



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Hawaiian Affairs  
February 11, 2009 at 9:30 am

by

Karen C. Lee

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### HB 908 RELATING TO TUITION WAIVERS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Chair Carroll, Vice Chair Shimabukuro, and Members of the Committee:

The purpose of HB 908 is to require the UH Board of Regents to grant tuition waivers for Native Hawaiian students in the University of Hawai'i system.

The University supports the overall intent of this bill and appreciates the Legislature's concern for improving the academic success of Native Hawaiians in higher education. Likewise, the University strives to improve the access to state higher education and the success of our Native Hawaiian students. In 2008, we placed Native Hawaiian Educational Attainment as our very first strategic outcome for the years 2008 to 2015. It is our goal to increase degree attainment of Native Hawaiians by 6 to 9 percent per year.

To help us succeed in our goal, we are encouraging students who have financial need to apply for financial aid so that we can maximize federal assistance to students. We also already award 250 Native Hawaiian tuition exemptions to Native Hawaiian students with financial need, per UH Board of Regents policy. These are given in whole or partial amounts, depending on a student's financial need. Furthermore, we exempt non-resident Native Hawaiian students from paying the non-resident tuition differential; they are only charged the resident rates for tuition. Finally, the President of the University created a scholarship in 2008 that designated research funds to be used for Native Hawaiian students with financial need. In 2008-09, we will give an additional \$800,000 to Native Hawaiian financial assistance. In 2009-2010, it will be \$1,650,000 and in 2010-2011, it will be \$2,500,000, which is the amount to be designated every year after that.

We respectfully request that the bill be amended to target all Native Hawaiian students *with financial need*, as determined by the federal financial aid guidelines. This way, the University can continue to target those with financial hardships through a variety of federal, state and institutional grants and scholarships that can cover the cost of tuition. We also respectfully request that the assistance be in the form of University grants or scholarships to be consistent with the University's comprehensive financial assistance policy created in 2006.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



**HB 908 Relating to Tuition Waivers in the University of  
Hawai'i System**

House Committee on Hawaiian Affairs  
Rep. Mele Carroll, Chair  
Rep. Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair

Date: February 11, 2009                      Time: 9:30am                      Room: 329

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The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) supports HB 908 fully. Hawaiians and Native Hawaiians are and have been disadvantaged by the university system despite piecemeal attempts to include them. I refer you to the act.

A comprehensive system of tuition waivers for Hawaiians will allow the university's regents to establish tuition waivers for Native Hawaiian and Hawaiian students statewide and will help to ameliorate the situation which has historically put Hawai'i's native sons and daughters at risk for failing in higher education. Furthermore, many Hawaiian and Native Hawaiians either do not complete college and/or attain a higher degree citing economic reasons for not doing so. Tuition waivers will allow the students to complete their higher education as well as compete vigorously in Hawai'i's economy alongside with other minorities.

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs' Ancestry Verification system is well proven in our giving of higher education and vocational scholarships over the years and is both accessible on-line and available to all islands through our island centers. The verification system is well-staffed and will eliminate any of future objections by the university regarding Native Hawaiian and Hawaiian verification as this is the system currently accepted by the university in regards to scholarships and other grants the University of Hawai'i system.

Again, OHA supports HB 908 and we urge you to pass this measure. Mahalo nui loa.

## Rep. Maile Shimabukuro

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**From:** Joel Fischer [jfischer@hawaii.edu]  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 08, 2009 1:15 PM  
**To:** HAWtestimony  
**Subject:** HB908;Relating to Tuition Waivers;HAW;2/11/09;9:30AM;Rm329  
**Importance:** High

HB908, Relating to Tuition Waivers  
HAW; Chair, Rep Carroll

### **PLEASE PASS THIS BILL!**

This law should have been enacted years ago. The fact that it hasn't smacks of racism and a lack of understanding of the history of Hawai'i.

When the lands of the kingdom were stolen, the native people were deprived of a crucial spiritual and physical connection to the aina that lasts until the present. When the lands were returned (cede) to Hawai'i, unfair restrictions were placed on the use of the lands.

While compensation to today's native people, Kanaka Maoli, cannot be seen as adequate recompense for three 100+ years of oppression, it is one of the ingredients of overall "reconciliation." Indeed, with much of UH, Manoa, being on stolen lands, how can we deny that Native people have the RIGHT to free attendance to the university that is on their lands?

Thank you for supporting this bill.

Aloha, joel

Dr. Joel Fischer, ACSW  
President, 19-3, Democratic Party

Professor  
University of Hawai'i, School of Social Work  
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"It is reasonable that everyone who asks justice should DO justice."  
Thomas Jefferson

"There comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but one must take it because one's conscience tells one that it is right."  
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

"Never, never, never quit."  
Winston Churchill

## Strongly in Support of House Bill 908

I am not Hawaiian, I am a Caucasian, from Oregon who intended to stay in Hawaii 2-4 years to finish my higher education. However, I have been here for 20 years because I fell into a good job due to the fact there was a shortage of social workers, something I never really felt good about. Through the years I feel I have become a better social worker because I have come to learn and respect the Hawaiian culture. However, I feel strongly that the Hawaiian community would have better prospered by having a Hawaiian social worker one who could have been able to support the entire community, instead of one individual at a time.

Education is the most valuable gift we can give our children or young adults, to educate our future leaders is the most valuable gift we can give ourselves. These future leaders of Hawaii, rightfully should be Hawaiian. The University of Hawaii, the core of the higher education system of Hawaii, rests upon cited lands, rightfully belonging to the Hawaiian people. We owe it to the Hawaiians to let them use their own land for free and once again reap the benefits from what their land has to offer. As things have changed in time, no longer does the land provide nutrients to the Hawaiian people, but it still offers nutrition. Education is sustenance that will last a lifetime.

Any Hawaiian, attending any school within the University of Hawaii's system should be allowed to receive a waiver of tuition. It is the right thing to do. To determine who would qualify will not be a burden to the University, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs will provide the student with an ID card that will show they are apart of the Hawaiian registry. The state will not have any start up costs to provide this service on all ten of their University of Hawaii campus. The state will only prosper by providing higher education to their Hawaiian people, not having to bring people from the 48 continuous states, investing time and money training and educating people who rotate every 2-3 years.

I urge you to pass HB908 to the betterment of not only Hawaiian people put the entire state. Thank you.

Daintry Bartoldus MSW student, University of Hawaii.

TO: COMMITTEE ON HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS  
Rep. Mele Carroll, Chair  
Rep. Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair

Re: HB 908  
RELATING TO TUITION WAIVERS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF  
HAWAII SYSTEM

Requires the University of Hawaii system to become an accomplice to racism by giving free tuition to every student with a drop of the magic blood while not giving free tuition to every other student who has the same level of need.

For hearing Wednesday, February 11, 2009 9:30 am  
Conference Room 329

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION

By: Kenneth R. Conklin, Ph.D.  
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Chair Carroll, Vice Chair Shimabukuro; members of the committee:

I oppose HB 908 but know from experience you will not consider my reasons.

Tuition waivers based on race? This proposal keeps popping up in the Legislature every year. Which race is the favored one? Why, of course, it's the race which has been so highly favored in more than 160 federally funded programs racially exclusionary to benefit only them, plus a couple branches of the State government racially exclusionary to benefit only them, plus a bill in Congress to create a racially exclusionary government solely for them. We have a state bird, a state fish, a state flower, and maybe now a state insect. So you might as well declare ethnic Hawaiians our state race -- that would be a better bill than this one.

It might be reasonable to give tuition waivers to students whose families are in poverty. There are people of all races who would qualify. Why should only ethnic Hawaiians get these waivers when there are so many other equally needy individuals who would be excluded by race from getting the waivers? If someone doesn't have a drop of the magic blood, just go ahead and kick him to the curb.

It might be reasonable to give tuition waivers to students from families where no other family member has ever

graduated from college (or perhaps never even attended college). There are people of all races who would qualify. Why should only ethnic Hawaiians get these waivers when there are so many other similarly situated individuals who would be excluded by race from getting the waivers? If someone doesn't have a drop of the magic blood, just go ahead and kick him to the curb.

I'm asking you to vote against this bill. I'm asking you not only to vote "no", I'm asking you to stand up when the bill comes for a vote, rip up a copy of the bill in plain view of everyone, and shout out loud and clear "HELL NO." But based on previous years' performance, I'm guessing the committee will pass it unanimously, without even any reservations, because you're afraid to stand up for what's right. This bill is so ridiculously racist it should never have even been scheduled for a hearing. A committee chair with a sense of decency would have killed it. But you'll pass it along until the very end of session, when the Ways and Means committee will mercifully allow it to die, not because the bill is morally obscene, but only because there's not enough money in the budget to pay for it.

Did you find this testimony to be insulting? Well then, I guess you're smarter than I thought when I saw the other bills you've been passing with no "no" votes and no reservations. If this were a court you would hold me in contempt, and I would shout "YES INDEED" and gladly pay the fine.