



Headquarters: Department of State of Hawaii
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Honolulu, Hawaii 96815

February 18, 2014

**Testimony in Support of SENATE BILL 2131 SD1
Relating to the university of Hawaii Before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Hearing On Thursday, February 20, 2014, S:00 A.M.
In Conference Room 211**

Chair Ige, Vice Chair Kidani and Committee Members,

The Department of Hawaii, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) represents 3,800 members in 20 Posts located throughout the State of Hawaii. VFW is a federally chartered national association of soldiers, sailors, marines and airmen who have served the United States of America in wars, campaigns, and expeditions on foreign soil or in hostile waters.

S.B. 2131 SD1 Requires the board of regents of the University of Hawaii to waive the nonresident tuition and fee differential for veterans of the Air Force, Army Coast Guard, Marine Corps and Navy, who were honorably discharged, beginning with the 2014-2015 academic year.

VFW Hawaii concurs with the findings of the Committees on Higher Education and Public Safety, Intergovernmental and Military Affairs that “a number of states currently have laws that waive certain residency requirements to allow veterans to attend state universities in states other than their state of residency upon separating from the military. Allowing a waiver of the nonresident tuition differential to veterans will expand veterans’ educational opportunities by allowing them to attend college within the University of Hawaii System at the resident tuition rate.”

VFW Hawaii members are grateful for your efforts to implement this tangible financial benefit especially for those members of the Hawaii Alliance of Student Veterans some of whom are also our VFW Hawaii comrades.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of S.B. 2131

Lawrence M.G. Enomoto

Lawrence M.G. Enomoto
VFW Hawaii State Legislative Liaison



SUBJECT: SB 2131 IN-STATE TUITION FOR NON RESIDENT VETERANS

Dear Chairman Ige, Vice-Chair Kidani, and members of Ways and Means,

I would like to start by thanking you all for taking the time to allow SB 2131 to be heard before you today. I would also like to give my own personal story about how this bill will impact current and future Hawaii veterans in a positive way.

My name is Raymond Banda, and I am testifying to you today to ask that you vote Yay on SB 2131. The in-state tuition for military veterans that SB 2131 covers is something us student veterans have been working, and waiting, on for the past five years, and we believe that there is no better time than right now to see it happen. With the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan coming to an end, the military currently downsizing, and a fragile job market, veterans need a hand up now so more than ever. Currently, over 500 veterans a month are starting to transition out of the military, and into the America job market. I was one of these veterans back in December 2011, and would like to share my story a little with you to convey the importance of in-state tuition for military veterans.

In June 2011 I had just arrived back in Hawai'i from my sixth deployment, ready to start transitioning out of the military and end my 10+ years of service to our country. As soon as I arrived back to the states, my first goal was to start clearing, and my second was to find a job within the six months I had remaining in the service. It was unfortunate for me that a few jobs were unattainable due to my rather long commitment still left in the military, but it was extremely tragic that most of the jobs I couldn't get because of my lack of college education. Over the decade that I served I was only able to get a few semesters of college in due to the high pace of military training, deployments, and relocating to different units. Regrettably the military education and training we receive doesn't count for much in today's job market. Now my remaining time in the military flew by and I transitioned out jobless, and in need of a new civilian education. Know to always do my research I counted out any for-profit colleges, and had planned on going to UH Manoa. Ever since I moved to Hawai'i in 2009 I knew that this would be the place where I would live the rest of my life, and eventually retire from. Sadly, an education from UH Manoa was not something I could do right after leaving the military. While in the military defending our country, I was granted in-state residency for tuition purposes, but as soon as I left I was no longer a



resident of Hawai'i. This is something that put attending UH Manoa out of my reach because the Post 9/11 GI Bill will only pay for in-state tuition. Without a job, and unable to obtain a decent one, due to lack of proper education, paying about \$18,600 out of pocket a year to attend was something I would not have been able to manage. Luckily my story has a happy ending, because Leeward Community College has a Yellow Ribbon program that allowed me to attend, without having to pay out of pocket, and that is what has kept me in the state so far.

My story is one of probably thousands that veterans have to tell both here in Hawai'i and across our country. Advocating and fighting for in-state tuition is something that I'm passionate about and I'm happy to pick up where other veterans started back in 2008. Hopefully this is the year when we can stop advocating for this, by you allowing this bill to be heard. I know by doing so you will be allowing other politicians to also see the importance in it so that it can pass and give all of Hawaii's veteran population a much need hand up so that they can become productive members of our society.

Thank you so much for your time, and all you do for the great state of Hawai'i. I look forward to working with you in any and all matters related to the Veterans in Hawai'i as well as the betterment of our state.

Cordially,

Raymond Banda III
Legislative Director, Hawai'i Alliance of Student Veterans



Dear Senators and members of the committee,

My name is Adrian C. Young and I would like to take a bit of your time to explain a situation that myself and other veterans face with regard to our Post 9/11 GI Bill education. I ask that though my writing may be long, that you please consider it when make your decisions regarding purposed bills especially tuition fees for veterans and former service members; regarding higher education.

I served in the Army for over ten and a half years and was medically retired, as of 13 August 2013. I have been living here on Oahu since July 2010. I love Hawaii, the culture, the history, and especially the people. After I arrived to Hawaii, I volunteered to be a part of the advanced party for the 25th Infantry Divisions return to Iraq, to close out US lead operations there. Upon returning in 2011, my island ohana Greg and Gina De la Cruz, who had helped me through a rough few months prior to deployment; opened up their home to me and allowed me to rent out part of their home as a place to stay upon my return. I stayed there from December 2011 until October 2013 (after meeting my wife, marrying and finding out we were expecting our first child). My wife, Naomi (who is a local small business owner), and I then moved to down off of S. King St; near the University of Hawaii (UH) at Manoa, since I was spending too much time stuck in traffic traveling between Mililani and UH Manoa.

I would like to tell you a bit of my history so you know the facts and can perhaps help me understand why the state of Hawaii, and more specifically the UH Manoa veterans and former service members to advance their financial goals and increase their income by stepping all over the backs of veterans, service members, and their families.

This is happening by improperly charging veterans for their education. There was a proposed bill this year; that would make veterans and former service members exempt from paying out of state tuition fees. I would like to see this bill brought before the local legislation and voted on. I would like to know with all of the budget cuts, and attempts to cut funding to veterans and retirees, how a person with a valid state ID, registered to vote in the state of Hawaii, proof of residency via 3 lease agreements, married to a resident of Hawaii; who has had her own local small business for the last eight and a half years, and has paid local utilities, vehicle taxes, and added to the state's GDP by consumption; can be told that because I am medically retired with 80% disability and do not pay taxes, that I still have to pay out of state tuition for my education. I am not alone in this situation. There are several others that are being told they have to as well. This means, that I am paying over \$8,000 per semester, and I plan on attending in the summer; it means the average person that is using the GI Bill, pays double the cost. Well, actually, the government does. You see, some students do not even realize that with a loop hole for Hawaii they are able to still get the government to pay the out of state fees. University of Hawaii knows this and charges that fee to the VA. This means that the school is charging the VA for one veteran what it should charge to educate two. There are over 500 former service members and or family members using the Post 9/11 GI Bill at UH Manoa right now; if they are charge out of state tuition than, this means that 8 million dollars goes to UH instead of the 4 million that it should receive per year. So I ask you, do you think it right to use the money that should be there for a service member when he or she gets out to pay back or re-balance a budget from the

“Wonder Blunder” or when the Secretary of the VA goes before congress to ask for the VA budget not to be cut, or to allow an increase in the COLA for retirees to match inflation; or an increase in the substance allows for Soldiers, so that when they are not paid for the 5 weeks at Christmas break that they can have enough to tide them over. Service members and their families that are on Active duty pay the in-state fees, undocumented students, or students of undocumented families pay the in-state tuition fees. So why do you ask those that have served for, fought for, and bled for this country to pay something you are not willing to ask an undocumented student to pay for?

There are less than 25 states that charge veterans an out of state fee for their education. I am asking that you take Hawaii off of that list. Because if we don't, there are bills now in process at the national level, that will start to remove states from the list of schools that the VA approves for Post 9/11 GI Bill. Just established is a feedback website for former service members and their family members that are using the Post 9/11 GI Bill. This website has setup to allow these individuals to give feedback about their dealings with schools and with their experiences using their benefits. The point of this site is to follow the direction of the President's Executive Order (Principles of Excellence) and to ensure that schools are treating these individuals correctly; and hold these institutions of higher learning to the highest standards. The question is do you think that \$4 million in Post 9/11 GI Bill funds is better than \$0?

It is time that we stop allowing loop holes in the system to continue to hinder the financial future of the VA and the Less than 1% of the nation's population, like myself, that chose to serve our country in time of war.

Respectfully,

Adrian C. Young
SSG, U.S. Army
Retired

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LATE



Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 2131 – Relating to the University of Hawai`i
Senate Committee on Ways & Means
Thursday, February 20, 2014
9:00am, Conference Room 212

Aloha Chair Ige and Vice Chair Kidani, and members of the Committee:

Hawai`i Alliance of Student Veterans supports Senate Bill 2131, relating to the University of Hawai`i.

My name is James Cavin and I am the Executive Director for Hawai`i Alliance of Student Veterans (HASV). I am writing to you today on behalf of HASV, who represent over 14,000 student veterans throughout the Islands, to **please vote YAY on SB 2131** IN-STATE TUITION FOR NON RESIDENT VETERANS.

Veterans in Hawai`i are a profitable business resource and we recognize that student veterans represent a desirable recruiting pool for educational institutions. In representing a growing sector of the population, development of this pool of veterans should be an important priority for the state. For example, when it comes to student veteran retention at a particular educational institution, is anyone better qualified to offer sound advice than a student veteran? Furthermore, student veterans can assist colleges in their mission of retention. Therefore, the state of Hawai`i and the University system, should eliminate barriers which hinder student veterans from attending universities and colleges in Hawai`i. SB2131 is such a solution to a barrier that is causing student veterans to leave the state and/or attend for-profit or non-profit schools, who have little to no regulations and oversight.

The Post-9/11 GI Bill pays the highest in-state tuition and fees. Due to military obligations, many veterans are unable to establish in-state residency for the purposes of enrolling at a public university or college. Ultimately, this becomes a financial burden that leaves veterans vying for additional financial aid due to out-of-state residency status. Using the University of Hawai`i at Manoa as an example, student veterans have to pay nearly \$17,000 out of pocket until their residency kicks in after one year. SB 2131 would make all student veterans eligible for in-state tuition at the University of Hawai`i's colleges and universities, regardless of their residency status, eliminating the need for veterans seeking a post-secondary credential to find full-time employment or accrue student loan debt while attending Hawai`i's public institutions. The protocol for establishing residency for tuition purposes is to wait a full year, leaving many recently-separated veterans unable to satisfy strict requirements due to their service in another state. Nuanced policies within our university system are highly complex and penalize veterans with stringent residency requirements they are unable to fulfill due to their honorable military service.

According to a state-by-state landscape analysis conducted by Student Veterans of America, 20 states already offer in-state tuition to veterans, 8 states offer conditional waivers to veterans under particular circumstances, and another 12 states are currently considering similar legislation.

In 2012 Dr. John Schupp, who was invited to speak at the UH Veterans Conference, handed over a full report on the benefits of granting in-state tuition to non-resident veterans, in Hawai'i. From a fiscal perspective, opening the university system to more federal funds and allowing student veterans to utilize their benefits within Hawai'i, was logical. **A new report was handed over to Hawai'i Alliance of Student Veterans showing the economic impact of wavering non-resident student residency requirements. The report reads as follows:**

Comparison of in-state and out of state tuition and BAH to all in-state tuition and BAH

Present System No in-state tuition to any service-members on the islands- 4 year period (fall 2009 to spring of 2013

Post 9-11 vet population, those that have returned to Hawai'i (the present market)

County	# of vets	County	# of vets
City and County of Honolulu	10,949	Kauai County	250
Hawai'i County	659	Kalawao County	0
Maui County	361	Total Returned	12,219

Financial Impact on the campus of UHM and the Island of Oahu for the 4 year period from Fall 2009 to Spring of 2014(*actual***)**

		Tuition	Tuition			
From	to	In state	Out of state	Total tuition	BAH total	Total impact
fall 09	spring 13	\$19,615,164	\$5,884,507	\$25,499,671	\$60,026,022	\$85,525,693

These numbers are based on drawing **5.7% of the market that qualifies for in-state tuition**, (up from 3.4% in 2009) and 0.25% of the service-members who would pay out of state tuition (these are a high approximation)

Awarding in-state tuition to all service-members on the Islands.

Total amount of service-members, per branch, on the Islands of Hawai'i Sept 2013

	Army	Navy/Marines	Marines	Air Force	C. Guard
Total Enlisted in HI	22,477	10,810	7,767	4,805	1,551

Financial Impact on the campus of UHM and the Island of Oahu for the 4 year period from Fall 2014 to Spring of 2018 (*estimated***)**

From	to	total tuition	BAH total	total impact	
Fall 14	Spring 18	\$34,777,619	\$92,729,476	\$127,507,096	

These numbers are based on drawing **2.7% of the market of all of the service-members that qualifies for in-state tuition, (less than ½ of market when compared to present system)**. Less % of the market is needed, but **total tuition is greater by \$9M**, and **total impact is greater by \$42M** over the four year period.

Dr. Schupp's report concluded:

The University of Hawai'i has a unique advantage over other campuses on the mainland. That is it has several military bases which employ over 42,000 service-members as of Jan 2012, with little signs of lowering this number. Additionally, 500 military members are getting out of all branches on a weekly basis. And it also has a geographic advantage in that it is the only campus within 2,000 miles, so competition from other campuses is minimal.

Possible Amendments

SB2304, which is a bill we collaborated on, was word for word with SB2131, but had language which the WAM Committee should take under consideration and this wording should answer what the University of Hawai'i had reservations on.

- a) Line 5, Sub-Section C: Beginning with the 2014-2015 academic year, the board shall waive the nonresident tuition and fee differential for veterans of the United States armed forces, who were honorably discharged, regardless of their actual state of residence, and who use G.I. education benefits. As used in this subsection, "G.I. education benefits" means any education benefit administered by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs that is designed to assist eligible veterans of the United States armed forces cover the costs associated with enrollment as a student.

Since there are many different benefits under the VA Education Program, various states have been adopting the above definition.

Again, Mahalo for your time Senator Ige, Senator Kidani and members of the committee and we ask for your kokua to **please pass SB2131** through and show the people of Hawai'i that you all understand the true meaning of veteran helpful, by protecting our men and woman as they have protected us.

Mahalo nui loa,

//signed//

James Cavin
Executive Director
Hawai'i Alliance of Student Veterans

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [WAM Testimony](#)
Cc: mendezj@hawaii.edu
Subject: *Submitted testimony for SB2131 on Feb 20, 2014 09:00AM*
Date: Tuesday, February 18, 2014 10:49:53 AM

SB2131

Submitted on: 2/18/2014

Testimony for WAM on Feb 20, 2014 09:00AM in Conference Room 211

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Javier Mendez-Alvarez	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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