



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 Higher Education and Technology
Friday, January 27, 2023, at 2:00 p.m.

By

Debora Halbert, Vice President for Academic Strategy
University of Hawai'i System

HB 78 – RELATING TO STRENGTHENING ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 78, which seeks to expand Hawai'i Promise at the Community Colleges for all Hawai'i residents.

The University of Hawai'i (UH) strongly supports efforts to make public higher education more affordable. We also note that the current Hawai'i Promise program has effectively proven its impact for students in the community colleges, where participation in Hawai'i Promise has increased student success in their chosen areas of study. In academic year 2021-2022, Hawai'i Promise recipients earned more credits, received better grades, and had higher persistence rates than their peers. Part-time students receiving a Hawai'i Promise scholarship also had higher graduation rates than their peers.

UH supports the intent of expanding the current Hawai'i Promise program to financially support all qualified students. Specifically, as the bill notes, a program where the awards granted to the student are focused on the unmet direct cost need and one calculated based upon a student applying for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and receiving whatever available Pell grants and other scholarships might be available to them.

As a "last dollar" initiative, the current Hawai'i Promise ensures that the State of Hawai'i can maximize federal support in the form of Pell grants. If that were to be extended to all "qualified" residents it would also reach students who have economic need but may not be able to fully cover the direct cost of education using other grants and scholarships.

As the data from the current Hawai'i Promise program shows, there are benefits to making the direct cost of education affordable for all eligible Hawai'i residents. The state would benefit from more students having the opportunity to attend college and potentially increase their ability to earn a living wage. Hawai'i residents would benefit by having increased access to expanded educational and workforce opportunities.

The UH has a small clarifying amendment to the purpose section starting on page 3, line 16, regarding the college students who received financial aid. The forty-two percent discussed in the purpose section received financial aid to contribute towards their direct cost, not necessarily to cover the cost of their tuition. See suggested amendment below:

... college students received financial aid to [~~cover the cost of their tuition~~ contribute toward their direct costs in the most recent year for which data is available

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.



STATE OF HAWAII
STATE COUNCIL
ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
1010 RICHARDS STREET, Room 122
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
TELEPHONE: (808) 586-8100 FAX: (808) 586-7543
January 26, 2023

The Honorable Representative Amy A. Perruso, Chair
House Committee on Higher Education and Technology
The Thirty-Second Legislature
State Capitol
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Representative Perruso and Committee Members:

SUBJECT: HB78 Relating To Strengthening Access to Higher Education

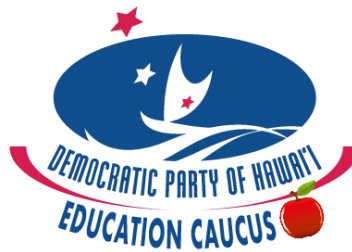
The Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities **SUPPORTS HB78**, which Expands eligibility for the Hawai'i community college promise program to all qualified students. Appropriates funds to expand access to community college to qualified Hawai'i residents through Hawai'i community college promise program scholarships.

The Council supports the intent of this measure. Reducing and or eliminating the cost of community college would positively impact our intellectual/developmental disability population (I/DD). Our I/DD population often times desire to go to higher education but, cannot due to their financial circumstances. This measure would increase the opportunity for our population to receive higher education.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **support of HB78**.

Sincerely,

Daintry Bartoldus
Executive Administrator



HOUSE BILL 78, RELATING TO STRENGTHENING ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

JANUARY 27, 2023 · HOUSE HIGHER EDUCATION AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE · CHAIR REP. AMY PERRUSO

POSITION: Support.

RATIONALE: The Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus **supports** HB 78, relating to strengthening access to higher education, which expands eligibility for the Hawai'i Community College Promise Program to all qualified students and appropriates funds to expand access to community college to qualified Hawai'i residents through Hawai'i Community College Promise Program scholarships.

Strengthening access to community college is essential to delivering the promise of higher education to all Hawai'i residents. Too often, the cost of college tuition is unattainable to working families, many of whom are experiencing chronic financial hardship because of our islands' exorbitant and ever-increasing cost of living. Community colleges empower students to develop the skills needed to diversify our economy, achieve personal prosperity, and build a sustainable future for our state that meets the demands of the 21st Century.

Making community college free for our state's residents is surprisingly inexpensive. According to data obtained from the University of Hawai'i's Institutional Research, Analysis, and Planning Office, for the fall 2022 semester, UH reported that 12,449 classified students with Hawai'i

residency were enrolled in community college, 4,930 of whom were registered as full-time students and 7,519 of whom were registered as part-time students. UH also reported that approximately 42 percent of community college students received financial aid to cover the cost of their tuition in the most recent year for which data is available and that part-time residential community college students enroll in 6.6 credits per semester on average.

When these data points are considered, **the cost of making community college tuition-free for Hawai'i residents can be estimated at less than \$20 million**, even after accounting for first-year enrollment increases experienced by other states (typically around 10-15 percent) that have implemented free community college programs. In fact, the actual cost of making community college tuition free would likely be even lower than these numbers suggest, since many students received financial assistance from the military or from other scholarship programs.

Many states have implemented programs to make community college free for all or most students, including California, Delaware, Nevada, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Virginia, and Washington. Joining this movement by expanding access to the Hawai'i Community College Promise Program to all qualified applicants would increase Hawai'i's college-going rate, especially for students and families who are economically disadvantaged. **The college-going rate currently stands at just over 50 percent for public high school graduates**, despite the numerous programs that currently exist to incentivize higher education opportunities in Hawai'i.

As the College Board has noted, there is a correlation between higher levels of educational attainment and higher earnings for all racial and ethnic groups, as well as all genders. Additionally, the College Board states that the income gap between high school graduates and college graduates has increased significantly over time, while higher levels of education also correspond to lower levels of unemployment, poverty, public health risks, and incarceration throughout society. We need to reverse this trend for local communities and ensure that the dream of higher education is not reserved for the privileged few. For working families and their keiki, the chance to make community college free is an opportunity that our state cannot afford to miss.

Kris Coffield · Chairperson, DPH Education Caucus · (808) 679-7454 · kriscoffield@gmail.com



The House Committee on Higher Education and Technology
Friday, January 27, 2023
Room 309, 2:00pm

RE: **HB 79, Relating to Strengthening Access to Higher Education**

Attention: Chair Amy Perruso, Vice Chair Jeanne Kapela and members of the Committee

The University of Hawaii Professional Assembly (UHPA) appreciates the opportunity to testify in **support of the intent of HB 79**, Relating to Strengthening Access to Higher Education, and **offers the following amendments**.

UHPA requests that HB79 adopt the proposed language in SB1151, to read as follows:

“(5) Has been determined by the campus to have unmet direct cost needs[.];
provided that a student who enrolls in a certificate program shall not be required to submit the
Free Application for Federal Student Aid each academic year.”

HB 79 provides increased educational opportunities by expanding eligibility for the Hawai`i Promise Program for community college to all qualified students. One such qualification of eligibility for students pursuing certificate programs is completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Assistance (FAFSA).

Exclusion of the FAFSA submission requirement for students in certificate programs will enable more families the opportunity to enroll in community college and acquire the skills necessary to enter the workforce. Certificate programs assist individuals to attain practical experience focused on the skills and knowledge needed for a specific job, opening the door to gainful employment. The absence of general education courses required in degree programs mean it takes less time and money to complete certificate programs. This impactful movement enables families to enter the workforce with practicable training that can be built on to advance in the workplace and further educational opportunities.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Fern'.

Christian L. Fern
Executive Director
University of Hawaii Professional Assembly

HB-78

Submitted on: 1/25/2023 2:58:41 PM

Testimony for HET on 1/27/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Corey Rosenlee	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

1/27/23

HB78

To Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela and members of the Higher Education and Technology,

I am Corey Rosenlee, a teacher at Campbell High and I strongly support HB78.

I have taught high school seniors for over two decades. The biggest stressors my students share is how they are going to pay for college. When I ask my students about their post-high school plans, only about half say they are going to go to college. When I ask my students if they would go to college if college was free, almost all of them raise their hands. President Biden as part of his Build Back Better Bill proposed two years of community college free for students. The evidence is clear that “free tuition for community college can [combat the affordability gap](#) and [lead to higher college enrollment](#) and, ultimately, [higher wages](#) for low-income students and students of color.”

Community College in Hawaii over the last ten years has seen enrollment drop by 31% from 34,100 to 23,409 in 2022. Only 1,863 Hawaii public high school seniors enrolled in Hawaii’s community colleges out of nearly 10,000 public school seniors.

National data shows that by making community college free would increase enrollment by 26%, and increase degree completion by 20%. Recently Windward Community College, using ESSER funds made community college free and saw an increase of 33% enrollment.

The Promise Scholarship is a great program, but is only applied after the fact. My students have never heard of the Promise Scholarship. Students may not even apply because they worry they would not qualify, even though many of them would qualify.

By making Community College free for all students, would increase the burden of cost and the intimidation of enrollment, and attract more low income students to enroll in Hawaii's Community Colleges.

How much would two years of Community College cost?

The cost of two years of community college for all Hawaii residents enrolled in a course of study would cost approximately \$14.25 million per year, accounting for increased enrollment.

Currently there are 4,930 full time students and 7,519 part time, freshmen and sophomores.

	Full-time	Part-Time
UHCC Total	4,930	7,519
Freshmen	3,161	4,117
Sophomores	1,769	3,402

Hawaii residents make up 88% of enrollment. Which would lower the amount to 4,339 full time students and 6,617 part time. Part time students potentially would be even lower because not all part time students are enrolled in a program of study.

	Full Time	Part-Time
UHCC Total	4,339	6,617
Average Tuition Cost	\$3,100	\$865 (average 6.6 credits x \$131 resident per tuition credit)

Total \$13.4 million \$5.7 million

The total cost, before aid, is \$19.1 million. Approximately 41% of current students qualify for aid, mainly federal pell grants

Total Cost	\$19.1 million
% of students qualifying for aid	.41%
Total after aid	\$11.3 million

Even after accounting for an increase of 26% enrollment the initial cost of \$11.3 million would rise to \$14.25 million. This could even further decrease because currently only 55% of students that are enrolled in Hawaii's community colleges complete the FAFSA. National data shows that nearly 50% of students who do not fill out the FAFSA would qualify for aid, which could further lower the cost.

HB-78

Submitted on: 1/25/2023 6:22:30 PM

Testimony for HET on 1/27/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mike Golojuch, Sr.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB78.

Mike Golojuch, Sr.

HB-78

Submitted on: 1/25/2023 8:20:42 PM

Testimony for HET on 1/27/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dyson Chee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB78. As a student who went to Kapi'olani Community College (KCC), I can attest to the importance of our higher education system in providing the tools that our residents and people beyond need in order to pursue their careers and build their lives.

Sincerely,

Dyson Chee

KCC Class of 2021

Will Caron
Kahalu'u, O'ahu
Jan. 25, 2023

TO: House Committee on Higher Education & Technology

RE: Testimony in Support of HB78

Dear Representatives,

I strongly support HB78, which would expand access to public community college to all Hawai'i residents. Too often, the cost of college tuition puts the promises of social mobility, economic security, good health, and happiness itself out of reach for working families. That's destabilizing for our democracy; it's bad for our economy; it's unhealthy for our society.

Christopher Newfield, American studies scholar and English professor at the University of California at Santa Barbara, and author of *The Great Mistake: How We Wrecked Public Universities and How We Can Fix Them* (2016), argues that the public university is a central pillar of democracy in the United States.

The degree to which research units depend upon student tuition dollars, the extent to which public-private partnerships have transformed universities into the R&D wings of corporations and the relationship between rising student debt and access (or lack thereof) to affordable higher education have all weakened this pillar's ability to support democracy and a healthy society. In a [feature](#) I wrote about Newfield's research in 2017, from which I am borrowing for my testimony, he says:

We need a re-democratized public system that is obsessed with high quality. It should be a popular system based on racial inclusion and created for absolutely every person in the country. It must offer concrete public goods to working class people. It must function as an entitlement for non-college people as well. It must be on the side of regular folks that have felt excluded from it for a long time. We can live up to the realization of the public university and we must, for the sake of our own consultancy. As we must build equal justice for all, so we must build equal education for all. (*Summit*, 2017)

Community colleges empower students to develop the skills needed to diversify our economy and build a sustainable future. Moreover, making community college free for our state's residents would likely cost less than \$20 million at a time when Hawai'i has a record \$1.9 billion budget surplus. This is a public investment that our community cannot afford to miss.

But what does public really mean? "'Public' is about the egalitarian, full development of the entire society," says Newfield. "It is the permanent rejection of the rule of elites. It is also the rejection of identity-based forms of stratification."

During the 1980s, universities began to retreat from their public good status. They accepted the conservative claim that the free market economy is more efficient and more fair to the public sphere and, as a result, began to play up service to private interests. Universities simultaneously began to downplay their universal mission to society as a whole, in favor of service to technocratic powers in Silicon Valley, Hollywood and Wall Street, for example. In particular, universities began to stress that college graduates have higher salaries than high school graduates.

“Higher salaries is a private market good, but it’s only one of several types of goods that the university offers society,” Newfield told me. “Unfortunately, it’s virtually the only one that we talk about now. We stopped saying that the public university is about learning for the entire population in diverse institutions of equivalent quality. We thereby have ignored the non-market value, the indirect value, the social value that universities produce.”

These values came to comprise what economist Walter McMahon called the university’s “dark matter” that policymakers, parents, students and administrators couldn’t see. People lost sight of the university’s contributions to personal health, to non-governmental civic organizations, to everyday problem solving capabilities, to family peace, to personal happiness and to social cohesion.

What’s really at stake here, more than the university functions of job training or the mass production of degrees, is the crucial social outcome that public universities provide: the democratization of intelligence—an essential requisite to a healthy and functioning democracy.

A Civil War Moment

In 1879, James B. Angell of the University of Michigan said that, “So long as the poor have anything like an equal chance with the rich of developing their intellectual power, we have little to fear from an aristocracy of wealth; but let wealth alone have the highest intellectual training, let the poor as a class be shut out from the schools of generous culture, and we must either consign the control of all intellectual and political life to the hands of the rich, or else have a constant scene of turbulence. Bitter class hatred would be inevitable.”

This warning came two years after a brokered presidential election ended racial reconstruction in the south and 14 years after the end of the Civil War. When Angell spoke of turbulence and hatred, he was referencing events within his own lifetime. As federal troops withdrew from the South, with Jim Crow rising in their wake, the public university was a critical fulcrum in building an integrated society.

In Angell’s eyes, the state university was the public good that would allow society to develop without civil strife. But it could only do this as an inclusive institution, accepting of women as well as men, Black as well as white, poor as well as rich. The public university would not build an aristocracy—even an aristocracy of talents. The university would be a school of generous

culture, where the poor would have the same elevated and liberal learning as the rich. And—crucially—it would be directly tied to society through tax support.

Angell's thinking shows that, 144 years ago, there were already three core public university features:

- No exclusion by race, class or gender;
- Public funding; and
- The goal of providing higher education for all.

But despite the public obligation to fund public universities, and despite the public's resulting ownership of, and commitment and connection to higher education, state funding for students has fallen nationally every decade since the 1970s. Angell's second pillar has been fundamentally destabilized.

As a result, the top half of the U.S. student population by income is the best in attainment in the modernized world, while the bottom half is one of the worst. A Georgetown Center For Higher Education and the Workforce report called "[Separate & Unequal](#)" shows data on new entrance rates to two different types of colleges and universities: one selective and the other open access. The great majority of new, white students went to selective, non-open access schools that have more money to spend per student and produce greater graduation outcomes, while the majority of Latinos and African Americans went to open access schools, which have less to spend and much poorer outcomes as a result.

Instead of democratization of education, grossly unequal funding generates re-segregation in which lower income students in much larger numbers go to community colleges with the least amount of money spent per student. Higher education has, for generations, been a highly visible site of racial integration. In recent decades, this has been framed by the political right as a "taking" or "diluting" of white property, which quietly justifies giving less money per student to the types of colleges that have a higher proportion of students of color.

"In some ways, we are in the midst of our own Civil War moment," Newfield warned in 2017. "We have a society that is divided by race, by class, and divided by level of education. We have a tale of two countries, and the gap between these two countries is getting worse. We are living Angell's nightmare."

Fixing The Great Mistake

A bachelor's degree has long been the entry ticket to the middle class. But universities have now split the middle class into unequal pieces. Graduates of elite, private schools do well, as do many graduates of public flagships like the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. As we move down the stratified ranks of the university system to the open access sector, the struggle increases.

When public colleges don't have the money to upgrade the capabilities of graduates, as is now the case, college skills become commodity skills. We increase our individual productivity and we

do not, as we used to, pay for that incremental improvement of that investment in ourselves, either with money or with time, energy and intelligence.

“Democratic citizens have to be as familiar with the process of knowledge creation as with established knowledge itself,” says Newfield. “They have to see that all learning is research learning, and then be the kind of people that can practice this.”

Making community college universally accessible is a first step in correcting what Newfield calls the “Great Mistake” of higher education: to adapt to a policy world view that assumes the superiority of the private to the public sector for every good or product, including education.

Instead of hiring consultants and third party vendors to “find efficiencies;” instead of offloading parts of the public university’s core competency—which is undergraduate instruction—we need to recommit to public funding of higher education, and of education and society more broadly.

We should pay for this public commitment of resources through a just and equitable tax system that assesses and levies a fair tax on the super rich and corporations—who benefit greatly from the public university system, and all other public systems within society—to fund our future.

From there, we should set a goal of zero student debt for 4-year bachelor’s degrees. The California legislative analyst’s office issued a report on debt-free college that calculated that it would cost the University of California \$300 million additional dollars to buy out all of the debt of its 235,000 students. This was less than 10 percent of its tuition revenues in 2017. If we use the Lumina Foundation’s rule of 10, then the total bill per year for debt-free bachelor’s degrees for the country would be \$200 billion. As of my conversation with Newfield in 2017, this amount is almost exactly the same as what we now spend on our current, highly-privatized system of financing higher education—the one that continues to increase student debt.

In other words, we can already afford to buy debt-free college. And we should do it soon, because the financial structure of our overall university system that is in place now is only making the situation increasingly grim for students. The best way to eliminate debt is to eliminate tuition over the long run. The group Reclaim California Higher Education has calculated what would happen if California eliminated tuition in all three state systems (not just the UC system) and then replaced all of the lost tuition money with state money. This would cost the average California taxpayer an additional income surcharge of around \$48 a year.

The next step would be for universities to lobby tirelessly for an economy that pays their own graduates the full value of their productivity. Universities must push for a renewed productivity wage and denounce off-shoring, out-sourcing and adjuncting policies that hurt their base: the people who actually do the work, research and learning at an institution. This economic promise must become a fundamental right of the graduate once again.

A maximum consumption of the educational product across the whole society; passionate advocacy for great research and public support for its full costs; a rebuilt public funding system

that eliminates student debt; unique training on a mass scale for regular students; and supply-side pressure to restore the productivity wage for the sake of all working people, starting with college graduates: Achieving these goals would rectify the Great Mistake, and would put our democracy on solid footing and our society on a path toward true egalitarianism.

HB-78

Submitted on: 1/26/2023 7:46:06 AM

Testimony for HET on 1/27/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lorraine Gershun	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strengthening access to community college is essential to delivering the promise of a higher education to all Hawai'i residents. Too often, the cost of college tuition remains unattainable to working families, many of whom are experiencing financial hardship. Community colleges empower students to develop the skills needed to diversify our economy and build a sustainable future. Moreover, making community college free for our state's residents would likely cost less than \$20 million at a time when Hawai'i has a record \$1.9 billion budget surplus. At such a low price, this is an investment that our community cannot afford to miss.

HB-78

Submitted on: 1/26/2023 9:47:08 AM

Testimony for HET on 1/27/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hollie Rader	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha. My name is Hollie Rader, and I am writing this testimony in regards to HB78: Universal Community College in Hawai‘i. Coming from an immigrant family, being a first-generation college student, and having been raised by a low-income single mother, my family always emphasized the importance of education. My great, great-grandparents worked the plantations in Mountain View, Hawai‘i and Pu‘une‘ne, Maui in hopes of better providing for our family in the Philippines. On the contrary, although working under harsh working conditions and unfair pay, they were still in poverty going back to the Philippines. Growing up, my grandma would always tell me stories of how she was a barangay captain (elected leader in the community who communicates and solves concerns often with no pay), frog catcher for a merely 25 PHP (\$0.50 USD), labendera (woman who washes peoples’ clothes by hands), and farmer who couldn’t even afford the opportunity to pursue higher than an elementary education as the oldest daughter of eight siblings. Hence, this is one of the many reasons why HB78 is so important to many individuals who share similar stories of struggle as me.

But, out of this, I have done my best to give back to my Waipahū community by being a Paraprofessional Educator in the high school's McInerny Early College 3.0 program, which also provides outreach to other schools in Kaua‘i, O‘ahu, Maui, and Hawai‘i Island. As a proud Waipahū Marauder, I have seen the transformative impact that having an education can give our youth. Throughout my time in high school, I was able to study through the McInerny Foundation to receive my Associate of Arts in Liberal Arts degree before I graduated with my high school diploma in May 2021 and will now be graduating this upcoming May as an IS in Peace and Conflict Resolution Major with a Political Science Minor. Besides the available program that was offered to me, I was mainly inspired by my fellow classmates who shared similar stories as me, and our hard work and dedication to receiving a higher education to be better equipped and empowered to give back to our community is what I believe drove us the most.

However, despite current programs in place, I still believe that our islands are lacking in educational opportunities for our youth and urge our Hawai‘i House Representatives to pass HB78. As I was reading current events, I stumbled upon a Hawai‘i News Now article that was published earlier this week, which states that “about 370,000 Native Hawaiians live in the continental U.S...compared to nearly 310,000 living in Hawaii.” Throughout our islands, there has been a constant dialogue of dismay regarding our youth leaving for the American continent as well. By allowing universal community college in our islands, I believe this can also be a motivating factor for our youth to stay and truly realize the amount of opportunity and support

that is available for them. In addition, I believe that it is unfair for Kanaka Maoli students to pay to learn about their culture and identity while being displaced in their own home.

Mahalo for your advocacy.

Hollie S. Rader

HB-78

Submitted on: 1/26/2023 11:13:43 AM

Testimony for HET on 1/27/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cards Pintor	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

When I was in the Honolulu Youth Commission, the last resolution I created was free community college. Though it was a lengthy discussion, it was passed. Now I am here to say that as a student that is on the pathway of getting their Associate's Degree by their high school senior year, free community college will pave the way for everyone. Community college is not just a pathway to get a college degree but also helps certify people in cosmetics, diesel engineering, nursing, welding, firefighting safety, tourism, videomaking, art, psychology, Hawaiian History, and Hawaiian Language. Making it more accessible will help guarantee job security, as education is the one thing that cannot be taken away from anyone.

Higher Education and Technology
The Hawaii State House of Representatives
415 S Beretania St.
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: SUPPORT HB78

January 26, 2023

Aloha Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, and esteemed members of the Higher Education and Technology Committee,

My name is Erika Molyneux, and I am a resident of Kaneohe and an instructor, Legislative Relations Committee Chair, and faculty senate member at Leeward Community College in Pearl City. I am writing as an individual in support of [HB78](#), relating to academic tenure at the University of Hawai'i. I also urge you to support the bill.

Strengthening access to community college is essential to delivering the promise of a higher education to all Hawai'i residents. Too often, the cost of college tuition remains unattainable to working families, many of whom are experiencing financial hardship. Community colleges empower students to develop the skills needed to diversify our economy and build a sustainable future. Moreover, making community college free for our state's residents would likely cost less than \$20 million at a time when Hawai'i has a record \$1.9 billion budget surplus. At such a low price, this is an investment that our community cannot afford to miss.

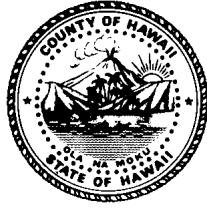
For these reasons and more, please vote in SUPPORT to [HB78](#).

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Erika Molyneux', written in a cursive style.

Erika Molyneux

Jennifer Kagiwada
Council Member District 2 South Hilo



Office: (808) 961-8272
jennifer.kagiwada@hawaiicounty.gov

HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL - DISTRICT 2

25 Aupuni Street • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

DATE: January 25, 2023
TO: House Committee on Higher Education and Technology
FROM: Jennifer Kagiwada, Council Member
Council District 2
SUBJECT: HB 78

Aloha Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela and members of the Committee,

I am writing you in strong support of HB 78. With my background in Early Childhood Education with an emphasis in Public Policy Development this is an issue that is of special importance to me. It is essential that our State delivers on the promise of quality education to all Hawai'i residents at all ages. Too often, the cost of college tuition remains unattainable to working families, many of whom are already experiencing financial hardship. Community colleges empower students to develop the skills needed to diversify our economy and will allow them to qualify for higher paying jobs. Moreover, making community college free for our state's residents would likely cost less than \$20 million at a time when our State budget is in a record \$1.9 billion surplus. This is an investment in a more equitable future that our community cannot afford to miss. Free community college for all qualified students is a crucial step towards improving education access for all.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jenn Kagiwada'.

Jenn Kagiwada

HB-78

Submitted on: 1/26/2023 1:06:53 PM

Testimony for HET on 1/27/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
cheryl Burghardt.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I SUPPORT HB 78 for Universal Community College in Hawai`i. My college career started in community college in my hometown. It was a place that gave me the foundation for my career while allowing me to live at home with my family and to work to pay. Looking back it would have made studying and course selection much less challenging if I would have had support as proposed in this bill. We have great community colleges here on our islands which can offer so much to our communities

Chair Amy Perruso
Vice Chair Jeanne Kapela

House Committee on Higher Education & Technology

Friday, January 27, 2023
2:00PM

**TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB78 RELATING TO STRENGTHENING
ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION**

Aloha Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela, Members of the House Committee on Higher Education & Technology,

My name is Jun Shin. I am a graduate of the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa and a current member of the Hawai‘i State Youth Commission, testifying as an individual in **STRONG SUPPORT** of **HB78**, Relating to Strengthening Access to Higher Education.

It’s not an understatement to express how crucial this bill is to opening the doors to higher education. Hawai‘i’s higher education may be more affordable when compared to other states, but when you factor in dealing with the high cost of living, which especially impacts working class and low-income families who are struggling to pay the bills as is. As a result, higher education is still out of reach for everyone in the family, which results in having to move out of state for education and later employment, or quitting on that goal altogether.

There are many reasons why people might want to and should have the right to seek out higher education. Restarting school after a long time, finishing up some core requirements before heading to a four year college/university (to defer additional costs), changing careers, continuing your education after high school, or you just want to learn something new, cost should not be a barrier to any of these reasons and more. Also, while you should not require a higher education to survive here in Hawai‘i, practically speaking, it is becoming harder and harder to go into the job market without it.

Please pass **House Bill 78** out of your committee, and help to shape a better future for students and potential students, young and old here in Hawai‘i, we now also have a \$1.9 billion budget surplus to do so.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Jun Shin,
State House District 23 | State Senate District 12
Cell: 808-255-6663
Email: junshinbusiness729@gmail.com

HB-78

Submitted on: 1/26/2023 1:36:07 PM

Testimony for HET on 1/27/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hema Kealohanuikaiama Watson	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha mai kākou, honorable Chair Amy Perruso, honorable Vice Chair Jeanne Kapela, and all other HET committee members. My name is Hema Kealohanuikaiama Watson and I am a senior at Hālau Kū Māna PCS. I testify in strong support of HB78.

In Hawaii, we are burdened with high costs and low wages, a reality that punishes people for situations they may have only been born into. This harsh reality is a reason as to why we need to support the people of Hawaii and provide a gateway into college. The income gap between high school graduates and college graduates has increased significantly over time. Higher levels of education have been shown to create lower levels of unemployment, poverty, public health risks, and incarceration throughout our society. An educated populace is a prepared one so we should be doing everything we can to encourage that.

The Hawaii community college promise program was meant to lift up under-privileged peoples into getting their secondary education. However, this program has not made it fully affordable to all who wish to attend CC's. While it is helpful, this program should be expanded to all students who qualify as residents and we need to provide those students with money to cover their costs. We have let too many students out of our colleges doors with bags of debt. They need to enter our economy and the world with more positives than negatives.

It would cost less than \$20,000,000 to achieve this, even accounting for a surge in attendance, a cost very doable with our Hawaii General Fund. The positives of this improved program would do right by the people of Hawaii and would benefit everyone living here. My brother wouldn't have to worry about paying debt and my friends and I wouldn't have to bite our nails hoping we have enough scholarships. I support HB78 and implore the members of this committee to do the same.

Mahalo nō.

HB-78

Submitted on: 1/26/2023 7:00:30 PM

Testimony for HET on 1/27/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ashley moniz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this testimony and believe it would be incredible for all Hawaii residents, hopefully strengthening the future of our community to allow Hawaiian people to remain here.

HB-78

Submitted on: 1/26/2023 11:39:57 PM

Testimony for HET on 1/27/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Clark justin Duran	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My testimony is in support of expanding eligibility for the Hawai'i Community College Promise Program to all qualified students and appropriating funds to do so. The goal is to increase access to community college for qualified Hawai'i residents through scholarships provided by the program.

Aloha all,

My name is Jolene Palijo, I am a student at Waipahu High School in pursuit of an Associate of Arts degree through the Early College program. I am submitting testimony in support of HB78 and the benefits it would bring to eligible residents.

Earning community college credits through the complete coverage of the Early College program has allowed me to learn about the world through lecture and conversation. A common method of teaching I have experienced is the use of conversation including student knowledge to connect scholars to the concepts taught and the point of view of classmates. This use of new ideas, questions, and discussion being a part of the learning process is something that I have applied into how I organize my understanding and learning outside of college classes. From participating in these classes, I have gained knowledge and skills that have aided me in my academic success and considerations for future career paths.

I believe that eligible residents should be brought into these educational discussions. Permitting more students to enroll adds more perspective to an educational institution's population, allowing more opportunity to exchange fresh ideas and learn more about others in the college space. These spaces allow learning to stem from the student's course and fellow classmates. Additionally, a more educated population benefits both the individuals and their community by encouraging scholars that can communicate for themselves and utilize learning through their professions. Therefore, extending our eligible residents' ability to have accessible college education is beneficial since without this opportunity in my own experience, I would not have the same support, knowledge, and consideration for my present and future education.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Jolene Palijo

HB-78

Submitted on: 1/27/2023 9:16:52 AM

Testimony for HET on 1/27/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Nanea Lo. I'm a Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian) born and raised here in the Hawaiian Kingdom. I'm writing in favor of HB78 RELATING TO STRENGTHENING ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION.

It is important that the "state" provide free education including community college to further strengthen the workforce for the people of Hawai'i. Statistics show that when we have competent people that are rooted in education and skills they are far better contributors to society and the world.

We must do all we can to support working class people and get them the education that they deserve and for free.

me ke aloha 'āina,

Nanea Lo

HB-78

Submitted on: 1/27/2023 9:19:08 AM

Testimony for HET on 1/27/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Flora Joan Thompson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha!

My name is Flora Thompson. I am a student at Waipahu High School and enrolled at a community college. I am currently working on graduating with my associate's degree in engineering through the early college program. I am submitting my testimony in support of HB78, and the opportunity it would bring to eligible people.

The majority of the credits I earned have been from a community college, the courses there have taught me valuable skills, in addition to introducing me to what college will be like in the future. Moreover, the affordability and accessibility of community college have allowed me to consider more options when it comes to my future. Due to my pending associate's degree through the community college system being free, I have now been able to look at off-island colleges to continue my degree. This opportunity also allows me to look at getting a major, instead of a bachelor's degree, without having to take on mountains of debt.

Community colleges are stepping stones to greater a future, not only should they be affordable but accessible, because of the valuable life lessons, they teach. They teach how to commit, how to work hard, and overall just decide who you want to be. Through community college, I have been able to share my perspective on the world and attain other community members' perspectives as well. Community college students have the chance to explore all walks of life, before spending the rest of there in just one. This is why I firmly believe that community colleges should allow all eligible people the access they need to have a college education, accordingly to my experience I would not be where I am today, with the hope for the future I have today without my access to a community college education.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my testimony!

Flora Thomspson