



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education & Technology
Wednesday, February 16, 2022, at 2:00 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 Takayama, Vice Chair Clark, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 426 HD1 which requires tuition waivers to 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 the UH is in compliance with Public Law No: 116-315 which went into effect on January 5, 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 12 months as a result of a court order. The UH has implemented this as of January 5, 2021.

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
459 PATTERSON ROAD, E-WING, ROOM 1-A103
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96819-1522
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TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 426, HD1 RELATING TO TUITION WAIVERS

PRESENTATION TO THE
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION & TECHNOLOGY

BY

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

FEBRUARY 16, 2022

Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Clark, 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 Chapter 35 benefits and entitlements program to be verified first. This will ensure that eligible dependent children can be initially screened for or potentially qualify for other educational benefits.

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 / (808) 433-0422.



**Testimony to the House Committee
Higher Education & Technology**

**Wednesday, February 16, 2022 at 2:00 P.M.
Via Videoconference**

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

Chairs Takayama, Vice Chair Clark, 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: 2/11/2022 7:55:18 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/16/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
John Bolduc	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support HB426 HD1.

John Bolduc

HB-426-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2022 3:54:26 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/16/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Daniel T Michel	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I feel I said all I can say for right now in my first testimony, which is as follows: 'I support passing this. It seems to be right, as other states have already implemented this. So, since my mother has given Hawaii the chance to also start implementing this as other states have, the state of Hawaii should go ahead and pass this legislation. I understand not passing it if you come to the conclusion that this legislation is not right and just, but please figure out whether or not it is right and just, and fair to become law in Hawaii, and please then act accordingly. So also, if you find it is fair legislation to pass, then please pass it. My mother has spent years on this, so it only fair to make sure we do the right thing. Thank you so much.'

Thanks again.

Sincerely,

Daniel Michel

HB-426-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2022 4:32:00 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/16/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
joan bolduc	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support Bill HB426 HD1 and appreciate your consideration.

HB-426-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2022 12:18:22 PM

Testimony for HET on 2/16/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Mary Jane Bennett	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Honorable House of Representatives :

My name is Mary Jane P. Bennett. I have lived on Maui for 18 years. I have served, part time, as a Certified Birth Doula and International Board Certified Lactation Consultant .

I am a Mother of Four Children. I am married to, and I am the caregiver for Jim Bennett.

He is a 100% Service Connected Disabled Combat Veteran.

In Late 2019, I requested Tuition Waivers for Children of Deceased and 100% Service Connected Disabled Veterans. I had no experience with the Arduous and Confusing Legislative process. I am still learning, how very Long it takes to pass a Bill.

May I please ask every one on this HET commitee and beyond, for your empathy and kokua? Please understand how disappointed we were to realize back in 2019 that the Tuition Waiver was not in place. We thought it was offered in the State of Hawaii in the Public University of Hawaii Stysem. Especially because we know that the States of California Oregon and Washington and others, have had this Law in place for a very very long time. Hawaii has a very strong Military presence. Why is thisTuition Waiver in the State of Hawaii not in place for our yet?

Please support HB426. It will provide much needed peace of mind and relieve a very great financial burden for the Children of Deceased or 100% Service Connected Veterans.

Grants and Scholarships are not enough to cover Tuition 100%. Please pass HB426 and work as hard as you can to continue to talk about it with All of your colleagues in the House of Representatives and in the Sentate.

Please, at this point, (2 years later since introduced in Janauary 2020) ,

I wish to suggest an Ammendment : To include Children of ALL Ages and Tuition to be waved for Any Degree of Higher Education or Training, up to the Highest Level of PhD .

Passing HB426 would be a perfect way to say Mahalo nui loa, Thank you very much for

Your Service, and to honor our Fallen Veterans for their Ultimate Sacrifice for our Freedom!

If my words are not clear, please reach out to me anytime for clarification. I can elaborate on how badly needed this Tuition Waiver is needed for all of our Fallen Ohanas in the State of Hawaii. I can tell you more about experiences our Veterans endured in All Wars. Having a Parent go thru the atrocities of War is a Family Affair.

Mahalo no kau kokua!

Sincerely yours truly,

Mary Jane

HB-426-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 11:41:17 AM

Testimony for HET on 2/16/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
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