

HB1457 HD1

PROPOSED SD1

Dream Act

EDU, WAM



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Education
March 19, 2012 at 1:30 pm

by

Rockne Freitas

Vice President for Student Affairs & University and Community Relations
University of Hawai'i System

HB1457 HD1 PROPOSED SD1 – RELATING TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Chair Tokuda, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee:

I am submitting written testimony on behalf of the University of Hawai'i and its 10 campuses.

HB1457 HD1 PROPOSED SD1 extends eligibility for state financial aid and resident tuition to students of the University of Hawai'i without lawful immigration status who meet certain specified criteria.

The University supports the intent of this bill that is aligned with proposed Federal legislation known as the "Dream Act". The University is committed to providing access to a college education for all those who call Hawai'i home and want to improve themselves and their community.

The University is ready to develop policies and procedures to improve college access for the undocumented immigrant; consistent with Federal law, and would ask that any legislation in this area provide sufficient flexibility to enable such policies and procedures to be crafted to avoid potential conflicts between State and Federal laws, regulations, and policies.

Thank you for your support of the University and the opportunity to comment on this bill.

HAWAII
STATE
COMMISSION
ON THE
STATUS
OF
WOMEN



Chair
LESLIE WILKINS

COMMISSIONERS:

ELENA CABATU
ADRIENNE KING
CARMILLE LIM
AMY MONK
LISA ELLEN SMITH
CAROL ANNE PHILIPS

Executive Director
Catherine Betts, Esq.

Email:
DHS.HSCSW@hawaii.gov
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HSCSW

235 S. Beretania #407
Honolulu, HI 96813
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March 18, 2012

Testimony in Support, HB 1457, HD 1, SD 1

To: Senator Jill N. Tokuda, Chair
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice-Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Education

From: Catherine Betts, Esq., Executive Director, Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women

Re: Testimony in Support of HB 1457, HD 1, SD 1

On behalf of the Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women, I would like to express strong support for HB 1457, HD 1, SD 1, which would enable students to apply for and participate in financial aid programs, regardless of their immigration status.

Obtaining higher education can be extremely costly and, oftentimes, cost prohibitive. Immigrant students who are high achieving and talented should not be forced to bear an unequal financial burden simply because they want to obtain a college education. These students often already face various problems, including financial barriers to higher education, fear of deportation and inability to secure gainful employment—all because of their legal status. Providing eligibility to secure state financial aid or tuition waivers is an investment in our state's future.

I recently had the very humbling opportunity to meet with undocumented college students from California. They shared horrifying stories about trying to avoid police officers for fear of deportation, stories about being their families' only future link to social and economic prosperity, and stories about wanting to realize their dreams of obtaining a college degree. I have no doubt that our undocumented students in Hawaii are just as bright and hardworking. Immigration status should never restrict one's academic future, or one's ability to thrive. To many students, this bill represents a step toward everything they have ever learned about the "American dream". I strongly support it and respectfully urge this Committee to pass this bill.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Catherine Betts, Esq.
Executive Director, Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women



Committee: Committee on Education
Hearing Date/Time: Monday, March 19, 2012, 1:30 p.m.
Place: Room 225
Re: Testimony of the ACLU of Hawaii in strong support of H.B. 1457, HD1, Relating to Higher Education

Dear Chair Tokuda and Members of the Committee on Education:

The ACLU strongly supports H.B. 1457, HD1, which will allow certain qualified young people who possess limitless potential to contribute to our society and provide them with a path to citizenship after higher education. Immigrants who have lived in the United States since their youth can acquire legal status by working hard and maintaining good moral character; nothing could be more consistent with American values.

States should grant all their resident students, regardless of immigration status, the right to attend public universities at an affordable rate. This bill would play a critical role in promoting fundamental fairness in access to public higher education.

This bill will promote two very important objectives: (1) the imperative of protecting the rights of vulnerable immigrant communities; and (2) the importance of access to higher education.

H.B. 1457, HD1, provides opportunities for the growing population of undocumented youth, without which they risk becoming a vulnerable underclass.

Nationally, almost one-third of immigrant children who are still in school live below the federal poverty line.¹ The inability of immigrants to obtain lawful status creates an “underclass” subject to exploitation, often unable or afraid to assert civil and constitutional rights. This is particularly dangerous for children who enter the country at a young age. In the words of the Supreme Court, “the illegal alien of today may well be the legal alien of tomorrow . . . [W]ithout an education, these undocumented children, [a]lready disadvantaged as a result of poverty, lack of English-speaking ability, and undeniable racial prejudices, . . . will become permanently locked into the

¹ Jeanne Batalova & Margie McHugh, Migration Policy Institute, *DREAM v. Reality: An Analysis of Potential DREAM Act Beneficiaries* (July 2010), at 8, available at <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/DREAM-Insight-July2010.pdf>.

American Civil Liberties Union of Hawaii
P.O. Box 3410
Honolulu, Hawaii'i 96801
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Hon. Sen. Tokuda, Chair, EDU Committee
and Members Thereof
March 19, 2012
Page 2 of 3

lowest socio-economic class.² Allowing this large and growing group of individuals to remain in poverty without access to higher education is wrong for Hawaii.

Many of the undocumented individuals currently living in Hawaii have lived here for years or decades and have deep ties to our state. Particularly for those who were brought to Hawaii when they were children, these ties are often much stronger than those – if they exist at all – to their country of origin. In addition, many individuals are members of so-called “mixed” families where at least one member is a U.S. citizen or legal resident. These members of our communities are extremely vulnerable. They face daily reluctance to contact police and public safety officials; exposure to private exploitation and abuse; diminished or non-existent workplace safeguards; exclusion from public health programs; and fear of asserting their basic legal rights and protections.

Given this situation, the future is bleak for those brought to Hawaii as children by their parents without proper documentation. Current laws ensure that their dreams will always remain out of reach. Unlike the classmates they have grown up next to, pursuing a college education aren’t just a matter of working hard and achieving. Instead, they face many roadblocks in their path to success: crushing financial burdens, discriminatory enrollment policies, the inability to work, and the constantly-looming threat of deportation.

H.B. 1457, HD1 would ensure that these morally blameless young people don’t have their careers and lives stunted by legal problems not of their own making. The legislation creates a powerful imperative for recipients of conditional lawful status either to pursue a college education. It also encourages immigrant children now enrolled in elementary or secondary school to obtain a high-school diploma and further education. Thus, H.B. 1457, HD1 will significantly ameliorate the costly economic and social detriments associated with maintaining a large population of individuals in Hawaii who are part of our communities but prevented from using their talents fully to serve our country.

By encouraging high-achieving young people to focus on their studies, the legislation will allow these individuals who are part of our communities’ fabric to regularize their status and thereby benefit our economy.

² *Plyler v. Doe*, 457 U.S. 202, 207-08 (1982).

American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai'i
P.O. Box 3410
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96801
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Hon. Sen. Tokuda, Chair, EDU Committee
and Members Thereof
March 19, 2012
Page 3 of 3

The mission of the ACLU of Hawaii is to protect the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the U.S. and State Constitutions. The ACLU of Hawaii fulfills this through legislative, litigation, and public education programs statewide. The ACLU of Hawaii is a non-partisan and private non-profit organization that provides its services at no cost to the public and does not accept government funds. The ACLU of Hawaii has been serving Hawaii for over 40 years.

Sincerely,

Laurie A. Temple
Staff Attorney

American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai'i
P.O. Box 3410
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HAWAI'I FRIENDS OF CIVIL RIGHTS
3432 B-1 Kalihi St. Honolulu, Hi 96819

March 19,2012

TO: Senator Jill Tokuda and members of the Education Committee

FROM: Amy Agbayani

RE: HB 1457 hd1 proposed sd1

I am testifying as a private citizen and co-chair the Hawai`i Friends of Civil Rights and I do not represent UH, my employer. HF CR supports policies, programs and individuals who are committed to civil rights, equal access and diversity. HF CR supports HB 1457, hd1 proposed SD1 that would allow students who do not hold a lawful immigration status to pay resident tuition rates and eligible for university programs. Under the federal Immigration and Nationality Act, states have the authority to grant state and local public benefits to residents who do not have lawful immigration status.

I respectfully urge you as policy-makers for our state, to give these students a chance to become educated, productive members of our community. As an immigrant myself, I have great sympathy for the many barriers these foreign born students and their families may encounter. These students are already a part of our multi-ethnic community and I am confident that an investment in their education will benefit the university and our community.



UNITED FILIPINO COUNCIL OF HAWAII

P.O. BOX 498, Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0498

Testimony in Strong Support of HB 1457, HD1 Proposed SD1
Senate Committee on Education
Hawai`i State Capitol, Room 225
March 19, 2012, 1:30 p.m.

To: The Honorable Sen. Jill Tokuda, Chair
Senate Committee on Education, Hawai`i State Legislature
From: Lynn Gutierrez, President, United Filipino Council of Hawaii

Report Title: RELATING TO HIGHER EDUCATION.

Description: Extends eligibility for state financial aid and resident tuition to students of the University of Hawaii without lawful immigration status who meet certain specified criteria. (Proposed SD1)

Dear Sen. Jill Tokuda, Chair, Sen. Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair, and Members of the Senate Committee on Education:

The United Filipino Council of Hawaii strongly supports this bill. I am the president of the United Filipino Council of Hawaii (UFCH). We are an umbrella organization with member civic groups from six island councils. UFCH membership is comprised of nearly 5,000 individual members.

I am a naturalized American citizen, as are most of our UFCH members. I am also a Hawai`i public school teacher with nearly forty years of experience to know the profound impact that higher education can make on a student's ability to overcome life adversities and to become a contributing member of his or her family and community.

UFCH understands that the present bill would amend current law to extend eligibility for state financial aid and resident tuition to students of the University of Hawaii without lawful immigration status who meet certain specified criteria. (Proposed SD1)

Passage of this bill would be a humanitarian gesture that would open the doors to an invisible, but vital segment of Hawai`i's youth to help us strengthen our society and economy. Thank you for the opportunity to provide UFCH support. Thank you for hearing this bill and for your consideration of its merits.

Sincerely,

Lynn Gutierrez, UFCH President



OAHU FILIPINO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

P.O. Box 17531 • Honolulu • Hawaii 96817

Testimony in Strong Support of HB 1457, HD1 Proposed SD1
Senate Committee on Education
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 225
March 19, 2012, 1:30 p.m.

To: The Honorable Sen. Jill Tokuda, Chair; The Honorable Sen. Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Education, Hawai'i State Legislature
From: Maria Etrata, President, Oahu Filipino Community Council

Report Title: RELATING TO HIGHER EDUCATION.
Description: Extends eligibility for state financial aid and resident tuition to students of the University of Hawaii without lawful immigration status who meet certain specified criteria. (Proposed SD1)

Dear Sen. Jill Tokuda, Chair; Sen. Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair; and Members of the Senate Committee on Education:

My name is Maria Etrata, president of the Oahu Filipino Community Council. OFCC is an umbrella organization that represents a network of non-profit civic groups with a unified vision to improve the lives of our Filipino communities.

OFCC respectfully asks that you pass this bill to enable undocumented youth, who meet the qualifications of the provisions under consideration, to access higher education at resident tuition rates, and to be eligible to apply for scholarships.

It is heartbreaking to see across the nation, as well as in Hawai'i, that students who come to the U.S. as children or babies with their parents from their country of origin suddenly discover that they are disenfranchised individuals, without the proper documentation, when they try to apply for a driver's license or submit applications for college and financial aid.

Hawai'i's undocumented, but highly motivated youth, aspire to "be somebody". They want to make our society a better place for all. Given this, they are keenly aware of the rights and privileges of U.S. citizenship, which many American people take for granted. In these times of economic austerity, we cannot afford not to support this Hawai'i Dream Act. With higher education and financial aid within their reach, these youth will be in a position to be of great help. Please consider using your power and influence to give them hope and a way to be a part of society's solutions.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony, and for hearing these bills.

Sincerely,

Maria Etrata, President, Oahu Filipino Community Council



Nursing Advocates & Mentors, Inc.

... a non-profit organization with a mission to address the global nursing shortage by providing guidance and assistance for nursing colleagues to obtain their professional license in nursing.

NAMI, P.O. Box 2034 Aiea, HI 96701

E-mail: bramosrazon@aol.com

Testimony in Strong Support of HB 1457, HD1 Proposed SD1
Senate Committee on Education
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 225
March 19, 2012, 1:30 p.m.

To: The Honorable Sen. Jill Tokuda, Chair; The Honorable Sen. Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Education, Hawai'i State Legislature
From: Beatrice Ramos-Razon, President, NAMI-Nursing Advocates and Mentors Inc.

Report Title: RELATING TO HIGHER EDUCATION.

Description: Extends eligibility for state financial aid and resident tuition to students of the University of Hawai'i without lawful immigration status who meet certain specified criteria. (Proposed SD1)

Dear Sen. Jill Tokuda, Chair, Sen. Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair, and Members of the Senate Committee on Education:

My name is Beatrice Ramos-Razon. As the founder and president of NAMI (Nursing Advocates & Mentors, Inc.), I am proud to submit our strong support for this bill. NAMI's membership is comprised of over 75 volunteer nurses, instructors, allied health care professionals, and Filipino leaders, who are dedicated to improve the health of Hawai'i's people through education, mentoring, advocacy and service. NAMI has been a mentor to minority and underrepresented students in University of Hawai'i Student Equity, Excellence and Diversity programs engaged in community-based participatory research to address health disparities.

The Hawai'i DREAM Act is vital to Hawai'i's successful economic turnaround. Our state government and economy have the most to gain with highly educated, highly skilled, and highly motivated students, who can help navigate Hawai'i toward a resilient recovery. For students wishing to attain higher education, but whose status is undocumented non-citizen, it is devastating to learn that their undocumented status has drastic legal consequences that make them ineligible for resident tuition and financial aid. These bills are a step in the right direction for such Hawai'i students.

With these bills enacted, one day soon, these affected students will be a part of Hawai'i's leaders in diverse fields. They are eager to demonstrate that they will be good stewards in the care and prosperity of our island state. Thank you for considering to give them this opportunity and for hearing these bills.

Sincerely,

Beatrice Ramos-Razon, RN, FACDONA
President, Nursing Advocates and Mentors, Inc.

Filipinos for Affirmative Action

3432 B-1 Kalihi Street- Honolulu, Hi 96819

Testimony in Strong Support of HB 1457, HD1 Proposed SD1
Senate Committee on Education
Hawai`i State Capitol, Room 225
March 19, 2012, 1:30 p.m.

To: The Honorable Sen. Jill Tokuda, Chair
The Honorable Sen. Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Education, Hawai`i State Legislature
From: Agnes Malate, Board Member, Filipinos for Affirmative Action

Report Title: RELATING TO HIGHER EDUCATION.
Description: Extends eligibility for state financial aid and resident tuition to students of the University of Hawaii without lawful immigration status who meet certain specified criteria. (Proposed SD1)

Dear Sen. Jill Tokuda, Chair, Sen. Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair, and Members of the Senate Committee on Education:

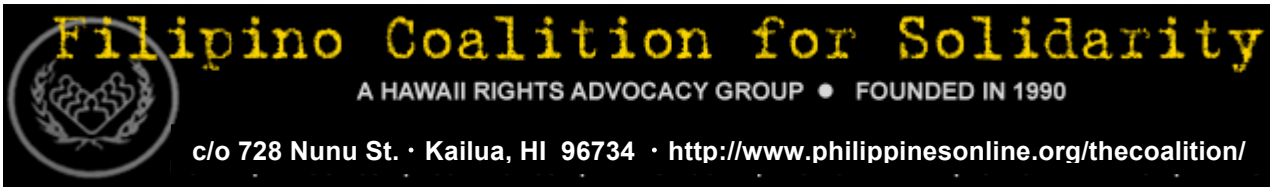
As a board member of Filipinos for Affirmative Action, a proponent of civil rights, I submit strong support for this bill.

I believe that passage of the Hawai`i Dream Act will be of long-term benefit to the entire State of Hawai`i, and not just the students themselves. Education is an investment that benefits all of society. The twentieth century has often been termed the "American Century," where our country established itself as a world leader in industry, science, music, literature, and critical thought. None of this could have happened without the massive investment in public education, and higher education, that provided millions of students with the unprecedented opportunity to develop their skills and innate powers to fully contribute to society's benefit. Engineers, scientists, doctors, writers, poets – the millions of educated individuals who made this country great – could not have accomplished such an incredible feat without the benefits provided by public education. The Internet itself was developed from research conducted by a public university professor, who himself was educated by public schools. Allowing all of Hawai`i's students, including DREAMers, to gain access to the education they need to fully contribute to society is an investment that will benefit all of Hawai`i.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide our strong support, and for hearing this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

Agnes Malate
Filipinos for Affirmative Action Board Member



Testimony in Strong Support of HB 1457, HD1 Proposed SD1
Senate Committee on Education
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 225
March 19, 2012, 1:30 p.m.

To: The Honorable Sen. Jill Tokuda, Chair
The Honorable Sen. Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Education, Hawai'i State Legislature
From: Charlene Cuaresma, Past President, Filipino Coalition for Solidarity

Report Title: RELATING TO HIGHER EDUCATION.
Description: Extends eligibility for state financial aid and resident tuition to students of the University of Hawaii without lawful immigration status who meet certain specified criteria. (Proposed SD1)

Dear Sen. Jill Tokuda, Chair, Sen. Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair, and Members of the Senate Committee on Education:

My name is Charlene Cuaresma, past president of the Filipino Coalition for Solidarity. The Coalition strongly supports this bill. Since its inception in 1990, the Coalition has represented more than 50 Filipino community leaders, whose aim is to work for social justice issues to empower Filipinos to make socially responsible contributions to Hawai'i and our global neighbors through education, advocacy, and social action. The Coalition is committed to an ongoing resolution to address disparities as social justice issues.

Support is needed to remove barriers that prohibit enrollment in schools within the University of Hawai'i system for undocumented non-citizen Hawai'i students. The provisions and amendments to this bill would enable qualified students to pay resident tuition, apply for scholarships, and other programs and resources for student success.

More than generate much-needed revenue through in-state tuition, these students coming out of Hawai'i's high schools are at a crossroads. Passage of these bills will make a critical difference at a critical time when our state needs college and career-ready young people to help steer our state into economic solvency and vitality. Thank you for hearing this bill and for the opportunity to share the views of our Filipino community.

Respectfully,

Charlene Cuaresma
Past President
Filipino Coalition For Solidarity

Filipino American Citizens League

Jake Manegdeg, President
P. O. Box 270126 ★ Honolulu, Hawai'i 96827

Testimony in Strong Support of HB 1457, HD1 Proposed SD1
Senate Committee on Education
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 225
March 19, 2012, 1:30 p.m.

To: The Honorable Sen. Jill Tokuda, Chair
The Honorable Sen. Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Education, Hawai'i State Legislature
From: Jake Manegdeg, President, Filipino American Citizens League

Report Title: RELATING TO HIGHER EDUCATION.

Description: Extends eligibility for state financial aid and resident tuition to students of the University of Hawaii without lawful immigration status who meet certain specified criteria. (Proposed SD1)

Dear Sen. Jill Tokuda, Chair, Sen. Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair, and Members of the Senate Committee on Education:

My name is Jake Manegdeg. I am proud to strongly support this bill. The League was formed over ten years ago to contribute to the advancement of civil rights and social justice for minority groups, underserved populations, and vulnerable communities through education, advocacy, and social action.

Even though the United States is comprised historically of generations of immigrants, today more than ever, there is a great need for fair immigration reform. This bill addresses the plight of young people who are caught in the middle. Hawai'i has its share of students whose undocumented status prohibits them from qualifying for resident tuition, scholarships, and other programs to support student achievement in the University of Hawai'i system.

Thank you for hearing these bills and for exploring how the University of Hawai'i Board of Regents might resolve these problems for undocumented non-citizen students.

I appreciate the opportunity to voice Filipino community views to address this education disparity for all those affected. Hawai'i's young people need all the support we can give them to ensure that they are ready to contribute as good stewards of a civil, fair, inclusive, and compassionate society with the rigor to survive and thrive now and through the 21st century. Please consider passing these bills.

Very Sincerely,

Jake Manegdeg
President, Filipino American Citizens League



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

TO: Senator Jill N. Tokuda, Chair
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair
Committee on Education

FROM: Melba Bantay, Program Director
General Immigration & Refugee Services

DATE: Monday, March 19, 2012 (1:30 p.m., Room 225)

RE: **SUPPORT of HB 1457, HD1, Proposed SD1**
Relating to the University of Hawaii

Chair Tokuda, Vice Chair Kidani, and members of the Senate Committee on Higher Education. Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB 1457, HD1, proposed SD1. My name is Melba Bantay and I am Program Director for the General Immigration & Refugee Services Program at Catholic Charities Hawaii (CCH). Catholic Charities is a tax exempt, non-profit agency that has been providing services for immigrants and refugees for over 20 years.

Catholic Charities Hawaii is a member of The Hawaii Coalition for Immigration Reform, which is an interdenominational coalition advocating for the passage of the DREAM (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors) Act.

Catholic Charities Hawaii strongly supports HB 1457, HD1, proposed SD1 which will make it possible for undocumented Hawaii students to be eligible for student financial aid and university programs at the University of Hawaii. This will allow them to pursue higher education without facing the barrier of prohibitive financial expense. These young adults have lived in the United States for most of their lives and have the potential to become tremendous assets to our community. We believe this bill represents Hawaii's true values as an island culture, which welcomes diversity and fair treatment.

The young adults that this bill will benefit are Hawaii students who are graduating from Hawaii high schools and have been raised in our local culture. Forcing these aspiring students to pay out-of-state tuition rates and making them ineligible for University programs will deny them the education they need to fulfill their dream of becoming contributing members of our community.

By passing this bill, Hawaii will join the ranks of at least ten other states that have not been afraid to take the lead in recognizing the value of their DREAMers.

Catholic Charities Hawaii asks for your support of **HB 1457 HD1, proposed SD1**. If I can provide any further information, please feel free to contact me at 808-527-4711 or via email at mbantay@catholiccharitieshawaii.org. Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.



Conference room: 225
Testifier position: Support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Jose Villa
Organization: Hawaii Hispanic News
E-mail: jose@hawaiihispanicnews.org
Submitted on: 3/16/2012

Comments:

I support [HB 1457, HD1](#)

Our nation was started by immigrants fleeing their country in the hope of a better life for themselves and their families. Through their efforts, America became a beacon of hope, democracy and opportunity. That model was immortalized in the Emma Lazarus' poem inscribed on the Statue of Liberty: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free." Two-hundred and thirty-six years later, our nation is still viewed around as the world as that beacon of hope and opportunity for a better life.

On a per capita basis, Hawaii has the largest concentrations of ethnic groups of any state in the nation. The majority of our state's residents can trace their roots – *and do so proudly* – to immigrants from scores of countries around the world. And, for that reason, Hawaii is viewed globally as a model of what ethnic diversity can achieve.

Realistically, we know there are many undocumented residents in Hawaii. It is my contention that if you took all the undocumented residents out of Chinatown, we'd have to close Chinatown. The same is true for the Filipino community, the Vietnamese community, the Samoan community, the Mexican community, etc. If America is a model of a successful nation built by immigrants, then Hawaii is a model for a successful state built by immigrants.

Many people came here originally without papers or overstayed visas. They worked hard towards that vision of hope and opportunity of a better life for themselves and their families. Their kids have grown up here, and while they may have visited their parents' country, they are viewed as foreigners -- Americans – there. America is the only home they've ever known.

Due to the insistence many of their parents had on education, many of these students excelled in high school. And, for many, it wasn't until they tried to get into college that they discovered they are undocumented.

At that point, our society has two choices: 1) we can either give them an equal opportunity to get a quality education and use that education to improve our state and nation; or 2) we can relegate them to ending their academic careers with a high school diploma.

I would rather have them stocking shelves in a university library than stocking shelves in a corner grocery store. You can't improve your life -- and make significant contributions to our state's economy -- by reading the labels on the cans of chicken soup. For these reasons, I support [HB 1457, HD1](#).

Erin Conner

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Sunday, March 18, 2012 3:59 PM
To: EDU Testimony
Cc: dasgupta@way.net
Subject: Testimony for HB1457 on 3/19/2012 1:30:00 PM

Testimony for EDU 3/19/2012 1:30:00 PM HB1457

Conference room: 225
Testifier position: Support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Monisha Das Gupta
Organization: Hawaii Coalition for Immigration Reform
E-mail: dasgupta@way.net
Submitted on: 3/18/2012

Comments:

To the Honorable Chair Tokuda, Vice-Chair Kidani, and Members of the Senate Committee on Education:

I am associate professor in ethnic studies and women's studies at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, and my area of research expertise is in U.S. immigration policy. My area of study has drawn me into addressing policies that improve the lives of migrants in the United States. Since 2010, I have been a member of the Hawaii Coalition for Immigration Reform. I am writing in strong support of HB 1457 HD1 SD1 to grant in-state tuition to local undocumented high school students who are bound for the state university system, and to allow these students to participate in financial aid programs within the limits of the federal law. If the bill is passed, Hawaii will join twelve other states in the nation - California, Connecticut, Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin - that grant undocumented students in-state tuition on meeting conditions similar to the ones outlined in the bill. California passed a bill last year allowing such students to access state-funded financial aid. In Illinois, a measure was passed last year as well to create a privately funded scholarship program to which undocumented students could apply. Since 2001, states have increasingly stepped into the gap left by the failure of federal level policies to create a pathway for undocumented youth, who were brought into the United States at a very young age, to legalize their status. These states have proactively sought to address the predicament of students who went through the state public school system only to find their prospects of attending college shattered. Despite meeting admission criteria, the out-of-state tuition rates even at state schools put higher education out of their reach. In our state, the out-of-state tuition for the current academic year at UHM is a staggering \$12,456, and it is scheduled to increase. The University of Hawaii only stands to gain from this bill because currently these students are not attending college, and not paying tuition. Thus, the university loses the \$5,000 or so per student who would have attended school had they been able to pay the resident rates. Furthermore, the bill, in allowing access to financial aid that is set aside from student tuition revenues, ensures equity. It permits undocumented students to benefit from a pool into which they pay in but are currently unable to avail. It is important to note that according to the Institute for Taxation and Economic Policy, undocumented immigrants in Hawaii pay \$50.6 million in state and local taxes. Since they pay into the system, they surely deserve to get something back in the form of in-state tuition for their children. In the course of my research on newcomer immigrant communities in the state of Hawaii, I have come across cases where students eligible for admission have not been able to attend college because the non-resident tuition was unaffordable. I have been told of students who grew up in Hawaii but were forced to return to their parents' homeland because they saw no future for themselves after graduating from high school. One case, shockingly, involved a U.S.-born

citizen, who was a minor (under 19 years of age) at the time of his admission. He was unable to attend college because his undocumented parents could not establish residency, and, therefore could not prove their child's eligibility for in-state tuition at a community college.

The proposed bill will benefit youth who have attended our high schools, have been successful, and are motivated to pursue higher education. What I appreciate most about the bill as an educator at a public university is that it will execute the spirit of public higher education by expanding access to quality and affordable education. It is worth noting that our Congressional delegation from Hawaii has consistently supported the federal-level DREAM Act. Our state legislators will be in step with our Congressional delegations' recognition that DREAMers are valued members of our society, and their inclusion reflects the ethos of our state, the cultural diversity and economic growth of which has been fueled by multiple waves of migration.

Erin Conner

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Sunday, March 18, 2012 4:39 PM
To: EDU Testimony
Cc: juncolme@yahoo.com
Subject: Testimony for HB1457 on 3/19/2012 1:30:00 PM

Testimony for EDU 3/19/2012 1:30:00 PM HB1457

Conference room: 225
Testifier position: Support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Serafin Colmenares Jr.
Organization: Congress of Visayan Organizations
E-mail: juncolme@yahoo.com
Submitted on: 3/18/2012

Comments:

The Congress of Visayan Organizations is the statewide umbrella of Visayan organizations in Hawaii. We strongly support HB1457 and urges the members of the committee to pass it.

Chair Tokuda and members of the Senate Committee on Education, thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of HB1457, the Hawaii Dream Act.

As a national organization committed to advancing common-sense state immigration policies that expand opportunity for all residents, both immigrant and native-born, Progressive States Network strongly encourages the passage of HB1457. This bill will dramatically expand access to higher education for Hawaii's talented high school students – including those who do not qualify as state residents and those who are undocumented – by allowing these students the opportunity to pay in-state tuition at Hawaii's colleges and universities. At a time when a college education is truly the gateway to navigating a still-sluggish economy, the potential for this bill to bolster Hawaii's economic development and ability to attract high-technology firms in the long and short term is unmistakable.

In an increasingly globally competitive world, a highly educated population is the surest route to broad prosperity. College educated workers earn more over the course of their lifetime, add more revenue to states and localities, and contribute significantly to our states' and nation's civic life. According to one crucial study, the US workforce will face a **shortage of 16 million college educated adults** by 2025.ⁱ This gap is a challenge of the highest order for Hawaii and the nation's future productivity and workforce development horizon – one that proposals such as the Hawaii Dream Act can help address. HB1457 provides an intelligent, targeted way to meet that challenge while also responding to the growing demand for a college-educated workforce outlined by many innovative high-tech firms. Hawaii's ability to attract the companies of the future—high-technology firms and the innovation industry—is directly linked to the state's pool of talented, college-educated students to serve as a workforce for such firms. .

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, two-thirds of the occupations or industries projected to see the highest growth by 2018 will require a college degree.ⁱⁱ This is why Nike, Intel, and other global firms have voiced their support for tuition equity bills in Colorado and Oregon – because these companies would prefer to work with the immigrant talent in their backyard rather than search for the next Steve Jobs or Bill Gates outside the US.ⁱⁱⁱ

This workforce development argument also informs why many other states are going down this same path this year. To date in 2012, four states have already introduced tuition equity proposals. These bills, in addition to similar laws already enacted in fourteen other states, point to a growing consensus in statehouses across the country that the smartest way to develop human capital and attract dynamic industry: through expanding access to higher education for talented immigrant students. The issue routinely attracts bipartisan support---from labor groups and chambers of commerce alike.

Without the Hawaii Dream Act, the considerable investment Hawaii already commits toward the elementary and secondary education of these students would go to waste. The loss of this investment and talent would be unconscionable even in times of fiscal health, but the state's current financial condition underlines the urgency behind this measure.

This measure would also benefit Hawaii's budgetary bottom line in an immediate and lasting way by pumping money into state coffers from tuition fees and broadening the state's tax base. By creating a pipeline for highly-talented undocumented students to receive a college education, Hawaii will be preparing these students for high-paying careers that will put them on a path towards meaningfully contributing to the state's revenue stream. Developing this human capital will also allow the state to retain the talent it will need to attract 21st century innovation and industry to its shores.

The positive impact for Hawaii's University system is also worth considering: in the 2009-2010 academic year, Hawaii's 5,000 foreign students contributed \$116.8 million to the state's economy in tuition, fees, and living expenses^{iv}. Passing HB1457 will expand the numbers of students eligible for the university system and greatly increase the resources available to it. In Colorado and Utah, for example, proposed tuition equity bills were expected to infuse over \$1 million in revenues into each state's university system.^v HB 1674 will dramatically expand the resources available for every Hawaiian student's college education without disadvantaging the enrollment prospects for native-born students. At a time when budget shortfalls and fiscal austerity threaten the meaningful education of all Hawaiians, HB1674 is truly a common-sense solution.

If passed, HB1457 will serve as a vitally important workforce development tool for the state. While simultaneously broadening the tax base and expanding resources for the University system, HB1457 will help educate and retain some of Hawaii's top talent, integrate deserving and talented undocumented students into the economy create the kind of workforce necessary to foster an innovative and vibrant Hawaii that is built to last.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify,

Suman Raghunathan

Director of Policy and Strategic Partnerships

Progressive States Network

ⁱ The Lumina Foundation, "[A Stronger Nation Through Higher Education](#)". February, 2009.

ⁱⁱ "[Help Wanted: Projects of Job and Education Requirements Through 2018](#)," Georgetown Center for Education and the Workforce. June, 2010.

ⁱⁱⁱ "[CEOs to Lawmakers: Back off Immigration](#)," Phoenix Business Journal. March 16, 2011.

^{iv} NAFSA, "[The Economic Benefits of International Education to the United States for the 2009-2010 Academic Year: A Statistical Analysis](#)."

^v "[State Revised Fiscal Impact to SB 126](#)," Colorado Legislative Council Staff Fiscal Note. February 22, 2011.

March 17, 2012

Re: HB1457HD1 proposed SD1

Senate Education Committee
Senator Jill Tokuda, chair
House of Representatives
State of Hawai'i

Dear Senator Tokuda and Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 1457HD1 proposed SD1 RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I. I support this bill as a minister of the United Church of Christ. The United Church of Christ has long supported the welfare of immigrant people, documented and undocumented, recognizing that our nation is a nation of immigrants, and that without the contributions made by immigrants we would be much the poorer as a people. The church has supported immigrant rights based upon the teaching of the Hebrew scriptures "to care for the widow, the orphan, and the alien residing in the land," and also the teaching of Jesus that we should care for the "least" among us.

The passage of this bill will be of a great benefit to young people who reside among us, who have graduated from Hawai'i's schools, but who find themselves without lawful immigration status. They will be able to pay resident tuition fees and participate in resident university programs, which will make it more affordable for them to pursue higher education at the University of Hawai'i.

This bill will benefit not only undocumented young residents of Hawai'i but also the University of Hawai'i itself, which will be blessed with more students, and therefore more income.

I trust that the House Finance Committee will vote to support this bill. It is the *pono* thing to do.

Sincerely,

The Rev. D. Neal MacPherson
2513 Stream Drive
Honolulu, HI 96817

My name is Stan Bain, I am a United Methodist minister and the organizer of Hawaii Coalition for Immigration Reform composed of 25 organizations committed to work for immigrant rights. on behalf of the coalition I speak in support of House Bill 1457HD1 proposed SD1. The potential university students affected by this bill were brought to Hawaii at a very young age. They did not choose to settle here. Now Hawaii is their home. English is their language. Our Hawaiian mix is their culture.

They have or will have successfully completed their elementary and high school education in Hawaii schools. To be able to obtain higher education degrees through the University of Hawaii system by paying in-state tuition is an investment in their lives. The proposed waiver does not jeopardize the waivers citizen students currently enjoy.

This legislation also is an investment in the University of Hawaii because more of these qualified students would be able to attend UH if allowed to matriculate at the resident rate. Their presence would enhance the caliber of the student mix as well as attract more funds to the university through financial aid and scholarship grants.

Additionally, this legislation is an investment in the state of Hawaii in the long run. The state has already invested in the public elementary and high school education of the students who will benefit from this legislation. The state will benefit if they are able to remain in Hawaii for their higher education and add their skills to the economic and cultural well being of Hawaii nei beyond completion of their studies. Furthermore, the proposed legislation places these non-citizen residents on a path to citizenship.

Gary Locke, Secretary of Commerce and co-Chair of the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and former Governor of Washington said:-
“Research has shown the potential of undocumented students to contribute to the economy and the U.S. Workforce. The DREAM Act would offer a rigorous and lengthy pathway towards earned legalization that would be a powerful incentive for young people to stay in school, graduate, stay out of trouble, and contribute to the economic stability of our country.”

I urge you to approve the proposed senate draft.

Testimony for EDU 3/19/2012 1:30:00 PM HB1457

Conference room: 225
Testifier position: Support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Natalie Peguero
Organization: Individual
E-mail: ntlpr@gmail.com
Submitted on: 3/17/2012

Comments:

I believe that the DREAM ACT is imperative to not only Hawaii but the U.S. as a whole. As an ally to undocumented communities, I believe that any student who is a qualified, motivated, resident of a specific state should be able to pay in-state tuition just like any other resident would. Having such financial barriers deters students from seeking higher education and thus are unable to fulfill their full potential as members of society. It just makes sense for every state to provide their residents with as much access possible to higher education in order to have a well-rounded community.

Erin Conner

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Friday, March 16, 2012 2:28 PM
To: EDU Testimony
Cc: cpaul@hawaii.edu
Subject: Testimony for HB1457 on 3/19/2012 1:30:00 PM

Testimony for EDU 3/19/2012 1:30:00 PM HB1457

Conference room: 225
Testifier position: Support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Dr. Paul M. Chandler
Organization: UH MANOA
E-mail: cpaul@hawaii.edu
Submitted on: 3/16/2012

Comments:

Please support this bill. It will help a number of our young people get into college rather than remain hopeless as undocumented residents through no fault of their own. Students who have grown up here usually speak only English and know no other culture. They should not be harmed because a relative overstayed a visa. They can become the next generations lawyers, bank presidents, teachers, doctors and engineers. ALOHA, PAUL M CHANDLER

Erin Conner

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Friday, March 16, 2012 4:45 PM
To: EDU Testimony
Cc: hermanhstern@msn.com
Subject: Testimony for HB1457 on 3/19/2012 1:30:00 PM

Testimony for EDU 3/19/2012 1:30:00 PM HB1457

Conference room: 225
Testifier position: Support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Herman Stern
Organization: Individual
E-mail: hermanhstern@msn.com
Submitted on: 3/16/2012

Comments:

I support allowing undocumented students that have graduated from Hawaii high school -- and are talented enough to register at the University of Hawaii -- to pay in-state tuition instead of out-of-state rates. In my view, we should do everything we can to encourage young people that have the talent to attend our university, instead of making it several times more expensive for them.

Erin Conner

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Friday, March 16, 2012 11:02 PM
To: EDU Testimony
Cc: joana.cuevas@us.army.mil
Subject: Testimony for HB1457 on 3/19/2012 1:30:00 PM

Testimony for EDU 3/19/2012 1:30:00 PM HB1457

Conference room: 225
Testifier position: Support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Millie J Cuevas
Organization: Individual
E-mail: joana.cuevas@us.army.mil
Submitted on: 3/16/2012

Comments:

I support HI Dream Act!! I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker working as a family and child therapist for military families. As a social worker, I have worked with immigrant families in Florida and have seen how immigrant children come to the U.S. and become assimilated to the American culture and become integrated in American Society sometimes even losing their primary culture and language unable to relate to their country of origin. They identify themselves as Americans and want the opportunity to live the DREAM and become successful and contribute to American society in a positive manner. I think to myself that the only difference between me and them is that I was blessed enough to be born on the island of Puerto Rico making me an automatic US citizen. I was blessed to have the opportunity to go to a university and gain higher education. I was blessed to be able to become a social worker and now be able to help the children and families of military personnel serving our country. Please give these children the opportunity to give back to the country that they now call home.

Testimony for EDU 3/19/2012 1:30:00 PM HB1457

Conference room: 225
Testifier position: Support
Testifier will be present: Yes
Submitted by: Sue Haglund
Organization: Individual
E-mail: shaglund@hotmail.com
Submitted on: 3/18/2012

Comments:

My name is Sue Haglund, please accept my written testimony for HB1457 HD1 SD1.

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB1457 HD1 SD1. This piece of legislation is important for the State of Hawaii, for undocumented minors, and for U.S. born minors with undocumented parents. This measure is imperative for all college-bound students living in Hawaii who attend and are graduates of Hawaii's public and private schools.

Since 2001, there have been twelve states who passed a State version of the Dream Act. These states are: California, Connecticut, Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin. Furthermore, according to Migration Policy Institute, 'the number of immigrants in Hawaii with a college degree increased by 34.0 percent between 2000-2009.' This is a bill that has economic benefits to the University of Hawaii and to the state of Hawaii.

University of Hawaii benefits economically from this bill by providing access to higher education to undocumented students. Students can have access to education at an affordable cost by paying in-state tuition. This act creates and generates an opportunity for a higher student enrollment from a population currently residing in the State of Hawaii who currently cannot access education because they are expected to pay out-of-state tuition. They are expected to pay out-of-state tuition because residency cannot be established because they or their parents are undocumented, regardless if they resided in Hawaii for years and are Hawaii high school graduates.

Currently 2011-2012 University of Hawaii at Manoa Undergraduate for Regular Semester Resident pays 4,200 (campus-based student fees not included in this cost. However, Undergraduate for Regular Semester as NonResident pays 11,616 (campus-based student fees not included in this number cost) Thus, the difference for Undergraduate at UH-Manoa for this current 2011-2012 is 7,416. This, as a result, makes access to higher education unattainable and most definitely not affordable.

Yet what is worst is the rising cost of tuition for the next five years across the entire University of Hawaii system.

With the rising cost of tuition effective FALL 2012 ACADEMIC 2012-2013--UH-MANOA TUITION (excluding Campus-based Student Fees) Undergraduate Resident to pay: 4,332 Undergraduate NonResident to pay: 12,456 The projected difference for academic Regular Tuition Schedule for 2012-2013 is 8,124.

So how does this benefit the University of Hawaii?

Make access to education affordable to an untapped population who want to pursue a college education and are permitted to pay in-state tuition, then you generate an educated skilled labor workforce from scientists to entrepreneurs that will generate untapped revenue for the State of Hawaii because of the opportunity to access higher education at an affordable cost.

Lastly, I would like to recommend that members of Senate Education Committee take into consideration and add a section to HB1457 HD1 SD1, a similar language found in the state of Illinois, Public Act 097-0233, sect 67 b.7, which states, (7) Establishing and administering training programs for high school counselors and counselors, admissions officers, and financial aid officers of public institutions of higher education. The training programs shall instruct participants on the educational opportunities available to college-bound students who are children of immigrants, including, but not limited to, in-state tuition and scholarship programs. [Illinois, Public Act 097-0233, section 67 b.7] By adding a section to HB1457 HD1 SD1, similar to Illinois' Public Act 097-0233 sect 67 b.7, this piece of legislation should: establish and administer training programs for high school counselors, career counselors, guidance counselors, admissions officers, and university financial aid officers. The training programs for university and high school representatives enable current undocumented students who attend(ed) Hawaii's public or private secondary schools to receive and to be inform with viable and vital information for educational opportunities to access higher education.

I strongly support HB1457 HD1 SD1 and recommend that EDU committee to please PASS HB1457 HD1 SD1.

Thank You Kindly, Sue Haglund

Erin Conner

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Sunday, March 18, 2012 1:44 PM
To: EDU Testimony
Cc: wctanaka@gmail.com
Subject: Testimony for HB1457 on 3/19/2012 1:30:00 PM

Testimony for EDU 3/19/2012 1:30:00 PM HB1457

Conference room: 225
Testifier position: Support
Testifier will be present: Yes
Submitted by: Wayne Tanaka
Organization: Individual
E-mail: wctanaka@gmail.com
Submitted on: 3/18/2012

Comments:

To the Honorable Chair Tokuda, Vice-Chair Kidani, and Members of the Senate Committee on Education,

Mahalo nui loa for providing us with the opportunity to once again support the Hawai'i DREAM Act, as embodied in Proposed Senate Draft 1 of HB1457. This is an incredibly important opportunity for Hawai'i to recognize the value of our youth, and the importance of providing educational opportunities for all keiki of Hawai'i nei.

As defined by this proposed draft, Hawai'i's DREAMers are Hawai'i's students -- educated in our local schools, steeped in local culture, and wanting nothing more than an equal opportunity to pursue a higher education without being subjected to prohibitive out-of-state tuition costs. Providing these college-driven students with the opportunity to pay in-state tuition will not only increase enrollment in our public university system, but will provide these hard-working individuals with the skills they need to contribute their full potential to our island state.

Please, let Hawai'i demonstrate, as over a dozen other states have already done, that we are not fooled by misleading mainland rhetoric; that we understand both the true value of education to our communities, as well as the substantial societal importance of providing equal educational opportunities to our immigrant community members.

Mahalo nui loa for this opportunity to testify,

Wayne Tanaka, Esq.
Fifth-generation Japanese-American
First generation Korean-American
Keiki o ka 'aina

Erin Conner

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Sunday, March 18, 2012 4:49 PM
To: EDU Testimony
Cc: dinasf@gmail.com
Subject: Testimony for HB1457 on 3/19/2012 1:30:00 PM

Testimony for EDU 3/19/2012 1:30:00 PM HB1457

Conference room: 225
Testifier position: Support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Dina Shek
Organization: Individual
E-mail: dinasf@gmail.com
Submitted on: 3/18/2012

Comments:

I strongly support HB 1457 to extend access to higher education to some of the most promising, yet also most vulnerable, students in Hawaii. Passage of this bill will benefit the entire state by providing opportunities for college-drive students to excel and strengthen our communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Erin Conner

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Sunday, March 18, 2012 6:06 PM
To: EDU Testimony
Cc: ANath@hawaii.edu
Subject: Testimony for HB1457 on 3/19/2012 1:30:00 PM

Testimony for EDU 3/19/2012 1:30:00 PM HB1457

Conference room: 225
Testifier position: Support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Anjali Nath
Organization: Individual
E-mail: ANath@hawaii.edu
Submitted on: 3/18/2012

Comments:
I strongly support this bill; please pass it unamended!

Erin Conner

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Sunday, March 18, 2012 8:03 PM
To: EDU Testimony
Cc: rcompton@hawaii.edu
Subject: Testimony for HB1457 on 3/19/2012 1:30:00 PM

Testimony for EDU 3/19/2012 1:30:00 PM HB1457

Conference room: 225
Testifier position: Support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Randy Compton
Organization: Individual
E-mail: rcompton@hawaii.edu
Submitted on: 3/18/2012

Comments:

Hawai'i needs to invest in the hearts and minds of those who want to learn in Hawaii and stay in Hawaii afterwards.

Allowing more students to attend the University of Hawai'i will generate previously untapped tuition revenue.

Many of Hawai'i's DREAMers face considerable hardship in affording non-resident tuition rates - so much so that they decline to pursue any higher education, notwithstanding their otherwise great potential. Providing in-state tuition rates for these dedicated students will not only give them the opportunity they need to contribute in the future, but will also allow them to become tuition-paying - and revenue-generating -- students of the University of Hawai'i system.

Clare Hanusz
Attorney at Law

1260 Young Street, Suite 228
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814
Telephone: (808) 384-9682
E-mail: chanusz@gmail.com

March 19, 2012

To the Honorable Chair Tokuda, Vice-Chair Kidani, and Members of the Senate
Committee on Education,

I write this short statement to express my strong support the Hawai'i DREAM
Act, as embodied in Proposed Senate Draft 1 of HB1457HD1.

As an immigration attorney and advocate for immigrants in Hawaii I have seen
first hand the struggles of children who were raised in Hawaii but born elsewhere who
lack legal status. These children are very much Hawaii's children, with the same hopes
and dreams as my own keiki who were born in the islands. However, the obstacles to
leading a productive life that these immigrant kids face are daunting, obstacles which
include the lack of opportunity for higher education. This bill can help them, which in
turn will help all of us as support for these students will create a stronger, more
compassionate and just society for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Aloha,

Clare Hanusz



HAWAII CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

6301 Pali Highway
Kaneohe, HI 96744-5224

LATE TESTIMONY

Email to: EDUtestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov
Hearing on: Monday, March 19, 2012 @ 1:30 p.m.
Conference Room # 225

DATE: March 16, 2012

TO: Senate Committee on Education
Senator Jill Tokuda, Chair
Senator Mitchell Kidani, Vice Chair

FROM: Walter Yoshimitsu, Executive Director

RE: Support for HB 1457 Proposed SD1 Relating to Higher Education

Honorable Chairs and members of the Senate Committee on Education, I am Walter Yoshimitsu, **representing the Hawaii Catholic Conference**. The Hawaii Catholic Conference is the public policy voice for the Roman Catholic Church in the State of Hawaii, which under the leadership of Bishop Larry Silva, represents Catholics in Hawaii. We support this proposed draft that allows for state financial aid and resident tuition to students of the University of Hawaii that currently are without lawful immigration status.

Hawaii is the melting pot of cultural mixtures representing a variety of ethnic backgrounds. It is what makes us so unique! There are generations of immigrants that live and work here, providing the backbone of our island infrastructure. Children that are raised in Hawaii their whole lives suddenly find themselves unable to further their education because they find out that their "status" makes them ineligible to continue. This is very sad indeed for the young adults who have thrived academically in a culture they have grown to love.

We appreciate that this bill will allow these students to be eligible to participate in all student financial aid and university programs allowed under federal law.

Passage of this law would do several things for Hawaii: (1) it would keep gifted and talented students in Hawaii, (2) potential earnings of these students would encourage them to invest in our local economy and (3) keep students from dropping out of the educational system.

Our research shows that support for the DREAM Act comes from coalitions that include people and groups from across the political spectrum. Support for HB 1457 proposed SD1 is one way we can work together to provide a better future for our immigrant brothers and sisters.

Mahalo for your consideration.