



HB 395 RELATING TO TUITION WAIVERS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I

House Committee on Hawaiian Affairs
Representative Faye Hanohano, Chair
Representative Chris Lee, Vice Chair

February 2, 2011

8:30 a.m.

Room 329

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) strongly **SUPPORTS** HB 395 that grants tuition waivers to Native Hawaiian students in the University of Hawai'i system. OHA concurs with the findings of the measure and offers additional comment herein.

The University of Hawai'i was established in 1907 as a land grant university under the Morrill Act of 1862 and built upon Hawaiian kingdom lands. Unlike the 1890 land grants that established the historical black colleges and universities or the 1994 land grant colleges for Native Americans, both established to provide access to disenfranchised groups of people, the University of Hawai'i has been slow to open the doors of equal opportunity and social justice to Native Hawaiians. Current Board of Regents policy allows for only two hundred and fifty (250) tuition waivers for Native Hawaiians in financial need.

OHA commends the University of Hawai'i for its strategic plan, "University of Hawai'i Defining our Destiny: Strategic Plan 2002- 2020", and for setting as a core commitment, a commitment to social justice. One of the University's Social Justice strategic imperatives is to "recognize our *kuleana* (responsibility) to honor the indigenous people and promote social justice for Native Hawaiians." The plan then sets as a benchmark: "Our enrollment of Native Hawaiians increases to 15 percent of the student population." This is a high benchmark indicating that Native Hawaiian enrollment has not yet reached 15 percent of the student population but has hovered at 11 percent for several years. It is also a low benchmark considering that Native Hawaiians constitute nearly 25 percent of the total population.

According to the *University of Hawai'i's Annual Report to the 2010 Legislature on Student Scholarship and Assistance Special Fund 2008-2009*, only \$299,057 in tuition waivers went to Native Hawaiian Financial Aid. More tuition waivers were granted to employee spouses (\$369,734), and the most tuition waivers were granted to graduate assistants (\$11,504,233).

Tuition waivers for all Native Hawaiians desiring access to the University of Hawai'i system will enable the University to meet its Social Justice strategic imperatives. By eliminating this financial barrier, more Native Hawaiians can achieve the goal of

graduation from a post-secondary institution with a degree in hand enhancing the options and economic opportunities that are available to them and their families.

OHA therefore urges the committee to **PASS** HB 395 RELATING TO TUITION WAIVERS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure.



Papa Ola Lokahi
Nāna I Ka Pono Na Ma

Papa Ola Lokahi
894 Queen Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Phone: 808.597.6550 ~ Facsimile: 808.597.6551

Papa Ola Lokahi

A non-profit Native Hawaiian organization founded in 1988 for the purpose of improving the health and well-being of Native Hawaiians and other native peoples of the Pacific and Continental United States.

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TESTIMONY: HB 395, RELATING TO TUITION WAIVERS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
Rep. Faye Hanohano, Chair
Sen. Chris Lee, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 2, 2011
8:30 am
Conference Room 329
State Capitol

Hardy Spoehr, Executive Director

Aloha Chairman Hanohano, Vice Chair Lee, and Members of the House Committee on Hawaiian Affairs. Papa Ola Lokahi expresses its strong support for this measure.

Education is critical for developing the 'lahui.' Many states with public universities have extended tuition waivers to their respective Native populations. Further, given the fact that the University of Hawai'i is situated on public lands which were formerly known as part of those lands "ceded" to the United States, it is only just that the University expands its tuition waivers to Native Hawaiians.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide strong supportive testimony for this important measure.

Testimony of Sharde Mersberg, Native Hawaiian Student of University of Hawai'i at Mānoa
In SUPPORT of
H.B. 395 – Relating to Tuition Waivers in the University of Hawai'i System

House Committee on Hawaiian Affairs
Wednesday, February 2, 2011 **8:30am** **Conference Room 329**

Chair Hanohano, Vice-Chair Lee, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Sharde Mersberg and I am a Native Hawaiian student attending the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa in pursuit of my Masters of Public Health. I humbly ask for your support to pass H.B. 395 Relating to Tuition Waivers in the University of Hawai'i System.

There are two main points that I request you keep in mind when making your decision: Native Hawaiians are indigenous peoples with inherent rights and it is more cost-effective for this bill to be implemented than to further perpetuate the disservice done unto not only the Native Hawaiian community, but Hawai'i as a whole.

As stated previously, from the Ceded Land Trust, § 5(f) of the Admissions Act, to the more current "Akaka Bill" (Native Hawaiian Government Reorganization Bill, S.1011), the land is set aside "for the betterment of the conditions of native Hawaiians". Further, Native Hawaiians are an indigenous peoples. By definition, an indigenous population is recognized for their inherent rights tracing back to their existence as the original inhabitants of the land. As a result, indigenous peoples have the *right* to land and resources, such as education. Moreover, the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa is *on* "ceded" land. It is to the betterment of Native Hawaiians to pass this bill in support and acknowledgement of Native Hawaiians', as indigenous peoples, rights.

Data, including data presented in the bill, has many layers of analysis. As the data shows, Native Hawaiians with college and graduate degrees are not highly represented. Besides costs, being *privileged* is a key factor that results in being able to access and remain in school. Other data details further that a Native Hawaiian doctor with a Native Hawaiian patient has better—satisfaction, accuracy and more cost-effective—(health) outcomes. By passing H.B. 395, this will allow an opportunity for gaps between the privileged and not as privileged to be narrowed. Passing H.B. 395 will also allow better management of limited resources, and waste reduction, with Native Hawaiian doctors working strategically and Native Hawaiian patients being properly cared for. As a result, Hawai'i altogether will benefit with proper resource management and preservation.

For the betterment of not only Native Hawaiians, but also Hawai'i as whole, I urge you to pass H.B. 395.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Sharde Mersberg
shardem@hawaii.edu

Jennifer Wilbur

From: Francine Palama [franpalama@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 02, 2011 8:14 AM
To: HAWtestimony
Subject: testing

Aloha mai kakou,

I am a native Hawaiian non-traditional student who is seeking a professional degree at the University of Hawai'i and have benefited from the tuition waiver program.

I support HB 395: Relating to Tuition Waivers in the University System for all native Hawaiians to attend the University and community colleges that tuition waives are provided to native Hawaiian students. This bill will provide higher education opportunities and allow for native Hawaiian students to attain their goals after high school; become prominent role model leaders in our community; support their families and be a part of the professional leaders in academia across our state.

Mahalo,

Francine M. P. Palama,
DARCH Doctoral Candidate
School of Architecture
University of Hawai'i at Manoa
2410 Campus Road
Honolulu, HI 96822
Ph. 808-341-9881
Email: franpalama@gmail.com

Jennifer Wilbur

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, February 02, 2011 8:09 AM
To: HAWtestimony
Cc: keohokalp@students.sou.edu
Subject: Testimony for HB395 on 2/2/2011 8:30:00 AM

Testimony for HAW 2/2/2011 8:30:00 AM HB395

Conference room: 329
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: phillip keohokalole
Organization: Individual
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: keohokalp@students.sou.edu
Submitted on: 2/2/2011

Comments:

Jennifer Wilbur

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, February 02, 2011 1:59 AM
To: HAWtestimony
Cc: tampalette@gmail.com
Subject: Testimony for HB395 on 2/2/2011 8:30:00 AM

Testimony for HAW 2/2/2011 8:30:00 AM HB395

Conference room: 329
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: Yes
Submitted by: Paulette Tam
Organization: Individual
Address: P O Box 4787 Kaneohe HI
Phone: 808-271-3760
E-mail: tampalette@gmail.com
Submitted on: 2/2/2011

Comments:
Please support HB 395

Jennifer Wilbur

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, February 01, 2011 11:08 PM
To: HAWtestimony
Cc: jkeoho@gmail.com
Subject: Testimony for HB395 on 2/2/2011 8:30:00 AM

Testimony for HAW 2/2/2011 8:30:00 AM HB395

Conference room: 329
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Jarrett Keohokalole
Organization: Individual
Address: 45-447 Kaneohe Bay Dr. Kaneohe, HI
Phone: 225-1926
E-mail: jkeoho@gmail.com
Submitted on: 2/1/2011

Comments:

Jennifer Wilbur

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, February 01, 2011 10:08 PM
To: HAWtestimony
Cc: NaLeoHawaiian@aol.com
Subject: Testimony for HB395 on 2/2/2011 8:30:00 AM

Testimony for HAW 2/2/2011 8:30:00 AM HB395

Conference room: 329
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Mahelani Sylva
Organization: Individual
Address: 4160 Hoala Street, 22C Lihue, Hawaii 96766
Phone: 808-635-4735
E-mail: NaLeoHawaiian@aol.com
Submitted on: 2/1/2011

Comments:

Madam Chair Hanohano and Members of the House Committee on Hawaiian Affairs,

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 395.

During these times of economic hardships, families focus primarily on the basics needs such as food and shelter. It is sad, that to seek a higher education is considered a luxury . . . a luxury that most of our youth can not afford.

Tuition waivers for our people would help lessen the burden of the cost for a higher education and create an opportunity for our youth to further their education.

Mahalo, for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me:

Respectfully,

Mahelani Sylva
P. O. Box 927
Lihue, HI 96766
Kaua'i Moku
808-635-4735

Jennifer Wilbur

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, February 01, 2011 5:59 PM
To: HAWtestimony
Cc: options888@yahoo.com
Subject: Testimony for HB395 on 2/2/2011 8:30:00 AM

Testimony for HAW 2/2/2011 8:30:00 AM HB395

Conference room: 329
Testifier position: oppose
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: anonymous
Organization: Individual
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: options888@yahoo.com
Submitted on: 2/1/2011

Comments:

I think this proposal is financially unsustainable with total disregard to how this will impact the city and state and the people of this community. The UH system is already under tremendous financial stress. I do not see any evidence that such a bill will support a better future for Hawaiian students. There are many other ethnicities that have no resources such as immigrant Vietnamese, Chinese and many others, just like the Hawaiians that they are very much successful. How can just the Hawaiians blanketly get tuition wavers, this is outrageous. My family is Hawaiian and do not believe this bill can be supported.

Jennifer Wilbur

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, February 01, 2011 5:59 PM
To: HAWtestimony
Cc: options888@yahoo.com
Subject: Testimony for HB395 on 2/2/2011 8:30:00 AM

Testimony for HAW 2/2/2011 8:30:00 AM HB395

Conference room: 329
Testifier position: oppose
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: anonymous
Organization: Individual
Address:
Phone:
E-mail: options888@yahoo.com
Submitted on: 2/1/2011

Comments:

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February 2, 2011

Aloha Rep. Hano Hano (chair,) Rep. Lee (vice chair) and Committee Members:

RE: HB 395 Relating to Tuition Waiver in the UH System

I support HB 395, because I worked part-time 20 to 25 hours a week to pay for my tuition and have medical insurance. I am not one of those students who can absorb the courses taught quickly. I needed to study at least 3 hours per course.

It took me 4 years to acquire an Associate of Arts Degree in Liberal Arts at Kapiolani Community College. Work and travel by bus hindered me from continuing my college education through the UH at Manoa Campus for a Bachelor of Arts Degree. My work place was in Kapalama and I lived in Aiea.

Many Native Hawaiian students live farther than Aiea, work and catch the bus, too. There is no time for college. A tuition waiver, would definitely aid potential Native Hawaiian students to pursue the multitude of degrees offered in the UH System to better Native Hawaiians in Hawaii Nei. Cost should not be a factor in hindering an education.

If work is needed, students can always find a job on their UH campuses or in the nearby vicinity.

Paulette Tam, Concerned Kaneohe Resident

Plam add parents refusal to help me go to college

Additional Comments: Please Support HB395

UH Rockney Freitas Rep. 2/10

added: my affluent parents refused to pay/help pay my tuition. I am part Hawaiian

*Financial Aid / Fed Aid
250 Tuition Waiver
Local's Mainland
Scholarship
Private Grants*