

**PRESENTATION OF THE  
BOARD OF ACUPUNCTURE**

TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE  
Regular Session of 2013

Friday, March 15, 2013  
8:30 a.m.

**TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL NO. 1076, RELATING TO THE USE OF THE  
DOCTOR OF ACUPUNCTURE TITLE.**

TO THE HONORABLE DELLA AU BELATTI, CHAIR,  
AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE:

My name is Michael Howden and I am the Chairperson of the Board of Acupuncture ("Board"). Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of Senate Bill No. 1076, Relating to the Use of the Doctor of Acupuncture Title, which is an Administration bill.

The Board wholeheartedly supports this measure which seeks to ensure that Hawaii acupuncture licensees who use the "Doctor of Acupuncture" title or designation "D.Ac." graduate from an accredited doctoral program in acupuncture and oriental medicine or, in the case of a foreign program, one that is equivalent. The measure would also repeal the Board's authority to approve advanced programs of study. Finally, the bill requires graduates of foreign programs to submit their educational credentials to a board approved and designated professional, at the licensee's expense.

Section 436E-13, HRS, provides that licensees can complete *either* an accredited program *or* a Board approved program as the basis to use "Doctor of Acupuncture" or "D.Ac.". Until recently, there was no available accredited

doctoral program; thus, the only way that a licensee could meet the requirement would be to apply to the Board for approval of the program the licensee studied. However, in 2002, an accredited doctoral program was developed and is now being offered at over nine U.S. schools. Since 2005, the schools have graduated approximately 145 students. As of 2009, approximately 855 students have enrolled in the accredited program.

The Board has been steadfast in its belief that the accredited doctoral program is the gold standard that licensees, who wish to set themselves apart by calling themselves “Doctor of Acupuncture” or “D.Ac.”, should be required to complete. Accordingly, the Board strongly favors repealing its authority to approve advanced programs of study because it lacks the experience, expertise and resources to do so.

In addition, the Board believes that licensees who attained their doctoral studies from a foreign school should have their school transcripts and curriculum evaluated by credential evaluators, at the licensee’s own expense. In its experience in reviewing foreign school documents, the Board has found the documents to be confusing, illegible and conflicting. More importantly, the Board is concerned that it lacks the resources and expertise to accurately judge the validity of the documents and school. The Board would utilize the credential evaluation reports as a tool during the application review. Incidentally, in a 2008 legislative initiative, the Board sought a similar amendment for foreign school graduates seeking acupuncture licensure, which the Legislature supported.

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For these reasons, the Board strongly supports the bill and asks that the measure be passed out of Committee as is.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill No. 1076.