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# HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE AUDITOR TO CONDUCT A STUDY ON THE POTENTIAL  
EFFECTS OF ALLOWING GRADUATE STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF  
HAWAII TO UNIONIZE.

1           WHEREAS, graduate students perform a variety of teaching  
2 and research functions that are necessary and vital to the  
3 overall strength and accomplishments of a successful university;  
4 and

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6           WHEREAS, while graduate students are first and foremost  
7 students, their enthusiasm for their subject matter and  
8 engagement with the academic material encourage continued  
9 intellectual inquiry and discovery among faculty members; and

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11           WHEREAS, at research universities, such as the University  
12 of Hawaii at Manoa, graduate students are in the trenches,  
13 collaborating on research with faculty members that often leads  
14 to innovative ideas, which in turn can attract research grants  
15 to the University; and

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17           WHEREAS, the teaching and grading assistance that graduate  
18 students provide to faculty members allows the University of  
19 Hawaii at Manoa to continue to offer undergraduates a quality  
20 educational experience; and

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22           WHEREAS, graduate assistants at the University of Hawaii at  
23 Manoa have not received meaningful compensation increases since  
24 2004, while the already high cost of living in Hawaii has  
25 steadily increased; and

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27           WHEREAS, disparities exist between actual salaries and  
28 benefits provided to graduate assistants at the University of  
29 Hawaii at Manoa and comparable institutions across the United  
30 States; and



1 WHEREAS, budget shortfalls have increased class size and  
2 workload at the University of Hawaii, the burden of which has  
3 largely fallen on the University's graduate student assistants;  
4 and

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6 WHEREAS, recent attempts to adjust employee pay scale steps  
7 for graduate assistants do not take into account the differences  
8 in extramural funding and variations between different  
9 University departments; and

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11 WHEREAS, changes in the economic climate have also resulted  
12 in the elimination of offices and administrative positions  
13 crucial to graduate assistants' successful employment  
14 experience; and

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16 WHEREAS, without a dependable and accessible avenue to  
17 obtain assistance with grievances, employment issues that  
18 graduate assistants face go unattended and unresolved; and

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20 WHEREAS, graduate assistants are not currently authorized  
21 to organize to advocate for their own employment rights; and

22  
23 WHEREAS, universities throughout the country enjoy positive  
24 working relationships with graduate student unions that fairly  
25 advocate for their graduate student members; now, therefore,

26  
27 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the  
28 Twenty-seventh Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular  
29 Session of 2014, the Senate concurring, that the Auditor is  
30 requested to conduct a study on the potential effects of  
31 allowing Graduate Students at the University of Hawaii to  
32 unionize; and

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34 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Auditor is requested to  
35 include in the study, consideration of graduate student working  
36 conditions, pay in relation to relevant cost of living and in  
37 comparison to graduate students at institutions where graduate  
38 students unionized, differences in workload based upon academic  
39 department, and potential costs to the University as an  
40 employer; and

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42 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study also include  
43 information regarding the effects of any mandated increase in  
44 graduate assistant compensation for graduate assistants at the



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1 University of Hawaii at Manoa and the possible effects of  
2 mandatory five-year funding for doctoral students; and

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4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Auditor is requested to  
5 establish an Advisory Council, to include graduate student  
6 representation, to assist in the development and execution of  
7 the study; and

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9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
10 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Auditor, Chairperson  
11 of the University of Hawaii Board of Regents, President of the  
12 University of Hawaii, Chancellor of each of the University of  
13 Hawaii campuses, and President of the University of Hawaii at  
14 Manoa Graduate Student Organization.

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17 OFFERED BY:

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