



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Finance  
Monday, February 28, 2022, at 12:30 p.m.

By  
Hae K. Okimoto  
Associate Vice President for Student Affairs  
University of Hawai'i System

### HB 426 HD1 – RELATING TO TUITION WAIVERS

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 426 HD1 which requires tuition waivers to be given to the dependent children of disabled veterans or active or reserve members of the armed forces who were killed in action.

The University of Hawai'i (UH) appreciates the intent of this measure as it honors the service of those who serve(d) in our armed forces. The UH does not believe this measure is necessary as UH is in compliance with several federal legislative actions which already provide education benefits for survivors and dependents of a veteran.

The following are federal programs that provide support for dependent children of disabled veterans or active or reserve members of the armed forces killed in action:

Chapter 35 - Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA) Program. The DEA program provides up to 45 months of education and training benefits to eligible dependents of service members who have died or are permanently disabled due to active service in the armed forces. These benefits may be used for degree and certificate programs, apprenticeship, and on-the-job training. Effective October 1, 2013, some recipients may be eligible to receive up to 81 months of GI Bill® benefits if they use DEA program benefits in conjunction with other VA education benefits.

Eligible children may use this benefit while they are between the ages of 18 and 26; however, under some circumstances the period of eligibility can be extended until the age of 31.

Spouses generally have ten (10) years from the date the VA establishes eligibility to use the benefit. However, effective October 10, 2008, a spouse may remain eligible for this benefit for twenty (20) years from the effective date of rating if the veteran was rated permanently and totally disabled within an effective date of three (3) years from discharge.

Surviving spouses of service members who died while on active duty have twenty (20) years from the date of death to use this benefit.

Public Law No: 116-315 which went into effect on 01/05/2021. Section 1002 of this Public Law expands eligibility for the Fry Scholarship to a child or spouse of a person who dies on or after September 11, 2001, in the line of duty while serving on duty other than active duty as a member of the Armed Forces, and a child or spouse of a member of the Selected Reserve who dies on or after September 11, 2001, from a service-connected disability while a member of the Selected Reserve. The UH has implemented this as of August 1, 2021.

Section 1011. Expansion of Transfer of Entitlement for Dependents under the Post-9/11 GI Bill expands the eligibility for dependents to whom Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits can be transferred. Eligibility now includes certain unmarried children placed in the legal custody of the service member for at least twelve (12) months as a result of a court order.

For these reasons, the UH does not feel there is a need for this bill and respectfully requests that HB 426 HD1 be deferred.



STATE OF HAWAII  
**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**  
**OFFICE OF THE VETERANS' SERVICES**  
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TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 426, HD1 RELATING TO TUITION WAIVERS

PRESENTATION TO THE  
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

BY

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

FEBRUARY 28, 2022

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita, 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 426, HD1.

This measure allows the University of Hawaii system including the respective community colleges to waive tuition for dependent children of service-connected one hundred per cent disabled veterans and active or reserve members of the armed forces who were killed in action, subject to certain requirements. These 100% disabled Veterans receive federal compensation for their injuries and ailments. However, many are total and permanently disabled precluding them from employment making it very challenging to support their dependents with educational opportunities. This measure would also assist dependent children who's loved one was killed in action and paid the ultimate sacrifice. We recommend that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Chapter 35 benefits and entitlements program be verified first by the UH system. This will ensure that eligible dependent children can be initially screened for or potentially qualify for other educational benefits sponsored by the VA.

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.

Point of Contact: Ron Han/ email: [ronald.p.han@hawaii.gov](mailto:ronald.p.han@hawaii.gov) / (808) 433-0422.

February 26, 2022

RE: College Tuition Waiver Bill HB426

Aloha,

My name is Janna Hoehn, resident of Maui for 32 years. Florist for 45 years. I am also the President of the Maui County Veterans Council. I have been working on a project for the past 11 years, the Wall of Faces project, Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund in Washington DC.

Working with many Gold Star families posting photos of their loved ones who died in the Vietnam War. Working with the Gold Star families has been a very humbling experience. The pain they have endured for many years, never goes away.

I fully support the Tuition Waivers for Children of Deceased or 100% service connected disabled Veterans, HB426 Bill.

This type of bill would have helped so many of our Fallen families that had children. I am in great hopes you will pass this bill to help the current families of our Fallen and 100% disabled veterans.

It is the least we can do for our service members who have proudly served, died serving our country and to the ones that came home with severe injuries.

I humbly ask your support in passing this bill.

Mahalo

Janna Hoehn  
President Maui County Veterans Council  
neverforgotten2014@gmail.com  
808-276-5455



**Testimony to the House Committee on Finance**

**Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair  
Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair**

**Monday, February 28, 2022 at 12:30 P.M.  
Via Videoconference**

**RE: HB 426, HD 1, RELATING TO TUITION WAIVERS.**

Chairs Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Military Affairs Council ("MAC") **supports** House Bill 426, HD 1 which requires UH and the community colleges under certain circumstances to waive tuition for dependent children of service-connected one hundred per cent disability veterans and active or reserve members of the armed forces who were killed in action.

The Hawaii Military Affairs Council (MAC) was established in 1985 when the Chamber was appointed by the State to serve as the liaison to the military. The MAC advocates on behalf of Hawaii's military, and is comprised of business leaders, academic institutions, State and County officials, members of the CODEL, community leaders, labor unions and organizations and retired U.S. flag and general officers. The MAC works to support Hawaii's location as a strategic U.S. headquarters in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region which is crucial for U.S. national and homeland security.

It is recognized that many states offer veteran's benefit that enables qualifying resident children and spouses to attend public post-secondary educational institutions tuition-free. This measure will align Hawaii with the many states in support of service members' dependents that are disabled, killed in action or deceased.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support for this measure.

**HB-426-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2022 4:23:01 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2022 12:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
joan	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support this bill -thanks for your consideration

**HB-426-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2022 2:45:46 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2022 12:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Daniel T Michel	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Hi. I'm glad to see this is moving along in the process. This is my third written testimony. I feel this bill may be fair to pass as other states have already implemented it. So if fair, Hawaii should take this opportunity to also implement it. My mother has been working a long time to give this state this opportunity. Thank you for your time and fair consideration.

Sincerely,

Daniel Michel

**HB-426-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2022 3:07:35 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2022 12:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Mary Jane P.Bennett	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Kakou!

I appreciate your generous time and support of HB 426 HD1 relating to Tuition Waivers for the Children of Deceased or 100% Service Connected Disabled Veterans or Purple Heart Recipients. The States of Washington, Oregon, California and other States have graciously provided Tuition Waivers for their resident Fallen Families for many years. The Greif of losing a parent to Any Wars or witnessing and feeling the daily suffering and pain of a disabled parent due to fighting in Wars is unbearable. Passing HB526 HD1 will provide much needed relief for Chlidren of Fallen Veterans. And it would be an amazing way to give Thanks for their Parent's Service and for giving the Ultimate Sacrifice.

I would like to ask for an amendment:

Please include Children Of Any Ages in pursuit of All Degrees up thru PhD and Doctorate Degreess. Please include Fallen Veterabs of All Wars. Before 9/11 and after.

May we always find ways to express our Gratitude for All of our Veterans of all Wars.

Mahalo nui loa for your Service as well.

Sincerely yours truly,

Mary Jane



**HB-426-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/27/2022 11:18:03 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2022 12:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
jim bennett	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB426 would provide relief for our families with children of service-connected one hundred per cent disability veterans and active or reserve members of the armed forces who were killed in action. It's the least we can do for service members and veterans like myself who were willing to give the ultimate sacrifice. I am for HB426

Thank you

Jim Bennett

Vietnam Combat Veteran

**HB-426-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/28/2022 11:45:12 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2022 12:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Kapua Keliikoa-Kamai	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha kakou,

I SUPPORT HB4 26 HD1 - RELATING TO TUITION WAIVERS. Requires UH and the community colleges under certain circumstances to waive tuition for dependent children of service-connected one hundred per cent disability veterans, active or reserve members of the armed forces who were killed in action, and purple heart medal recipients awarded in 2001 or later.

Other states have recognized the need to offer veteran's benefit that enables qualifying resident children and spouses to attend public post-secondary educational institutions tuition-free. This measure will align Hawaii with those states in support of service members' dependent children that are disabled, killed in action or deceased.

I would like to request that children's AGE EXTEND BEYOND THE 24 AGE LIMIT to allow for those children that have already aged out. And if possible, include spouses that have desired to attend higher education institutions but were too busy taking care of the children, disabled veteran and/or working to make (financial, educational, social-mental, etc.) ends meet.

My multi-toured Vietnam veteran husband is 100% disabled and has had his days & times. Our daughters have experienced first-hand what living with this type of physical, mental, sociological, etc. disabled father is like. Make no mistake, he still has loving, caring, thoughtful and other desired fatherly and husband/soulmate characteristic's - we're BLESSED. I myself, am a disabled veteran too, but not to that extent - PRAISE THE LORD.

All this shared, I ask for PASSAGE OF HB 426 HD1, with amendments, out of your committee and thanking you in advance.

Kapua Keliikoa-Kamai

Disabled Veteran

Concerned Waianae Resident

