

**LATE**

**SB 605**

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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 605  
Submitted by Jenna Caparoso, Graduate Student  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa  
January 31, 2013

Chair Taniguchi, Vice-Chair Kidani, Members of the Senate Committee on Higher Education:

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill SB 605 and to urge you to consider this critical legislation. The proposed measure addresses a significant matter concerning the current state of higher education and its' ability to embrace the educational needs reflective and inclusive of its entire student population.

Despite being the two fastest growing racial populations in the United States, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) continue to remain underrepresented, underserved, and virtually invisible at higher education institutions. The lack of attention given to AAPIs is indicated in the paucity of AAPI faculty and staff on campuses, disregard and devaluation of AAPI-focused research and dissemination, and limited access to resources. Specifically relevant to Filipino Americans, Southeast Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and other Pacific Islanders are the persistent challenges related to social inequalities, such as difficulties to college access. One approach to remedy these ramifications is to support AAPI students by providing resources and opportunities to engage in research and scholarship that gives AAPI students and larger AAPI communities a voice – a voice that I not only want to share, but must contribute to.

My support for this measure extends from my identity as both a Hawai'i-born and raised mixed-raced Asian American and Pacific Islander woman and a masters student in the Educational Administration program at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. As I continue to shape my research interests, which includes ethnic minority student success and diversity, I cannot ignore my commitment to actively support AAPIs and AAPI-focused scholarship. A large part of my decision to attend the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa was because it is an ideal location for engaging in AAPI research. Furthermore, the Office of Student Equity, Excellence, and Diversity (SEED) office, with which I had the fortunate pleasure of working on the Asian American and Pacific Islander Research Coalition (ARC) Symposium, is an ideal office to house this project. Their missions, practices, and applications vindicate the importance of having an AAPI presence and stance in higher education.

The timing has never been more critical for educators and policy makers to engage in discussions on appropriate courses of action, such as Senate Bill SB 605, that seek to give AAPIs in the state of Hawai'i and across the nation the currently overlooked attention in higher education they deserve. Such dialogues are catalysts for change - the beginnings of uniformed policies and practices that have the potential to cultivate awareness, respect, and compassion towards the entire student body - one inclusive of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation for your support of this issue. I urge you to pass SB 605 and thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 605.

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**To:** HRETestimony  
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**Subject:** Submitted testimony for SB605 on Jan 31, 2013 14:45PM  
**Attachments:** Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 605.pdf

**SB605**

Submitted on: 1/31/2013

Testimony for HRE on Jan 31, 2013 14:45PM in Conference Room 414

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Cheri Souza	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 605  
Relating to the University Of Hawaii  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION  
Rep. Brian Taniguchi, Chair  
Rep. Gilbert Kahele, Vice Chair  
January 31, 2013  
2:45 PM, Room 414

Chair Taniguchi, Vice-Chair Kahele, Members of the Senate Committee on Higher Education, thank you for hearing SB 605. I respectfully request your support of this important measure.

The educational needs of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) students in higher education is often overlooked, however through the support of this measure the State can allocate important resources to help these students succeed. Through the proposed funding, research will be conducted and disseminated, increasing the understanding of AAPI college student educational needs. Additionally, services designed to increase college success and completion will be provided to AAPI students, increasing retention and graduation rates, tying in to other statewide initiatives.

This research and support is imperative as we look towards the future of Hawaii. Through improved AAPI student services, the initiation of research and an arena to share and disseminate that research, the State is committing to the creation of a sustainable and educated workforce prepared to lead the University of Hawaii, and other businesses into the future.

Having served as a faculty member and counselor within the University of Hawaii System and other institutions for twelve years, as well as being a Ph.D. candidate at UH Manoa, I can assure you that AAPI students and educators will benefit from this legislation. The impact of this legislation will positively affect students and educators not only in Hawaii, but across the nation as new research is generated and AAPI students are engaged in that discussion.

Thank you for your consideration of this measure.

\*This statement reflects the option of this authored and is not the official testimony of the University of Hawaii

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**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 605**

Submitted by Kiana Shiroma, Academic Advisor  
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January 31, 2013

Chair Taniguchi, Vice-Chair Kidani, Members of the Senate Committee on Higher Education:

I fully support Senate Bill 605 and commend the Senate Committee on Higher Education for the proposed measure to fund five graduate assistants and student employee positions for the Student Equity, Excellence and Diversity (SEED) Office at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM) to conduct and disseminate research regarding Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) students in higher education, and to provide direct services to undergraduate and graduate students interested in diversity careers within the fields of student affairs and higher education. As an employee and student of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa for 10 years, I am sure that AAPI faculty, staff, and students will benefit from this legislation. Being born and raised in Kailua, I also know that the larger community and state will be better because of this appropriation as well.

The 2010 U.S. Census demonstrates that AAPIs are the two fastest growing racial groups in the country. However, specific populations, including Filipino Americans, Southeast Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders, and low-income AAPIs continue to face challenges in post-secondary retention and graduation that other ethnic and racial groups do not have to overcome. Presently, there is still a need to research and support underrepresented and underserved racial and ethnic minorities in higher education, making the SEED Office the ideal location for these proposed graduate assistant and student employee positions. I wish to express my deep appreciation to the Legislature for your interest in this important issue. I urge you to pass SB 605. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 605.