Hawaiian", as defined in section 10-2, Hawaii Revised
5 Statutes.

6 Native Hawaiian students comprise approximately twenty-six
7 per cent of Hawaii's public school population and more than
8 eighty-five per cent of those native Hawaiian students finish
9 high school. However, while about half of all native Hawaiian
10 high school graduates go on to attend college, native Hawaiians
11 have the lowest college graduation rates of all ethnic groups in
12 Hawaii. Of those who are able to attend college, far fewer
13 actually graduate with a college degree than students from any
14 other ethnic group in the State. According to the University of
15 Hawaii's institutional research office, native Hawaiians account
16 for only fourteen per cent of the total University of Hawaii
17 student population, a figure that includes all native Hawaiians
18 attending the system's three four-year and seven two-year



1 campuses. Further, while more than eighty per cent of the
2 University of Hawaii system's non-native-Hawaiian students
3 return for a second year of college, the percentage of native
4 Hawaiian students returning to college for a second year is
5 nearly ten per cent lower.

6 The low college matriculation and retention rates of native
7 Hawaiians throughout the University of Hawaii system seriously
8 impact their ability to complete college and earn a degree.
9 Nationwide, more native Hawaiians have dropped out of college
10 than have earned either a two-year associate or a four-year
11 baccalaureate degree. According to the 2000 United States
12 census, even though twenty-five per cent of all native Hawaiians
13 have earned some college credits, most have not completed their
14 undergraduate degrees, and only fifteen per cent of all native
15 Hawaiians have earned at least a bachelor's degree.

16 The statistics are even more troubling for native Hawaiians
17 attempting to attain the highest academic degrees in their
18 fields, including master's, professional, and doctorate degrees.
19 Only 3.2 per cent of native Hawaiians statewide have earned a
20 graduate degree of any kind, compared with 8.4 per cent of all
21 Hawaii residents and 8.9 per cent of the total United States
22 population. Further, only 3.6 per cent of the current doctoral



1 candidates at the University of Hawaii are native Hawaiian and
2 nearly seventy per cent of them do not receive any type of
3 financial aid or tuition waivers.

4 The academic stress of earning a college degree is
5 dramatically increased for many native Hawaiian students by high
6 levels of economic stress. Statistically, Hawaiians attending
7 the University of Hawaii are, on average, far more affected by
8 negative economic indicators than students from other ethnic
9 groups. For example, native Hawaiian students who do complete
10 their degrees take, on the average, a full year longer to do so
11 than students of other ethnic groups and many native Hawaiian
12 students must work full- or part-time while attempting to
13 complete their college degrees. This slower-than-average
14 completion rate is due primarily to the consequences of native
15 Hawaiians' poor access to available socio-economic resources,
16 combined with their ongoing need to produce income for
17 themselves and their families and Hawaii's high cost of living.

18 The low numbers of native Hawaiians with college and
19 professional degrees seriously affects the ability of Hawaii's
20 indigenous people to participate in the State's higher education
21 system as professors, deans, administrators, and policy makers.
22 At the University of Hawaii at Manoa, only four per cent of all



1 faculty positions are held by native Hawaiians and less than one
2 per cent of permanently tenured positions are held by native
3 Hawaiians.

4 The purpose of this Act is to require the University of
5 Hawaii to provide higher education tuition waivers for all
6 enrolled native Hawaiian students. The academic and economic
7 support provided by the tuition waivers can have far-reaching
8 positive consequences for the State as a whole. As more native
9 Hawaiians are able to earn college degrees, more native
10 Hawaiians will be able to pursue the highest levels of academic
11 and professional achievement. Through their participation in
12 networks of civic responsibility in the professional, academic,
13 business, and other arenas, native Hawaiian graduates of the
14 University of Hawaii system will be able to contribute more
15 effectively to the economic and social health of the State of
16 Hawaii and the native Hawaiian people.

17 SECTION 2. Chapter 304A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
18 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated
19 and to read as follows:

20 "§304A- Tuition waivers for native Hawaiians and
21 Hawaiians. Any law to the contrary notwithstanding, the board
22 of regents or its designated representatives shall grant a



1 waiver of all tuition to each and every student enrolled at any
 2 of the university system's ten campuses who is native Hawaiian
 3 or Hawaiian as defined in section 10-2; provided that a
 4 student's possession of a card issued by the office of Hawaiian
 5 affairs identifying the student as a person included in the
 6 Hawaiian registry under section 10-19 shall constitute
 7 conclusive proof that the student is native Hawaiian or
 8 Hawaiian."

9 SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.

10 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

11

INTRODUCED BY: _____

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By Request



Report Title:

University of Hawaii; Tuition Waivers

Description:

Requires the board of regents to grant tuition waivers for native Hawaiian students in the University of Hawaii system.

