



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Wednesday, April 2, 2014 at 9:25 a.m.

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SCR 38 – URGING THE BOARD OF REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII NOT TO RAISE STUDENT FEES TO BALANCE THE BUDGET OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII ATHLETICS DEPARTMENT OR BUDGET DEFICIT OF ANY OTHER DEPARTMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII.

Chair Ige, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawaii supports the intent of SCR 38 urging the Board of Regents to not raise student fees to balance the budget of the University of Hawaii's Athletics Department or the budget deficit of any other University department.

Mandatory student fees are used to support the co-curriculum on the various University campuses to foster a vibrant student life and to promote an enriching student educational experience outside of the classroom. These fees are used to support a variety of co-curricular student programs, activities, and services. These co-curricular programs include student publications such as the campus newspaper, a student literary magazine, e-publications, etc.; student government and advocacy; a locus, facility, or center where conveniences and amenities are offered as a gathering place for campus community members to interact; and student broadcast such as a campus radio station, public TV programs and other film-making projects which afford students opportunities to demonstrate creative scriptwriting, program editing, broadcast reporting, etc.

Mandatory student fees are also assessed to support essential on-campus services such as student medical and mental health services, transportation services including subsidized public transportation, access to computing and other technology centers to aid in students' academic endeavors, and intercollegiate athletics which provide educational opportunities for student competitors while strengthening ties with the communities and our state.

In nearly all cases, mandatory student fees are initiated by the campus student government or other student governance group after a thorough process of consultation with their student constituencies who will pay the fees. Where students see a need for programs or services, they have historically been willing to "tax" themselves for the benefit of a quality campus life. This practice has been in place for nearly six decades. We support the intent of this resolution provided that it does not preclude any of the student governance groups from proposing through established University procedures to raise student fees for specific desired purposes such as establishing or enhancing critical mental health and/or clinical medical services

According to UHM Athletic Director Ben Jay, "the idea of raising the student athletics fee to balance our athletics budget is not under consideration and has not been proposed to the UH Board of Regents."

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SCR 38, the intent of which the University supports with provisos noted in above.