



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Public Safety, Veterans, & Military Affairs
Wednesday, January 30, 2019 at 10:30 a.m.

By
Donald O. Straney, Vice President for Academic Planning and Policy
University of Hawai'i System

HB 573 – RELATING TO TUITION WAIVERS

Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Gates, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 573. This bill would allow the University of Hawai'i to waive tuition, in full or in part, for the children or spouses of deceased veterans who are eligible for gold star status. The bill would require the gold star family member to provide proof of their status.

HB 573 has a laudable goal. The University, however, does not grant full tuition waivers. We do waive the nonresident portion of tuition in some cases, generally paid for with funds allocated or donated to cover the waiver. The US Department of Veterans Affairs has educational assistance programs for gold star family members. We are aware that recently, the VA has changed its policy regarding some of these benefits. We are examining the extent of the impact of these changes on current or potential students who are gold star family members.

For this reason, the University of Hawai'i would respectfully request HB 573 be deferred until the policy changes by the VA are better understood and the impact on college students in Hawai'i can be evaluated.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 573, RELATING TO TUITION WAIVERS

PRESENTATION TO THE

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, VETERANS & MILITARY AFFAIRS

BY

MR. RONALD P. HAN
DIRECTOR OF STATE OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES

January 30, 2019
10:30 a.m.

Good morning, Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Gates, and members of the Committee:

I'm Ron Han, Director of the State Office of Veterans Services (OVS). I appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony **in support** of the concepts in House Bill 573.

This measure allows the University of Hawaii system including the respective community colleges to waive tuition for spouses and children of deceased members of the United States Military who qualify for a gold star lapel button. Spouses and children who would qualify to wear the gold star lapel button lost his or her loved one during World War I, World War II, or any subsequent period of armed hostilities in which the United States was engaged with to also include an international terrorist attack and military operations while serving outside the United States (including the commonwealths, territories, and possessions of the United States) as part of a peacekeeping force.

The OVS supports the intent expressed in this measure as long as its implementation does not impact or replace the priorities set forth in the Executive Budget.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of Hawaii's Veterans and their families.

HB-573

Submitted on: 1/29/2019 10:12:19 AM

Testimony for PVM on 1/30/2019 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Melodie Aduja	O`ahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities of the Democratic Party of Hawai`i	Support	No

Comments:

HB-573

Submitted on: 1/29/2019 2:39:34 AM

Testimony for PVM on 1/30/2019 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Randy Gonce	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-573

Submitted on: 1/29/2019 11:11:54 AM

Testimony for PVM on 1/30/2019 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
David Brostrom	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

Less than 1% of America's population are serving or have served in the United States Military. A small fraction of this 1% have been Killed in Action or on Active Duty. The population of Gold Star Family Members residing in Hawaii who would qualify for free tuition is less than 20. The financial burden on the Universtiy of Hawaii would be minimal at best as it is anticipated only a handful would take advantage of this opportunity. Gold Star Children are at a significant disadvantage as they usually do not recieve any compensation when there father or mother die while on acitve duty unless the deceased service members specifically directs that the SGLI and or Suvivor Benefits go to the children vice the living spouse. It is only fitting that the State of Hawaii provide this opportunity for the family members of those who have given the utlimate sacrifice. The State of California provides a similar benefit with much broader criteria.