



UNIVERSITY
of HAWAII®
SYSTEM

**Senate Committee on Higher Education
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Thursday, March 2, 2023, 10:15 a.m.**

Testimony by:

Jamie Go, Interim Executive Administrator and Secretary of the Board of Regents

S.B. No. 838 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII COMMUNITY COLLEGES.

Chairs Kim and Dela Cruz; Vice Chairs Kidani and Keith-Agaran, and members of the Committees:

The Board of Regents of the University of Hawai'i (Board) held discussions on S.B. No. 838, which would require the Vice President of Community Colleges to report directly to the Board, at its February 16, 2023, meeting and respectfully opposes passage of this measure.

The highly integrated University of Hawai'i System (UH System), consisting of campuses with distinct missions, provides students with a full array of post-secondary educational opportunities. While the nature of this scholastic structure enables students to meet their immediate educational needs, the synergistic relationship between the ten campuses of the UH System also affords students with the chance to further their higher educational pursuits through numerous collaborative pathways that have been established via UH policies and practices.

In addition, the responsibility for managing this distinctive and effective structure of public higher education in Hawai'i currently rests with a single executive officer as elucidated in Article X, Section 6, of the Hawai'i State Constitution, which states, in part, that: *"The board shall have the power to formulate policy, and to exercise control over the university through its executive officer, the president of the university, who shall be appointed by the board. The board shall also have exclusive jurisdiction over the internal structure, management, and operation of the university."*

Requiring the Vice President of Community Colleges to report directly to the Board would serve to disrupt the current management structure of the UH system, which has worked well to date, and affect the synergy created by already established campus integration.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to S.B. No. 838.

Committee on Ways and Means
The Hawaii State Senate
415 S Beretania St.
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: OPPOSE SB 835

March 1, 2023

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and esteemed members of the Ways and Means Committee,

I am writing to ask that you OPPOSE BILL [SB 838](#), which requires the University of Hawai'i (UH) Vice President (VP) of Community Colleges (CCs) to report directly to the Board of Regents, bypassing the UH President.

This bill appears to be one of several that are attempting to erode the university's autonomy, the UH President's authority, and increase legislative and political influence. Other proposals to get rid of the Board of Regents (BOR) Candidate Advisory Council and allow BOR appointments by the Governor with approval of the legislature. These bills threaten our very accreditation due to increased likelihood for political influence in BOR members. If BOR members are politically influenced, and the UH VP of Community Colleges no longer reports to the UH President, then the UH President has lost authority, and the UH VP of CCs may also be unduly politically influenced.

Allowing legislative interference to the degree this bill suggests would threaten the UH-System institutions' accreditation status. Both the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) accreditation are reliant on institutions of higher education being protected from undue influence or political pressure. The [WASC Standard on Integrity and Transparency Criteria for Review \(CFR\) 1.5](#) states:

Even when supported by or affiliated with governmental, corporate, or religious organizations, the institution has education as its primary purpose and operates as an academic institution with appropriate autonomy.

Guidelines: The institution does not experience interference in substantive decisions or educational functions by governmental, religious, corporate, or other external bodies that have a relationship to the institution.

And the [ACCJC Standard IV.C.4](#) states:

For these reasons, I strongly support OPPOSING BILL [SB 838](#). Mahalo nui!

Sincerely,



Erika Molyneux
Instructor, New Media Arts
Leeward Community College

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March 1, 2023

Testimony Opposing SB838: Relating to the University of Hawai'i Community Colleges.

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice-Chair
and Members of the Senate Committee on Higher Education

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice-Chair
and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Hawai'i State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Senators,

I urge you to vote "No" on SB838: Relating to the University of Hawai'i Community Colleges.

Requiring the Vice-President of Community Colleges to Report Directly to the Board of Regents.

- Legislating which office reports to which body within an organization is inappropriate; this should not be a subject of legislation at all, ever. Reporting should be determined within the organization itself.
- The norm in an organization is for a Vice-President to report directly to the President of that organization.
- Requiring the Vice-President of Community Colleges to report directly to the Board of Regents also appears to be a deliberate attempt to bypass the University of Hawai'i President.
- This bill would allow incredible and unacceptable interference in the internal affairs of the organization, University of Hawai'i.

Please vote "No" on SB838.

Mahalo for your attention.

Sincerely,

Eileen Cain

Eileen Cain, Ph.D.