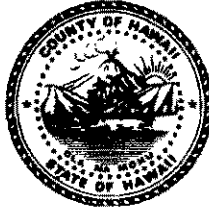


Harry Kim
Mayor



Wil Okabe
Managing Director

Barbara J. Kossow
Deputy Managing Director

County of Hawai'i
Office of the Mayor

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March 20, 2017

Rep. Angus L.K. McKelvey, Chair
Committee on Higher Education
Hawai'i State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chair McKelvey and Members

**RE: SB 826, SD 2
Relating to the Puna Distance Learning Center**

Puna covers a large geographic area (about the size of the Island of Kauai) and because it has relatively low-cost housing, its population has boomed over the years. However, economic opportunities within the district are extremely limited, and opportunities for higher education are many miles away in Hilo, along a highway that often suffers from terrible traffic.

A distance learning center under the auspices of our community college would be a great step toward realizing our State's goal of equal educational opportunities for all residents, regardless where they live.

I hope you will approve SB826 with substantial funding and an appropriate effective date.

Respectfully submitted,

Harry Kim
Mayor



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education
March 21, 2017 at 2:01 p.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 SD2 – RELATING TO THE PUNA DISTANCE LEARNING CENTER

Chair McKelvey, Vice Chair Hashem and Members of the Committee:

Both the University of Hawai'i at Hilo and the University of Hawai'i Community College System supports SB 826 SD2, to fund a distance learning center in the District of Puna and we look forward to the collaboration between our campuses as we plan for this center.

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. As Hawai'i Community College is moving into being a distributed campus with centers in Hilo, Palamanui, North Hawai'i Education and Research Center and potentially Puna, Hawai'i Community College, with collaboration of UH Hilo, is best suited to manage and deliver programs from UH Hilo, Hawai'i CC and other UH campuses as needed.

We support SB 826 SD2 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 SD2. Aloha.

HEDtestimony

From: Kaulana Dameg <kaulanad@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 15, 2017 10:20 AM
To: HEDtestimony
Subject: SB 826, SD2 SUPPORT

Aloha Chairs and Committee Members,

I SUPPORT and urge you to pass SB 826, SD2 that will appropriate funds to provide greater access to post-secondary education in the Puna district.

Mahalo,
Kaulana Dameg