



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance
Wednesday, February 22, 2023 at 2:30 p.m.

By

Della Teraoka, Interim Associate Vice President for Community Colleges
University of Hawai'i System

HB 67 HD1 – MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE PU'UHONUA PROGRAM

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i supports the intent of HB 67 HD1, which would appropriate funds for the Pu'uhonua Program at Windward Community College (WCC). Since 2017, WCC has offered credit bearing college education at the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC) and Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility (HYCF). Courses have been offered at Halawa Correctional Facility (HCF) since 2022. All college coursework and support services to date have been provided through the use of federal extramural grant funding. These funding sources are non-renewable and expire in June and September of 2023.

WCC's Pu'uhonua Program has a proven history of success. Between Fall 2018 and Spring 2022, 218 students were enrolled in college coursework at WCCC and HYCF. These students earned 1,057 college credits and 13 certificates. Their overall grade point average (GPA) was 3.6, which is higher than the on campus student GPA, demonstrating their aptitude and engagement year after year. In the one semester WCC has provided classes at HCF, 16 men have enrolled, earning 45 credits to date, and with an overall GPA of 3.12. Through supportive practices like pro-active counseling and tutoring, Pu'uhonua has resulted in positive educational change for carceral populations.

The Pu'uhonua Program provides effective pathways for incarcerated students to grow critical thinking, career, and life skills. It also serves as a pathbreaking model for Hawai'i's educational institutions. WCC is the first college in the University of Hawai'i system to offer significant credit-bearing education to carceral populations. We are also the first to be designated as a Pell Experimental Site, utilizing federal financial aid to cover the cost of tuition, fees, and educational materials.

Completing college coursework while incarcerated has been shown both nationally and locally to have significant benefits for the incarcerated individuals, the overall incarcerated environment and society. While in prison, there is a substantial reduction in violence and disciplinary infraction. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, formerly incarcerated individuals who receive no further education within, or after

leaving prison, are 76% more likely to recidivate within five years; that recidivism rate drops to 14% for individuals who obtain an associate's degree. There is a 13% increase in post-release employment for parolees who participate in prison education programs.

After students are released from prison, these positions will continue to benefit the incarcerated individuals and our state. The supportive counselors created herein will connect students post-release to further educational opportunities. For example, the students can be referred to career services and placement both online and in person through WCC's career center.

HB 67 HD1 supports an effective, supportive educational intervention that has been proven over seven years of implementation and growth, by appropriating the positions and funds necessary to staff WCC's Pu'uhonua program.

The University of Hawai'i supports the intent of HB 67 HD1, on the condition its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our BOR Approved Budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 67 HD1.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR



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No. _____

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 67, HD1
MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE PU'UHONUA PROGRAM

By
Tommy Johnson, Director

House Committee on Finance
Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 22, 2023, 2:30 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference 308 and Via Video Conference

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Public Safety (PSD) supports House Bill (HB) 67, HD1, which appropriates funding to the Windward Community College Pu'uhonua program for three (3) full-time positions. With the reinstatement of the Pell grant, these positions will support higher education opportunities at the Women's Community Correctional Center (WCCC), the Halawa Correctional Facility (HCF), and the Hawai'i Youth Correctional Facility (HYCF).

PSD has been working with Windward Community College Pu'uhonua program for the last 5 years at WCCC and more recently, at HCF for the past year, providing college credited classes. PSD is supportive of providing committed persons with higher education opportunities to lower the recidivism rate in the State.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 67, HD1.

HB-67-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2023 8:33:40 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2023 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Will Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB67 HD1.