UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I SYSTEM
Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Judiciary
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by
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and
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HCR 216 HD1 – SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF COLLEGE ESPORTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HCR 216 HD1, supporting the development of college eSports at the University of Hawai'i. The University of Hawai'i (UH) acknowledges that this developing field is growing and wanted to inform the legislature that we are working through multiple efforts to broadly support our students through a wide range of initiatives that include academic and student experience efforts.

UH appreciates the legislative support for the development of a comprehensive eSports program and we continue to work with local, national and international collaborations to promote the development of eSports programs and activities at UH for further student development opportunities.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of this resolution.

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LATE

I would like submit written testimony for support of H.C.R 216 H.D. 1, esports has been a passion of mine for long time and I would love to see it more at the University of Hawaii. It is currently a wild west with a majority of young people creating their own paths through it but with the help of the government and the University we could help create a more streamlined path for people interested in this. For some the competitive aspect draws them in and they want to be the best players but for the majority this is not a likely possibility so the alternative options of majors related to esports and video games provide lucrative opportunities for this generation and to create more skilled workers. Bridging the divide between these intelligent and motivated young minds and career fields that they will be passionate about will help to keep growing esports and video games. The structure overall will help all involved with the increased support students will be better taken care of and have better overall health and possibly a future in a lucrative field.

Ashley Zhang

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Hello, my name is Ashley Zhang and I am a freshman at the University of Hawaii Manoa. I am writing to you today to support the development of College Esports at the University of Hawaii also known as H.C.R. No. 216. I am a member of the University of Hawaii Overwatch Team and I am proud to be a part of a movement to help promote Esports to students. Esports is not only relevant to the players themselves, but also help to provide jobs outside of just playing the game. It provides jobs in psychology, audio and sound, broadcasting, art and animation, engineering, managing, finance, information technology, human resources, and marketing. I am currently majoring in Creative Media with a focus in animation because of my love for videogames. I have always loved the character and storyline of the games which inspired me to seek a career in the field. The current gaming club at University of Hawaii also helped me with interacting with other students. Before joining the team, I had not made any new friends outside of the ones I had from high school. The creation of the team helped me to branch out and meet new people that have the same passion as me for gaming. I truly love my teammates and hope to grow further in an Esports program with them.

My name is Chih-Hung Wang and I'm currently a student in university of Hawaii at Manoa. I'm one of the player in the team, I was lucky enough to be part of this big eSprots family. Ever since I join this team, I learned a lot, for example it taught me how to be a better teammates when they needed help also leadership is very important too. I learned how to lead a team and how to communicate with my teammates. This eSport is nothing different than other sports, we practice we learned from mistakes and we try our best to win, I have never dreamed to have a chance to be a Pro gamer. This is a big opportunity for me and the team to prove ourselves. Thank you!

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As of now, I am an esports coach at the University of Hawaii at Mānoa for the game Overwatch. I am highly supportive for this resolution because esports is a growing industry that is only going to get bigger as time goes on. For example, with games like Overwatch sold out the Barclays Center that seats 19,000 people for the first season of the Overwatch Grand Finals. To make it easier, colleges like the University of Hawaii should support esports as a profession for not just the players but casters, coaches, managers, and so forth. This resolution will help students who want to get into esports, like myself, a viable path to take without taking a huge risk of trying to make it on their own.

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UH Esports Testimony

As someone who only plays casual games and has no knowledge of coding, I had no hopes of being successful in the gaming industry. Esports not only provides opportunities for esport athletes, but also those who like the behind the scenes work, and helps those who may doubt themselves, have a place where they can be successful. I won't say that I represent all casual players, nor spectators, but I can say that ever since I was working on the team, I have slowly building skills that I wouldn't have had otherwise, and met people who I could work toward a similar goal. I have been their PR officer for a short time but I have gained social skills, learned more about games, and gained a purpose to work towards that I stand proud to support: esports on UH campus.

Daniel Mita, 21, dmita@hawaii.edu

I am a student at UH Manoa as well as a member of a UH esports team to compete in South Korea for $44,000 over the summer, representing both the university and the state. I represent a student in almost perfect academic standing with a 3 credit overload and triple major, crediting competitive gaming for my sudden academic improvement. As a student, I see a lack of or no motivation among a large portion of the student body. Many get passing grades, but you ask them if they enjoy class or look forward to their jobs, the answer is almost always no. By fostering a professional environment that connects the real world to students' hobbies, particularly one as widespread as gaming, the students of the University of Hawaii will see increased motivation and academic performance. Students will start to realize that their time does matter. Student and graduate representation of Hawaii will improve through professional communication, conflict resolution, and time management skills developed by collaborating towards a common goal with a team of four to five other students, an environment not unlike the professional workplace.

Hi my name is Kevin and I'm currently a communication major at the University of Hawaii. With the growing industry that is gaming and esports, I believe it is important that the state acknowledges and supports students and children that are entering this field. By showing support and providing resources, students will be able to grow as individuals as we can teach them business and entrepreneurship through new media and esports. The state showing support adds legitimacy for parents and also encourages them to work with their children to learn about what they are doing. If more and more students and children are entering this field, we should not be an obstacle to them but provide resources to encourage them to use their education to push what they are passionate about

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LATE

Esports, to me, means so much more than just playing videogames with my friends. It gives me the opportunity to compete, have fun and also learn valuable life skills such as dedication, teamwork, sportsmanship, time management and grace under pressure. Things you also learn from playing traditional sports.

Also, Esports has given me the ability to work in the related fields to my major. Once I finish my degree at UH, I will look for a job that hopefully will allow me to use things that I have learned during my time in college. Esports will give me that opportunity because there are many ways to utilize my economics degree in this field. This also applies to not only my major, but also graphic design, management, computer science, engineering, accounting, art and so on. Any form of STEM, Art and Business could find their skillset relevant in the world of competitive gaming in the 21st Century.

HCR 216 HD 1

Programs for traditional college sports teams provide a number of resources to enable their athletes to perform their absolute best during their academic careers. This often takes form in physical and mental health professionals to guide them.

I will not pretend that esports players have as physically demanding expectations put on their bodies as traditional athletes, but as with any profession, there is certain physical strain put on the parts of the body that are utilized most. Esports players run the risk of ailments like eye, back, and wrist strain. Precautions and healthy habits on how to combat these risks and how to deal with them if obtained are important for players to know in order to take care of their bodies. Players also need to know how best to keep themselves and their bodies healthy when living a more stationary lifestyle.

Accompanying the physical care, players need to know what kind of diet best matches their lifestyle and would best fuel them. Professional athletes need diets that are high in energy and allow for muscle building and have nutritionists to guide them. What foods help with focus and alertness needed in a professional gaming setting? What foods can be utilized and metabolized best by the body in this circumstance to gain the strongest and healthiest results? These are the kinds of questions that are rarely asked or answered in the gaming community. But if students wish to pursue gaming as a career, it only makes sense that they are fully prepared with this kind of knowledge.

Many professional gamers, and college students, also struggle with mental health. Not to say that they struggle any more than the average person, but often traditional sports athletes have access to the care needed to address these needs. Mental illness can take a great toll on the performance of any kind of athlete and be exacerbated by the high demands of team practices and academic pursuits. There are therapists that are dedicated to helping with the specific stresses that come with playing sports professionally. Athletes need to know how to work in a team setting, how to behave professionally in the public eye, and how to deal with loss. These needs are no different from traditional athletes to esports athletes.

And esports program would bring students one step close to obtaining the help they need to exist in the healthiest way possible in their field. This could also possibly provided much needed data on the video game and esports community as a whole. Video games are still a fairly new field of research in comparison with every other form of media. In order for this field to grow and be properly understood, it must be given a secure space to flourish.

Molly Tapken

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My name is William Cole, I'm a student at UH Manoa, and over the last two months I've been managing the competitive Overwatch team at UH. As a long-time casual gamer, it's been a huge opportunity for me as a jumping off point into gaming as a career, and one I would absolutely recommend attempting for anyone who thinks they might have what it takes. It's a great opportunity for college students, and one I want to make available for as many people as possible. For these reasons, I am in support of HCR 216 H.D. 1.

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