



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education
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by

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HB 979 – RELATING TO CYBERSECURITY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Chair Choy, Vice Chair Ichiyama, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i supports HB 979 regarding cybersecurity workforce training. As noted in the bill, we are already faced with the realities of a digital economy where we have significant workforce gaps in the specialized skills required to protect the integrity of data, and the technical infrastructure underlying the creation, transmission and use of data. The need is immediate and critical not only for government agencies like the U.S. Pacific Command and National Security Administration but also for private sector industries such as financial institutions, health care, insurance, retail, and tourism. These cybersecurity positions are quality jobs with living wage salaries and it is important that we provide local residents with access to these jobs.

To meet this need, the University proposes to build on its current cybersecurity degree pathways and training programs to design a program that begins in the high school, transitions to being able to obtain mid-level technical jobs through the community colleges, and continues on to baccalaureate and advanced degrees. The program would also include training for existing IT professionals to enhance their skills in providing cybersecurity support for their companies. The pathway approach provides students with early exposure to the field and the job opportunities, multiple levels at which they can exit to the work force, and a clear pathway to higher level education and higher wage jobs. While the community colleges will act as the expending agency for these funds if the bill is adopted, you have our commitment that the execution of the program will involve our K-12, University, and business partners.

The funds provided in the bill would allow us to train additional students and to extend the training to multiple campuses and the neighbor islands. Additionally the community colleges recently received an award from the U.S. Department of Labor that will help offset some of the curriculum development and design work needed for this program. We urge adoption of this measure.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB 979.