



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
February 27, 2017 at 9:40 a.m.

By
John F. Morton
Vice President for Community Colleges
University of Hawai'i System
and
Donald O. Straney
Chancellor, University of Hawai'i at Hilo

SB 826 SD1 – RELATING TO THE PUNA DISTANCE LEARNING CENTER

Chair Tokuda, Vice Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee:

Both the University of Hawai'i at Hilo and the University of Hawai'i Community College System support SB 826 SD1 with suggested revisions to fund a distance learning center in the District of Puna.

There is a critical need to strengthen rural outreach, education and economic development in Puna which is one of the most underserved areas in the state and also the fastest growing district on Hawai'i Island. It would be most feasible and beneficial for the residents of Puna for the Center to be under Hawai'i Community College, with UH Hilo collaborating and partnering to provide higher education and career options to the people of Hawai'i Island.

We would request that the bill be amended to identify Hawai'i Community College as the lead unit, as we are trying to move Hawai'i Community College into being a distributed campus: Hilo, Palamanui, North Hawai'i Education and Research Center and potentially, Puna. Hawai'i Community College is best suited to manage and deliver programs from UH Hilo, Hawai'i CC and other UH campuses as needed.

We support SB 826 SD1 with the above revisions on the condition that any requested funds do not supplant any portion of the University's Biennium Budget request.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB 826 SD1. Aloha.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Friday, February 24, 2017 5:14 PM
To: WAM Testimony
Cc: andrew.levin@hawaiicounty.gov
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB826 on Feb 27, 2017 09:40AM

SB826

Submitted on: 2/24/2017

Testimony for WAM on Feb 27, 2017 09:40AM in Conference Room 211

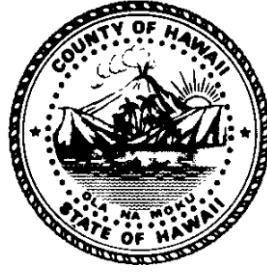
Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
andy levin	county of hawaii, Mayor's office	Support	No

Comments: In Mayor Kim's absence, please accept this testimony in support of a learning center in Puna. The district is very large, and travel to the closest university facilities in Hilo can be both expensive and time-consuming on a clogged two-lane highway. Providing a facility in the Puna District is warranted and certainly would be welcomed.

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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JEN RUGGLES
Council Member
District 5 – Puna Mauka,
Pahoa Mauka, Kalapana



*Public Works & Parks and Recreation
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Committee Chair*

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HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL

February 27, 2017

To: Hawai'i State Senate Committee on Ways and Means

From: Jennifer Ruggles, Council Member

Re: Testimony in support of Senate Bill 826 SD1 relating to the Puna Distance Learning Center



Dear Honorable Chair Jill N. Tokuda and members of the Ways and Means Committee,

I urge you to pass Senate Bill 826 SD1 which would appropriate funds for a distance learning center for the Puna district of Hawai'i County. Council district 5 which I represent encompasses the mauka half of Puna. The residents of this district are some of the most disadvantaged in the state. According to the Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism (DBEDT), 35.2% of persons in the upper Puna census tract are estimated to be living below the federal poverty level in comparison to the Hilo (kahuku-kaumana) census tract where 5.7% of persons are living below the poverty level.

We are the poorest district on the island, with the least infrastructure and the highest population. The Hawai'i County General Plan estimates that by 2020 the Population of Puna will be 58,246 compared to 49,791 in Hilo. The DBEDT estimates that the unemployment rate in the Pahoa census tract (in Puna) was 11.5% in 2016 compared to a state average of 3.3%. In order to improve the economy of Hawai'i County and of the state, we need to empower these residents by investing into their future. Creating a distance learning center in Puna will allow more residents to pursue higher education providing them the option to move out of poverty, improve their quality of life as well as make greater contributions to our economy.

If you have any questions regarding my support for this bill please do not hesitate to contact my office.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Saturday, February 25, 2017 7:41 AM
To: WAM Testimony
Cc: katc31999@gmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for SB826 on Feb 27, 2017 09:40AM*

SB826

Submitted on: 2/25/2017

Testimony for WAM on Feb 27, 2017 09:40AM in Conference Room 211

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kat Culina	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Saturday, February 25, 2017 9:30 PM
To: WAM Testimony
Cc: 333cory@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB826 on Feb 27, 2017 09:40AM

SB826

Submitted on: 2/25/2017

Testimony for WAM on Feb 27, 2017 09:40AM in Conference Room 211

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Cory Harden	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Aloha legislators, Eliminating the distance barrier to higher learning would strengthen Puna. mahalo, Cory Harden, Hilo

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