



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Lower & Higher Education  
Friday, February 8, 2019 at 2:30 p.m.

By

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

### HB 573 HD1 – RELATING TO TUITION WAIVERS

Chair Woodson, Vice Chairs Hashem and Perruso, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 573 HD1. This bill provides scholarships for qualified students who are 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.

The University is in strong support of this version of the bill. It is a very appropriate mechanism to use for augmenting whatever other forms of financial assistance gold star family members have for attending college.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**HB-573-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/7/2019 2:22:28 PM

Testimony for LHE on 2/8/2019 2:30:00 PM

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

Comments:

**HB-573-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/6/2019 3:08:39 PM

Testimony for LHE on 2/8/2019 2:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Augusto Decastro	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

**LATE**

**HB-573-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/7/2019 4:03:21 PM

Testimony for LHE on 2/8/2019 2:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
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 tuition assistance fluctuates around 20. The financial burden on the University 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 receive little if any compensation when their father or mother die while on active duty unless the deceased service members specifically directs that the SGLI and or Survivor Benefits go to the children vice the living spouse. The VA does allow Gold Star families to compete for a FRYE Scholarship but this is on a National Basis. Any monthly DIC from the VA must be transferred to the VA awarded scholarship further burdening the family. It is only fitting that the State of Hawaii provide this opportunity for the family members of those who have given the ultimate sacrifice. The State of Hawaii is one of five states who do not offer any assistance to Gold Star Families.

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 573 H.D.1, RELATING TO TUITION WAIVERS

PRESENTATION TO THE  
COMMITTEE ON LOWER & HIGHER EDUCATION

BY

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

February 8, 2019  
2:30 p.m.

Good afternoon, Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Perusso 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 H.D.1.

This measure provides the University of Hawaii system including the respective community colleges with a State appropriation for scholarships in support of 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.

Currently for eligible Goldstar spouses and children, the following Federal programs are available: Fry Scholarships, the Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program and non-educational program called Dependency and Indemnity Compensation. However, these programs have inherent gaps for survivor's support. For example, Fry Scholarships are authorized for a specified period for those who lost their loved ones after 9/11. Furthermore, these programs may not cover the complete need of those eligible with the required educational compensation.

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.