

SB2255



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Written Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on the Judiciary and Labor
February 4, 2014, 10:00 a.m.

by
Aviam Soifer, Dean
William S. Richardson School of Law
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 2255 RELATING TO ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Chairperson Hee, Vice Chairperson Shimabukuro, and Members of the Committee:

SB 2255 is a bill authored and introduced by law students of the William S. Richardson School of Law. Richardson students have consistently demonstrated their commitment to public service in many forms, including their formation of Advocates for Public Interest Law (APIL) in 1985, creating and implementing a significant *pro bono* requirement for graduation in the early 1990s, and their extensive, ongoing participation in clinical outreach work on behalf of our community. After graduation, they have worked for and served the most vulnerable among us in countless ways.

The Law School continues to support and encourage public service and increasing access to justice in our community through our many legal clinics and our direct involvement with the Access to justice Commission and the Bar.

We recognize the clear need for much greater access to justice, and the need to address the serious, burdensome debt that our students face upon graduation. The SB 2255 initiative could act as a vital supplement to federal loan forgiveness programs already in existence.

While we enthusiastically support the goals of the bill, we have some concern with respect to using the Law School as an administrator of collections for non-compliant participants. We want to avoid having the Law School placed in the position of creditor. This would be an undesirable and possibly adversarial relationship that does not comport with our mission.

In addition, should the Law School act as administrators of the program separately from the funding it provides, the Law School could become the target of criticism if and when only Richardson graduates are the direct beneficiaries of the program.

Again, we recognize and applaud the potential that SB 2255 holds as a big step in the right direction to address access to justice concerns and the burdensome loans shouldered by most of our graduates. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this matter.

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

P.O. Box 37158, Honolulu, HI 96837-0158

Phone/email: (808) 927-1214 / kat.caphi@gmail.com



COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND LABOR

Sen. Clayton Hee, Chair

Sen. Maile Shimabukuro, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Sen. Brian Taniguchi, Chair

Sen. Gilbert Kahele, Vice Chair

Tuesday, February 4, 2014

10:00 a.m.

Room 016

SUPPORT FOR SB 2255 - Loan Repayment Program for Richard Law Students

Aloha Chairs Hee and Taniguchi and Members of the Committees!

My name is Kat Brady and I am the Coordinator of Community Alliance on Prisons, a community initiative promoting smart justice policies for more than a decade. This testimony is respectfully offered on behalf of the 5,800 Hawai'i individuals living behind bars, always mindful that approximately 1,500 Hawai'i individuals are serving their sentences abroad, thousands of miles away from their loved ones, their homes and, for the disproportionate number of incarcerated Native Hawaiians, far from their ancestral lands.

SB 2255 establishes the Hawaii justice league program to provide loan repayments on behalf of eligible lawyers that pursue public interest work in Hawaii. Provides for loan repayments by the University of Hawaii William S. Richardson school of law. Creates the Hawaii justice league revolving fund.

Community Alliance on Prisons supports this measure that supports our community.

Many great law graduates are unable to pursue the meaningful work that in many cases was the reason they pursued a law degree because of crippling debt. Encouraging our brilliant law students to contribute to our community is a great thing.

Without a sense of caring, there can be no sense of community.

Anthony Burgess

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

**Board of Directors**

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Testimony of Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Supporting SB 2255 Relating to Access to Justice
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor
Senate Committee on Higher Education
Scheduled for Hearing Tuesday, February 4, 2014, 10:00 AM, Room 016

Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) law firm created to advocate on behalf of low-income individuals and families in Hawai'i on civil legal issues of statewide importance. Our core mission is to help our clients gain access to the resources, services, and fair treatment that they need to realize their opportunities for self-achievement and economic security.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **strong support** of Senate Bill 2255, which would establish a program to provide loan repayments for eligible lawyers pursuing public interest work in Hawai'i. As a nonprofit legal organization dedicated to promoting social justice for Hawai'i's low-income and other vulnerable residents, we strongly believe in the need to support attorneys seeking to serve their community in public interest law.

The creation of a meaningful Loan Repayment Assistance Program (LRAP) would replicate successful existing programs in a number of stated and law schools in the nation. The costs of loan repayment by graduates of law schools remains an almost insurmountable barrier to many who have a passion to provide public service through employment at a legal services program. That is a tragedy. The need has been recognized in numerous studies on the unavailability of critical legal assistance when low-income residents are confronted with a legal challenge that will impact on their ability to stop illegal eviction, inappropriate terminations from critical benefits, custody of their children and so many other barriers to survival and self-achievement.

The most recent study conducted by the Hawai'i Legal Services Hui indicated that the justice gap is so wide that less than one in four low-income residents in Hawaii were able to find assistance when confronted with a legal challenge. An effective LRAP program would provide a significant tool for legal aid programs and prospective employees to use in overcoming the economic barriers to public service that high loan repayment obligations impose.

Again, thank you for an opportunity to testify in strong support of SB 2255.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [JDLTestimony](#)
Cc: hstalk@gmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for SB2255 on Feb 4, 2014 10:00AM*
Date: Saturday, February 01, 2014 9:57:59 AM

SB2255

Submitted on: 2/1/2014

Testimony for JDL/HRE on Feb 4, 2014 10:00AM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Henri-Lee STALK	Individual	Support	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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To: [JDLTestimony](#)
Cc: fdemapan@hawaii.edu
Subject: *Submitted testimony for SB2255 on Feb 4, 2014 10:00AM*
Date: Saturday, February 01, 2014 10:05:41 AM

SB2255

Submitted on: 2/1/2014

Testimony for JDL/HRE on Feb 4, 2014 10:00AM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Frances Demapan	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [JDLTestimony](#)
Cc: thomas.michener@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB2255 on Feb 4, 2014 10:00AM
Date: Saturday, February 01, 2014 10:07:10 AM

SB2255

Submitted on: 2/1/2014

Testimony for JDL/HRE on Feb 4, 2014 10:00AM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Thomas Michener	Individual	Support	No

Comments: As a Richardson student and a future attorney, this bill would make my decision to pursue public-interest work much easier. Many people come to law school with hopes of "making a difference." But, as the realities of post-graduation become clear, job choices are made based on financial needs. Few can afford to work in public-interest positions while paying both undergrad and law school loans. For most, the job market dictates taking the highest paying job one can find and too often those jobs are not in the field of public-interest. I sincerely hope this bill is carefully considered and passed and enacted as soon as possible.

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [JDLTestimony](#)
Cc: mnakata@hawaii.edu
Subject: *Submitted testimony for SB2255 on Feb 4, 2014 10:00AM*
Date: Saturday, February 01, 2014 10:48:17 AM

SB2255

Submitted on: 2/1/2014

Testimony for JDL/HRE on Feb 4, 2014 10:00AM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Michele Nakata	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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Cc: ltuan@hawaii.edu
Subject: *Submitted testimony for SB2255 on Feb 4, 2014 10:00AM*
Date: Saturday, February 01, 2014 1:16:04 PM

SB2255

Submitted on: 2/1/2014

Testimony for JDL/HRE on Feb 4, 2014 10:00AM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
tuan la	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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To: [JDLTestimony](#)
Cc: eebrowni@hawaii.edu
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB2255 on Feb 4, 2014 10:00AM
Date: Saturday, February 01, 2014 4:31:36 PM

SB2255

Submitted on: 2/1/2014

Testimony for JDL/HRE on Feb 4, 2014 10:00AM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Eliza Browning	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I strongly support SB2255.

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [JDLTestimony](#)
Cc: mpettit@hawaii.edu
Subject: *Submitted testimony for SB2255 on Feb 4, 2014 10:00AM*
Date: Saturday, February 01, 2014 5:33:43 PM

SB2255

Submitted on: 2/1/2014

Testimony for JDL/HRE on Feb 4, 2014 10:00AM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Miyoko Pettit	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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To: [JDLTestimony](#)
Cc: aakao@hawaii.edu
Subject: *Submitted testimony for SB2255 on Feb 4, 2014 10:00AM*
Date: Saturday, February 01, 2014 6:54:56 PM

SB2255

Submitted on: 2/1/2014

Testimony for JDL/HRE on Feb 4, 2014 10:00AM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Alan Akao	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [JDLTestimony](#)
Cc: rakiona@hotmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for SB2255 on Feb 4, 2014 10:00AM*
Date: Sunday, February 02, 2014 8:06:40 AM

SB2255

Submitted on: 2/2/2014

Testimony for JDL/HRE on Feb 4, 2014 10:00AM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Randall Akiona	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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February 2, 2014

TO: Senator Clayton Hee, Chair Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor
Senator Maili S. L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard
Senator Brickwood Galuteria
Senator Les Ihara Jr.
Senator Malama Solomon
Senator Sam Slom
Senator Brian T. Taniguchi, Chair Senate Committed on Higher Education
Senator Gilbert Kahele, Vice Chair
Senator David Y. Ige
Senator Gilbert S. C. Keith-Agaran
Senator Michelle N. Kidani
Senator Jill N. Tokuda

February 4, 2014 10:00 Conference Room 016

FROM: Stephanie W. Batzer, MSW, JD Candidate

RE: SB 2255 Relating to Access to Justice – **STRONGLY SUPPORT**

Senator Hee, Chair; Senator Shimabukuro, Vice Chair; and members of the Senate Committees on Judiciary and Labor and Higher Education, my name is Stephanie Batzer. I am a JD candidate at the William S. Richardson School of Law. I have had the great fortune to travel and live across the globe during the course of my adult life, finally settling in this great state for the past 16 years. Five years ago, I chose to make a mid life career change, moving from information technology to social work in order to give back to the communities that have supported me over my career. In my concentration internship, I had the fortune to serve as part of the Court Appointed Special Advocate program, where I represented the best interest of five children; three of whom with which I still work. My time in family court showed me how under-represented a large community of our Hawaiian citizens are. Representing the children, and recognizing the needs that continue to exist in the community, led me to apply and attend law school. I am fortunate that I am able to afford the tuition here, but a great many talented individuals are not. This deters many from attending law school, and leaves others with large loans upon graduation, forcing young lawyers away from public service and into corporate law. I strongly support SB 2255 Relating to Access to Justice. Loan forgiveness in exchange for public service can only help strengthen our community with Richardson lawyers.

This bill supports the core values rooted in Richardson lawyers, which include: Service, Social Justice, Dignity and Worth of the Person, Importance of Human Relationships, Integrity, and Competence.

I urge your favorable consideration of SB 2255. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [JDLTestimony](#)
Cc: ndavlantes@aol.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB2255 on Feb 4, 2014 10:00AM
Date: Sunday, February 02, 2014 7:49:49 PM

SB2255

Submitted on: 2/2/2014

Testimony for JDL/HRE on Feb 4, 2014 10:00AM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Nancy Davlantes	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Given the disparity between public and private sector law careers, law school graduates wishing to work in the public interest must be encouraged.

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TESTIMONY OF BRIDGETTE BLANCH IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB2255 & HB2182

To: Chair Isaac Choy, Vice Chair Linda Ichiyama and Members of the House Committee on Higher Education

hedtestimony@capitolhawaii.gov

Hearing Date: Tuesday, Feb. 4, 2:01p, Room 309

To: Chair Clayton Hee, Vice Chair Maile Shimabukuro and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor

JDLtestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov

To: Chair Brian Taniguchi, Vice Chair Gilbert Kahele and Members of the Senate Committee on High Education

Hearing: Tuesday, Feb. 4, 10:00a, Room 016

To the Honorable Chairs, Vice Chairs and Members of the House Committee on Higher Education, Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor and the Senate Committee on Higher Education,

My name is Bridgette Blanch and I am a community resident of Aiea, Hawaii. I offer this testimony in **strong support** of **SB 2255** and **HB 2182** related to Access to Justice.

I understand these bills are intended to increase access to justice in civil legal matters for low- and moderate-income residents by creating a state funded student loan repayment program for public interest lawyers. I also understand that the creation of these bills is based on the recommendation and findings of the supreme Court of Hawaii Access to Justice Commission who found that the reasons for the severe disparity among citizens' abilities to access the judicial system is the insufficient number of attorneys choosing to practice public interest law.

I strongly support these bills because this effort addresses a critical need in our community to offer vital and necessary legal resources to those who need them the most. The lack of competent representation and guidance in civil legal matters is a severe issue in our community. Those who cannot afford to hire a private attorney run a higher risk of infringement upon their basic and fundamental rights, and often they do not gain access to valuable resources to improve the well-being of their families.

I know these issues first hand because I have been adversely affected by the lack of legal resources. I was diagnosed with lung cancer three years ago and life has been difficult trying to support myself as well as my family. I was forced to quit my job to take care of my health. I also am a single parent of a beautiful and bright 16 year-old girl. She has great hopes to attend college. I never established paternity for my daughter because I could not afford to hire an attorney to represent our family in the legal proceedings. My daughter is of Native Hawaiian ancestry through her father's side. Unfortunately, I do not have the resources to send her to college. However, there are several Native Hawaiian scholarships that she could have access to if I could amend her birth certificate to show her ancestry. In order for me to do that, I need to have legal representation. Again, we cannot afford it. What that means is my daughter will be cut off from those very important educational resources based on technicality.

The other issue we are facing is in our public housing division. Drug use is rampant where I live. I have told the public housing authority many times about the drug use and they refuse to do anything about it. In the meantime, my daughter and I live in fear not knowing what to expect when we come home. With drug use, there is an increased risk of crime and violence. If we had access to lawyer, he/she could guide us in knowing our basic rights under public housing and how to navigate the system to ensure a safe neighborhood. That is why I am supporting these bills because there is a huge need in our community for more public interest lawyers, especially for people like me who have fixed incomes. **SB 2255** and **HB 2182** will encourage more lawyers to work in the public interest arena to ensure citizens like me have equitable access to competent representation in all civil legal matters. By having more lawyers working in this area, the state will protect the basic rights of our most vulnerable citizens. For these reasons, please support **SB 2255 and HB 2182** as a way to increase more lawyers in the area of public interest.

Sincerely,

Catherine Blanch, 99-165 Kohomua St. No. 10F, Aiea, HI 96701, Phone: (808) 384-2118

Joshua Michaels
Student Bar Association
William S. Richardson School of Law
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2255

Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor
Honorable Senator Clayton Hee, Chair

Senate Committee on Higher Education
Honorable Senator Brian Taniguchi, Chair

February 4, 2014

Aloha Chairs and Committee Members,

I am testifying on behalf of the William S. Richardson School of Law Student Bar Association.

Purpose: SB2255 and companion bill HB2182 would increase access to justice in underserved communities and facilitate motivated young attorneys to practice public interest legal work (i.e. government, nonprofit, and low-income private practice) in Hawai'i.

"No citizen shall be disfranchised, or deprived of any of the rights or privileges secured to other citizens, unless by the law of the land." - Article I, Section 8 of the Hawai'i State Constitution

The Problem:

- In 2007, the Access to Justice Hui (comprised of representatives from several legal organizations) found that **only 1 in 5 low- and moderate-income Hawai'i residents have their legal needs met.**
- Currently, legal service providers are only able to help **1-in-3 who contact them for assistance**, and many who need legal services are discouraged from even seeking help.
- Significant barriers prevent thousands of people from getting the assistance they need: the **high cost** of legal services, **language** and **cultural** barriers, **lack of knowledge** regarding available services, and difficulty in accessing those providing service.
- Our state constitution affirms that all Hawai'i residents should have equal access to effective, high-quality legal services, irrespective of socio-economic status. The state is failing on its mandate.
- Due to the lack of affordable legal assistance, many local families face **month- to year-long delays** and overwhelming bureaucratic hurdles in court and administrative processes.
- The few organizations working in underserved communities face steep economic challenges; and many students interested in this work are herded into taking higher paying jobs

as associates in private firms by the pressures of student loan payments and Hawaii's exorbitant cost of living..

- So, not only do the underserved face the normal barriers to justice, but they also have difficulty obtaining aid from the very organizations established exclusively for their benefit.

The Solution:

- This bill seeks to increase the access to legal services in Hawai'i by providing a loan repayment program for selected attorneys who practice public interest law in underserved communities.

- The bill would establish a Hawai'i Justice League fund, administered by the William S. Richardson School of Law, which selects awardees from qualified applicants serving in public interest and makes student loan payments for awardees for up to five years or a to-be-determined dollar amount, as long as the awardee continues to serve in a pre-approved area of law and meets all other program requirements.

- Following the recommendations of the Hawai'i Supreme Court of implementing initiatives to enhance recruitment and retention of attorneys in nonprofit legal service providers, this bill seeks to provide greater access to justice by making it possible for those already interested in serving our vulnerable communities with some the relief they need to do so.

- This legislature enacted similar statutes to establish programs, which have already increased access to critical medical services in underserved communities. The same can be accomplished for legal services with the passage of **the Hawai'i Justice League Act of 2014, SB2255/ HB2182**. I strongly urge you to support this bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

TESTIMONY OF BRIDGETTE BLANCH IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB2255 & HB2182

To: Chair Isaac Choy, Vice Chair Linda Ichiyama and Members of the House Committee on Higher Education

hedtestimony@capitolhawaii.gov

Hearing Date: Tuesday, Feb. 4, 2:01p, Room 309

To: Chair Clayton Hee, Vice Chair Maile Shimabukuro and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor

JDLtestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov

To: Chair Brian Taniguchi, Vice Chair Gilbert Kahele and Members of the Senate Committee on High Education

Hearing: Tuesday, Feb. 4, 10:00a, Room 016

To the Honorable Chairs, Vice Chairs and Members of the House Committee on Higher Education, Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor and the Senate Committee on Higher Education,

My name is Rozell Foundain and I am a community resident of Honolulu, Hawaii. I offer this testimony in **strong support** of **SB 2255** and **HB 2182** related to Access to Justice.

I understand these bills are intended to increase access to justice in civil legal matters for low- and moderate-income residents by creating a state funded student loan repayment program for public interest lawyers. I also understand that the creation of these bills is based on the recommendation and findings of the supreme Court of Hawaii Access to Justice Commission who found that the reasons for the severe disparity among citizens' abilities to access the judicial system is the insufficient number of attorneys choosing to practice public interest law.

I strongly support these bills because this effort addresses a critical need in our community to offer vital and necessary legal resources to those who need them the most. The lack of competent representation and guidance in civil legal matters is a severe issue in our community. Those who cannot afford to hire a private attorney run a higher risk of infringement upon their basic and fundamental rights, and often they do not gain access to valuable resources to improve the well-being of their families.

I know these issues first hand because I have been adversely affected by the lack of legal resources. I was diagnosed with a life threatening disease recently. Because of this, I am not able to work. I was instructed by my doctor to apply for Social Security. I need guidance in order to complete the paperwork so I can gain access to resources for myself and my family. My worry and anxiety have increased because I have extreme financial insecurity because I am not able to work at this time. If there were a public interest lawyer available to me, he/she could guide me through the system so that my basic needs of food and shelter will be met. That is why I supporting these bills.

SB 2255 and **HB 21825** will encourage more lawyers to work in the public interest arena to ensure citizens like me have equitable access to competent representation in all civil legal matters. By having more lawyers working in this area, the state will protect the basic rights of our most vulnerable citizens.

For these reasons, please support **SB 2255 and HB 2182** as a way to increase more lawyers in the area of public interest.

Sincerely,
Rozell Fountain,

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [JDLTestimony](#)
Cc: mkaaihu@hawaii.edu
Subject: *Submitted testimony for SB2255 on Feb 4, 2014 10:00AM*
Date: Sunday, February 02, 2014 10:02:18 PM

SB2255

Submitted on: 2/2/2014

Testimony for JDL/HRE on Feb 4, 2014 10:00AM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Matthew Kaaihue	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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TESTIMONY OF KAUI PRATT IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB2255 & HB2182

To: Chair Isaac Choy, Vice Chair Linda Ichiyama and Members of the House Committee on Higher Education

hedtestimony@capitolhawaii.gov

Hearing Date: Tuesday, Feb. 4, 2:01p, Room 309

To: Chair Clayton Hee, Vice Chair Maile Shimabukuro and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor

JDLtestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov

To: Chair Brian Taniguchi, Vice Chair Gilbert Kahele and Members of the Senate Committee on High Education

Hearing: Tuesday, Feb. 4, 10:00a, Room 016

To the Honorable Chairs, Vice Chairs and Members of the House Committee on Higher Education, Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor and the Senate Committee on Higher Education,

My name is Kau'i Pratt and I am a community resident of Kaneohe, Hawaii. I offer this testimony in **strong support** of **SB 2255** and **HB 2182** related to Access to Justice.

I understand these bills are intended to increase access to justice in civil legal matters for low- and moderate-income residents by creating a state funded student loan repayment program for public interest lawyers. I also understand that the creation of these bills is based on the recommendation and findings of the supreme Court of Hawaii Access to Justice Commission who found that the reasons for the severe disparity among citizens' abilities to access the judicial system is the insufficient number of attorneys choosing to practice public interest law.

I strongly support these bills because this effort addresses a critical need in our community to offer vital and necessary legal resources to those who need them the most. The lack of competent representation and guidance in civil legal matters is a severe issue in our community. Those who cannot afford to hire a private attorney run a higher risk of infringement upon their basic and fundamental rights, and often they do not gain access to valuable resources to improve the well-being of their families.

These bills are important because my community needs help. Help includes support in various ways: a divorce from an abusive spouse, protection of their property rights against quiet title actions by corporations, protection against bullying by state agencies, filling out Social Security paperwork, etc.

Recently, my cousin was bullied by the state's Child Protective Services. It was unfortunate because she is a good mother to her two little girls, active within her community and ambitious. She is on a career path to become a nurse so that she can provide for her family. She was involved in an accident where one child was injured. CPS, without doing a proper investigation, took her children away from her for nearly two weeks without a court order. They then documented the abuse on record within two to three days from the accident. We fought them to have them reconsider her case but they didn't and she could not afford to hire an attorney. They were rude and bullied her throughout the process. Now that she has a documented case of child abuse on her record, she will not be able to get a job in the health care field for the next five years until the report drops off her record. I wholeheartedly believe that this could have been avoided if she had access to competent legal representation. Unfortunately, because she has the documented abuse on her record, her family will continue to live in poverty because she will not be able to develop professionally for the next five years. Because of stories like this, I strongly support these bills.

SB 2255 and **HB 2182** will encourage more lawyers to work in the public interest arena to ensure citizens have equitable access to competent representation in all civil legal matters. By having more lawyers working in this area, the state will protect the basic rights of our most vulnerable citizens.

For these reasons, please support **SB 2255 and HB 2182** as a way to increase more lawyers in the area of public interest.

Sincerely,

Kau'i Pratt, 45-411 Akimala St., Kāne'ohe, HI 96744

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON
JUDICIARY AND LABOR
AND
HIGHER EDUCATION

Tuesday, February 04, 2014
10:00 a.m.
Conference Room 016

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL NO. 2255
RELATING TO ACCESS TO JUSTICE**

Aloha and Hafa Adai Chairs Hee, Taniguchi, and Members of the Committees:

I am Oliver Manglona, a third-year law student at William S. Richardson School of Law. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 2255. As an aspiring lawyer who would like to pursue a legal career in public interest in Hawaii, I whole-heartedly agree with the intent and substance of this Bill.

As a Chamorro from the island of Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), Hawaii has been a second home for me for the past three years. Its culture and its people remind me of the family and friends I left behind and the 3,000 people who make up the tiny island. The sense of community in Hawaii is very reminiscent of what I left behind and it is also the main reason why I decided to pursue my legal career here in Hawaii.

The William S. Richardson's School of Law is a very community oriented law school that offers a wide curriculum in public interest work. The law school's Ulu Lehua Scholars Program, which I am very proud to say that I am a part of, is a prime example of the law school and its students' "commitment to social justice, the public interest, and service to legally, socially, and economically disadvantaged communities." The Ulu Lehua Scholars Program focuses on bringing students who have overcome many adversities, whether it is social, educational, or economic adversity into a profession normally reserved for the few and privileged. The success of the program has created a strong alumni committed to public interest work in Hawaii, and continues to produce dedicated lawyers, who are representatives for their community, in seeking legal recourse through advocacy and trial work to prevent injustices that are particular to their community.

Although the Ulu Lehua Scholars Program addresses the disparity in law school, the disparity in the practice of public interest law is still a real and ongoing problem. While the Program seeks to address the adversity that students like me face – socially and economically – the cost of serving in public interest law instead perpetuates this adversity – not only for myself, but also for the community I choose to represent. Senate Bill 2255 addresses this problem, and gives more people like me an opportunity to represent our

community. Community is the bedrock of Hawaii: its people are our 'ohana, and just like family, they should be protected and respected.

Again, I would like to express my deepest thank you to the Committees for the opportunity to testify in favor of Senate Bill 2255.

Respectfully,

Oliver Manglona
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TESTIMONY OF MS. SHARLETTE L. K. POE, JR. IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB2255 & HB2182

To: Chair Isaac Choy, Vice Chair Linda Ichiyama and Members of the House Committee on Higher Education
hedtestimony@capitolhawaii.gov
Hearing Date: Tuesday, Feb. 4, 2:01p, Room 309

To: Chair Clayton Hee, Vice Chair Maile Shimabukuro and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor
JDLtestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: Chair Brian Taniguchi, Vice Chair Gilbert Kahele and Members of the Senate Committee on High Education
Hearing: Tuesday, Feb. 4, 10:00a, Room 016

To the Honorable Chairs, Vice Chairs and Members of the House Committee on Higher Education, Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor and the Senate Committee on Higher Education,

My name is Ms. Sharlette L. K. Poe, Jr. and I am a community resident of Waianae, Hawaii. I offer this testimony in **strong support** of **SB 2255** and **HB 2182** related to Access to Justice.

I understand these bills are intended to increase access to justice in civil legal matters for low- and moderate-income residents by creating a state funded student loan repayment program for public interest lawyers. I also understand that the creation of these bills is based on the recommendation and findings of the supreme Court of Hawaii Access to Justice Commission who found that the reasons for the severe disparity among citizens' abilities to access the judicial system is the insufficient number of attorneys choosing to practice public interest law.

I strongly support these bills because this effort addresses a critical need in our community to offer vital and necessary legal resources to those who need them the most. The lack of competent representation and guidance in civil legal matters is a severe issue in our community. Those who cannot afford to hire a private attorney run a higher risk of infringement upon their basic and fundamental rights, and often they do not gain access to valuable resources to improve the well-being of their families.

SB 2255 and **HB 2182** will encourage more lawyers to work in the public interest arena to ensure citizens like me have equitable access to competent representation in all civil legal matters. By having more lawyers working in this area, the state will protect the basic rights of our most vulnerable citizens.

For these reasons, please support **SB 2255 and HB 2182** as a way to increase more lawyers in the area of public interest.

Sincerely,

Ms. Sharlette L. K. Poe, Jr.
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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [JDLTestimony](#)
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Subject: *Submitted testimony for SB2255 on Feb 4, 2014 10:00AM*
Date: Monday, February 03, 2014 4:58:39 AM

SB2255

Submitted on: 2/3/2014

Testimony for JDL/HRE on Feb 4, 2014 10:00AM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Faye L Wallace	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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S.B. 2255

Relating to Access to Justice

Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor

Senator Clayton Hee, Chair

Senate Committee on Higher Education

Senator Brian Taniguchi, Chair

Hearing on Tuesday, February 4, 2014, at 10 a.m.

Mahalo for this opportunity to submit testimony in **support** of the intent and purpose of S.B. 2255, which establishes a loan repayment program at the William S. Richardson School of Law for attorneys who pursue public interest work. I am an associate professor at the Law School and director of Ka Huli Ao Center for Excellence in Native Hawaiian Law. I submit this testimony, however, in my personal capacity as a private citizen, a graduate of the William S. Richardson School of Law, and an attorney who practiced for many years in the public interest sector representing Native Hawaiian clients.

I understand that the Hawai'i Justice League proposed by S.B. 2255 is modeled after a similar program, the Hawai'i Health Corps Program, created in 2012 by the Legislature and housed at the John A. Burns School of Medicine and the School of Nursing. The purpose of the Hawai'i Health Corps Program is to encourage health care professionals to serve in neighbor-island and rural communities where there are shortages of doctors and nurses. Similarly, there is a great unmet need for good, affordable, legal advice and representation in neighbor-island and rural communities.

When I attended Law School, tuition was affordable and, after graduation, although I could not spend money on luxuries, I could pursue my dream of working for the Native Hawaiian community. Today, it is very difficult for students, who graduate with tens of thousands of dollars of debt (each semester of resident tuition is over \$9,000), to be able to work for non-profits, in rural communities, or in advancing the rights of under-represented communities.

I have seen the great need in our community – and here I speak specifically of the Native Hawaiian community – for legal representation. At Ka Huli Ao, we are often asked to kōkua with legal advice; sometimes we are able to help through our clinics or through the Law School's pro bono program. We are not able, however, to provide direct legal representation. We simply do not have the capacity or resources to be able to do so. Sometimes we can offer advice and make recommendations. But, all too often, we must turn away members of our community.

The program established in S.B. 2255 serves two important purposes: first, it helps to relieve the debt of hard-working and dedicated young men and women who seek to serve the community; and second, it is a means to provide access to the legal system – indeed, to provide justice – to our citizens. I also note that some amendments may be necessary for the smooth administration of the program and to ensure that it is consistent with the federal loan repayment system. I commend the Legislature for considering S.B. 2255 and urge the Committee to pass it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to present this testimony.