



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Written Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
March 1, 2016 at 1:40pm

By  
Dr. Lori Ideta  
Vice Chancellor for Students  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

### SB 2767 SD1 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Chair Tokuda, Vice Dela Cruz, and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to provide comments on this measure.

The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa is in complete support of this measure that establishes three (3) full-time psychologists and one (1) full-time case manager at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

As you are well aware, college students are facing greater and more complex challenges in their personal and academic lives. Presenting issues amongst our students include anxiety, stress management, and suicidal ideations. We work hard to attend to all of our students. Our current team of psychologists, psychiatrists, and interns do an amazing job with limited resources.

The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa currently has 6.5 faculty positions, 1 temporary faculty position, 3 post-doc therapists, 3 doctoral Interns, and 2 doctoral practicum trainees. As the total number of students serviced each year increases, in the 2014-15 school year, the University has serviced approximately 1,300 students for close to 8,000 hours of therapy. The number of times students have sought services range from one intake appointment to over 30 individual therapy appointments. In the Fall 2015 semester, 559 intake appointments were scheduled, 296 emergency Blue Line appointments were scheduled, and 2591 therapy appointments were scheduled. On average, there are 32 hours each week dedicated to intakes, 40 hours of emergency Blue Line, and over 160 psychotherapy appointments available to undergraduate and graduate students.

However, the waitlist, which is for non-urgent clients, had 67 students on the list as of November 12, 2015, with an average number of days on the list being 7.17 days. As of February 01, 2016, 33 students are on the waitlist with an average numbers of days on the list is 16.06 days.

The demand for mental health services have increased across the country. According to data from the American College Health Association National College Health

Assessment Fall 2014 Reference Group within the last 12 months, 54% felt overwhelming anxiety, 32.6% felt so depressed that it was difficult to function, and 8.1% seriously considered suicide. This data increased in the Spring 2015 Reference Group, with 56.9% felt overwhelming anxiety, 34.5% felt so depressed it was difficult to function, and 8.9% seriously considered suicide.

Any efforts to increase services to our students would be very much appreciated. These new positions will help to alleviate the current heavy workload on our therapists and increase our abilities to reach out to the campus through proactive educational efforts. Your investment in the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa will have a long lasting impact and will create a legacy of those who supported the students of higher education in our state.

We support the intent of this legislation provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in the University's Board of Regents Approved Budget.

Thank you for your consideration.



**Graduate Student Organization  
University of Hawai`i at Mānoa**

Hemenway Hall 212 • 2445 Campus Road • Honolulu, HI 96822

Date: March 1, 2016  
Time: 1:40 p.m.  
Place: Conference Room 211

To: Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Senator Jill N. Tokuda, Chair  
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair

**Re: Support for SB 2767 – Relating to the University of Hawaii**

Dear Chair Tokuda, Vice Chair Dela Cruz, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony. My name is Jonathan Dial, and I am writing on behalf and as the President of the University of Hawai`i at Mānoa (UHM) Graduate Student Organization (GSO), which represents the approximately 5,000 graduate students at the UHM campus.

I am writing in strong support of SB 2767, which appropriates moneys for UHM to hire three psychologists and one case manager to provide student mental health services.

Whether as an undergraduate or graduate student, the pursuit of higher education is a demanding and highly stressful endeavour. As in any organization, it is vital that the psychological and emotional needs of the individuals within it are met in order for maximum productivity to be achieved. Students especially are in a vulnerable situation, as they may be far from support networks, away from home for the first time, and subject to strong social, financial, and academic pressures. As such, it is imperative that the University be able to provide adequate mental and psychological support services to all its students. Currently, the Counseling and Student Development Center at UHM is understaffed and unable to meet the needs of those who need help. For these reasons, we strongly support SB 2767.

If you have any questions, I am able to provide further clarification on our stance on this matter. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Dial  
UH Mānoa Graduate Student Organization, President

To: Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Senator Jill N. Tokuda, Chair  
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair

Date: Tuesday, March 1, 2016  
Time: 1:40 PM  
Place: Conference Room 211

Re: Support of SB 2767 Relating to the University of Hawai'i

My name is Jerrin Lawi-an and I am an undergraduate student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. I am writing in strong support of SB 2767, which appropriates funding for three psychologists and one case manager to provide student mental health services.

I've had friends come through this university who have struggled with various levels of emotional distress. Some have found a bit of ease in taking less courses but will take significantly more time in completing their degree. Others have decided the stress of school was not worth it all together. All of them, however, agree these are not optimal solutions.

An on campus Psychologist dedicated to tending to mental health concerns would be a boon to not only these students but more. Someone trained and available at any moment of the day would be able to keep these students in the mental state they want to be in.

I strongly support SB2767 for the students who wish to succeed in school, but may not have all the resources to do so. I am hopeful these students will have accessed to more robust services at UHM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jerrin Lawi-an  
jerrinl@hawaii.edu

To: Ways and Means Committee  
Senator Jill Tokuda, Chair  
Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Vice Chair

Date: Tuesday, March 1, 2016

Time: 1:40 PM

Place: Conference Room 211

Re: Support of SB 2767 Relating to the University of Hawai'i

My name is Jessica Chen and I am an undergraduate student at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. I am writing in strong support of SB 2767, which appropriates funds for three psychologists and one case manager to provide student mental health services.

As a pre-medical student, I have seen many of my peers overstressed and tired due to hours of studying and panicking. As you well know, getting into medical school is no easy task. Many of my friends panic over whether or not to pursue medicine. I have seen students who ultimately give up after failing an exam. I have seen friends who resort to poor life choices to relieve the stress.

I have been in those shoes. I have panicked after getting a C on my math exam. I have cried because I felt like I wasn't good enough. I have stressed because I know that grades are important when applying to medical school. Regardless of the major, I firmly believe that students should have the opportunity to speak to someone in a comfortable environment. It is not easy dealing with these struggles alone.

I strongly support SB 2767 for the students who need professional psychological help. The bill's funding for positions to provide mental health services can resolve mental health issues on campus. No student should have to resort to dealing with mental health problems on their own.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Chen  
jwchen@hawaii.edu  
808-541-7234



# ASUH

Associated Students of the University of Hawai'i

YOUR STUDENT GOVERNMENT

To: Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Senator Jill Tokuda, Chair  
Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Vice Chair

Date: Tuesday, March 1, 2016  
Time: 1:40 PM  
Place: Conference Room 211

**Re: Support of SB 2767 Relating to the University of Hawai'i**

My name is Kelly Zakimi and I currently serve as the President of the Associated Students of the University of Hawai'i (ASUH), the Mānoa undergraduate student government representing roughly 14,000 full-time undergraduates. Today, I am writing on behalf of the Office of the ASUH President in strong support of SB 2767, which appropriates funds for three psychologists and one case manager to provide student mental health services.

Mental health is becoming a national concern as the number of students seeking services at counseling centers is growing at a rapid rate. According to the Center for Collegiate Mental Health 2015 Annual Report, the average growth in number of students seeking services at counseling centers (+29.6%) was more than five times the growth rate of institutional enrollment (+5.6%). The Counseling and Student Development Center (CSDC) at Mānoa has also felt the effects of the growing levels of students requesting mental health services. Although the CSDC does the best with what it has, many students are placed on the waitlist because the Center does not have the capacity to meet the influx of requests. Consequently, many are not receiving the timely help they need. With more staff, the CSDC can enhance outreach efforts and better serve undergraduate and graduate students alike.

When assessing the college experience, most look at academics or extra-curricular activities. These areas are wonderful and much needed, but the mental and emotional well-being of students often gets overlooked. By appropriating funds for our severely understaffed Counseling and Student Development Center, this bill takes tangible steps forward in prioritizing the mental health of students. Please support SB 2767 and stand with students at UH Mānoa in supporting increased student mental health services. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,  
Kelly Zakimi  
Email Address: [zakimik@hawaii.edu](mailto:zakimik@hawaii.edu)

February 3, 2016

To: Chair Jill N. Tokuda

Vice Chair Donovan M. Dela Cruz

Members of the Ways and Means Committee

From: Sarah Benzing

Subject: Support of HB1703, SB2767, Relating to the University of Hawaii

Aloha! My name is Sarah Benzing and I am currently a junior at Kalaheo High School in Kailua. I strongly believe in House bill 1703 and its companion Senate bill 2767. This bill will allow the University of Hawaii to hire three psychologists and one case manager to provide college students with mental health services.

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness on mental health on college campuses, 80% of college students feel overwhelmed by their responsibilities and 50% have been so anxious they struggled in school. And keep in mind that students are expected to receive near perfect grades while participating in multiple extracurricular activities. How can we expect students to achieve these standards if they are overwhelmed and anxious with no one to support them within reach? It is impossible. Mental health is just as important as physical health, the only difference is that one is visible and the other is not. If colleges want their students to exceed standards and continue to succeed in the workforce, it would be logical to provide students with all types of health services, including mental health services.

Personally, as a high school student who enjoys participating in activities and learning as much as I can to better my future, I get overwhelmed easily and often. And I would hope that my college of choice would provide adequate help for any mental health issues so that I can continue to succeed in all aspects of life. I urge the committee to pass HB1703/SB2767. Thank you for your consideration.

To: Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Senator Jill N. Tokuda, Chair  
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair

Date: Tuesday, March 1, 2016  
Time: 1:40 PM  
Place: Conference Room 211

Re: Support of SB 2767 Relating to the University of Hawai'i

My name is Todd Simeroth and I am an undergraduate student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. I am writing in strong support of SB 2767, which appropriates funding for three psychologists and one case manager to provide student mental health services.

Over the last three years that I have studied here, I have encountered among many of my peers a common state of struggle with the various difficulties brought on by our often-confining environment. I have unfortunately seen this culminate into experiences of seclusion, overwhelming, and desperation. It is not an element unique to those residing in student housing, nor to those without family nearby, nor to those of any particular study or demographic.

I have had friends leave the university because they could not overcome these feelings. I have seen several peers in student leadership positions resign because they could not manage the growing stresses of the expectations put upon us. I have personally met individuals adversely affected by the incidents of our peers resorting to gruesome self-harm, as recently as within the past few weeks.

It is clear that there is an ongoing and pressing need for additional mental health services at our campus. Students who need professional psychological help should not have to wait days or weeks to receive counseling, or simply be left to manage their own conflicts to detrimental ends. The funding for the positions sought by SB 2767 can help resolve these hardships and protect the integrity of our community, and that is why I strongly support SB 2767.

Respectfully submitted,

Todd Simeroth  
simeroth@hawaii.edu  
808.366.5469



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**Cc:** [scrc@hawaii.edu](mailto:scrc@hawaii.edu)  
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**Date:** Monday, February 29, 2016 1:57:17 PM

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**SB2767**

Submitted on: 2/29/2016

Testimony for WAM on Mar 1, 2016 13:40PM in Conference Room 211

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Sierra Callihan	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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**Cc:** [jannahlynd131@gmail.com](mailto:jannahlynd131@gmail.com)  
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**SB2767**

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Testimony for WAM on Mar 1, 2016 13:40PM in Conference Room 211

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Jannah Dela Cruz	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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**Cc:** [joaquin.cedric@gmail.com](mailto:joaquin.cedric@gmail.com)  
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**SB2767**

Submitted on: 2/29/2016

Testimony for WAM on Mar 1, 2016 13:40PM in Conference Room 211

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Cedric Joaquin	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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**SB2767**

Submitted on: 2/29/2016

Testimony for WAM on Mar 1, 2016 13:40PM in Conference Room 211

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Sarah Nagaji	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Mental health is incredibly important. As a person who sees a therapist it has improved my mental health immensely. My mental health being better has also led to better relationships with friends and family, a better handle on organization and ability to control my emotions, and helped me be a better student. With my mental health being seen as important and having the help to improve it I have been able to focus better in classes, participate with University activities more, and do better on assignments.

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**SB2767**

Submitted on: 2/29/2016

Testimony for WAM on Mar 1, 2016 13:40PM in Conference Room 211

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Eric Baxa	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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**SB2767**

Submitted on: 2/29/2016

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<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Grant Takara	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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**SB2767**

Submitted on: 2/29/2016

Testimony for WAM on Mar 1, 2016 13:40PM in Conference Room 211

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Lauren Tagaban	Individual	Support	No

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**SB2767**

Submitted on: 2/29/2016

Testimony for WAM on Mar 1, 2016 13:40PM in Conference Room 211

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Alyssa Simbahon	Individual	Support	No

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**Cc:** [rakamosh@hawaii.edu](mailto:rakamosh@hawaii.edu)  
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**SB2767**

Submitted on: 2/29/2016

Testimony for WAM on Mar 1, 2016 13:40PM in Conference Room 211

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Roxie Kamoshida	Individual	Support	No

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**SB2767**

Submitted on: 2/28/2016

Testimony for WAM on Mar 1, 2016 13:40PM in Conference Room 211

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
David Enriquez	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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