



**TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
THIRTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE, 2022**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

H.B. NO. 426, RELATING TO TUITION WAIVERS.

BEFORE THE:

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONS, MILITARY, AND VETERANS

DATE: Wednesday, February 9, 2022 **TIME:** 10:00 a.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 430, Via Videoconference

TESTIFIER(S): Holly T. Shikada, Attorney General, or
Lori N. Tanigawa, Deputy Attorney General

Chair Ohno and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General provides the following comments.

The purpose of the bill is to require the University of Hawaii system and its community colleges to waive tuition for the dependent children of disabled veterans, of eligible veterans or national guard members who were killed in action, or of Purple Heart medal recipients, subject to certain requirements.

Section 6 of article X of the Hawai'i State Constitution gives the Board of Regents of the University of Hawai'i "exclusive jurisdiction over the internal structure, management, and operation of the university." Section 6 further provides: "[t]his section shall not limit the power of the legislature to enact laws of statewide concern. The legislature shall have the exclusive jurisdiction to identify laws of statewide concern." If the Committee decides to pass this bill, we recommend an amendment that adds a statement identifying this bill as a law of statewide concern.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.



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, RELATING TO TUITION WAIVERS

PRESENTATION TO THE

COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONS, MILITARY, & VETERANS

BY

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

FEBRUARY 9, 2022

Chair Ohno, Vice Chair Ganaden, 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.

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.

February 7, 2022

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 or 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

HB-426

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 5:30:30 PM

Testimony for CMV on 2/9/2022 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Mary Jane P. Bennett IBCLC LCCE CD(DONA) ECE	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

Aloha kakou,

I am Mary Jane Bennett. I am married to Jim. He is a Combat Vietnam Veteran and 100% Service Connected Disabled. We are proud parents of 4 Adult Children. We have lived on Maui for 17 1/2 years. I am the sole care giver for Jim. I am a part time International Board Certified Lactation Consultant, Certified Birth Doula and Educator as well.

I requested HB426 relating to Tuition Waivers for Children of Deceased or 100% service connected disabled veterans, for many reasons.

My faith in the Hawaii State University System was shattered when I realized that there was Zero State financial support for Children of Deceased and 100% service connected disabled veterans. Especially when I know the states of California, Oregon and Washington have laws providing State University Tuition Waivers for Children of Deceased and 100% service connected disabled veterans.

I speak from my heart, and humbly and politely ask all of you Honorable House of Representatives and Honorable Senators to dig deep into your Empathetic Souls and please work harder on Passing HB426 all the way thru this arduous Legislative process, that not very many lay citizens know how to navigate, but doing our best to learn the process and grateful for the kokua we receive.

This HB426 would provide the very necessary Financial Relief for our Ohanas with Children of service connected one hundred percent disabled Veterans and active or reserve members of the armed forces who were killed in action. It is the least we can do for our Veterans and their Ohanas who served our Country.

One last thing, I was told by a very good friend that I might suggest here that the HB426 be amended;

At this time to add the words: Tuition Waivers for Children at **Any Age**, of Deceased or 100% service connected disabled veterans, be they, Undergraduates all the way up thru Graduate and the Highest Education of Doctorate, and PhD.

Mahalo no kau kokua!

Sincerely your truly,

Mary Jane P. Bennett

HB-426

Submitted on: 2/8/2022 2:41:55 AM

Testimony for CMV on 2/9/2022 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

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 do make sure we do the right thing. Thank you so much.

Sincerely,

Daniel Michel

HB-426

Submitted on: 2/8/2022 9:54:16 AM

Testimony for CMV on 2/9/2022 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
jim bennett	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

I am in support of HB426. It 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 our servicemembers like myself who were willing to give the ultimate sacrifice. A veteran is someone who, at one point in their life, wrote a blank check made payable to the United States of America for an amount up to and including their very own WELL BEING and their LIFE.

At this point since it's been,since 2019 that my spouse requested this HB426, Please ammend the bill to include Tuition Waivers all the way up thru Graduate, Doctorate, PhD at ANY AGE.

Mahalo ,

Jim Bennett

Vietnam Combat Veteran



**Testimony to the House Committee
Corrections, Military, & Veterans**

**Wednesday, February 9, 2022 at 10:00 A.M.
Via Videoconference**

RE: HB 426, RELATING TO TUITION WAIVERS.

Chairs Ohno, Vice Chair Ganaden, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Military Affairs Council ("MAC") **supports** House Bill 426 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.