



Tuesday, February 27, 2024

TO: Hawai'i State Senate Committee on Higher Education

FROM: ASUH Undergraduate Academic Affairs Committee Chair

**Concerns Relating to GM596,
Appointing Governor Abercrombie to the Board of Regents**

Aloha e Chair Mercado Kim, and honorable members of the Higher Education Committee,

I am Kyson James-Foree, a current senator for the College of Arts and Sciences and the chairperson for the Undergraduate Academic Affairs Committee of the Associated Students of the University of Hawai'i (ASUH) at Mānoa. I am writing to the Committee on Higher Education concerning GM596 and the confirmation of Governor Abercrombie's appointment to the Board of Regents (BoR). As a student and as a senator within ASUH, I ask the Committee to vote against the appointment of Governor Abercrombie to the BoR.

As an acting Regent, Governor Abercrombie's conduct has been woefully disappointing, especially considering his decades of experience. When we, as students, raise questions or concerns at BoR meetings, Regent Abercrombie does not meet us with even a modicum of respect, instead choosing to answer and address us, directly or indirectly, in rather demeaning ways. The Senate cannot condone an environment where students attempting to voice concerns and ask questions are met with ridicule and unwarranted lectures lacking care, which Regent Abercrombie is creating. A Regent should be able to interact with students in a respectful manner, affording us the same level of reverence we grant them; however, it feels as if Regent Abercrombie does not carry that degree of care, which is extremely disappointing.

Furthermore, Regent Abercrombie has shown a predisposition to delaying the BoR's ability to conduct itself through his consistent rants and speeches in the middle of agenda items. It is my opinion that these rants and speeches detract from the Board and its ability to focus on the tasks at hand. There have been several times at BoR meetings I have attended where Regent Abercrombie essentially wasted precious time going on long-winded rants about varying topics, people, and groups instead of utilizing his position and years of experience to contribute meaningful and concise points.

Therefore, I ask that the Committee on Higher Education reject the appointment of Governor Neil Abercrombie to the Board of Regents or ensure that there are commitments received to changing his approach to students and his conduct at meetings. The students at the University of Hawai'i deserve Regents who are able to effectively and appropriately navigate points of contention with students and do not use them as opportunities to demean and degrade them. The Senate should never allow an individual with such behavior to sit as a Regent.

It is with this in mind that I hope the Senate and Governor Green hear and feel our concerns regarding the appointment of Governor Abercrombie and ensure our next Regent reflects the ideals and values of the University of Hawai'i.

Me ke aloha,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kyson James-Foree". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kyson James-Foree

Senator for the College of Arts and Science

Chair for the Undergraduate Academic Affairs Committee



Monday, February 26, 2024

TO: Hawai'i State Senate Committee on Higher Education

FROM: Office of the President of ASUH

Requesting Former Governor Abercrombie not be approved to the Board of Regents

‘Ano‘ai e Chair Mercado Kim, and honorable members of the Higher Education Committee,

My name is Bronson Azama, I am the current President elect of the Associated Students of the University of Hawai'i (ASUH) at Mānoa. I request that the members of the committee on Higher Education vote against the appointment of former Governor Abercrombie to the Board of Regents (BoR). As a Regent yet to be approved, the former Governor's conduct has demeaned student opinion, his speeches tend to delay the Board's decision-making, he publicly references proponents of government transparency via sunshine law as "idiots", and can further entrench the University in mistrust.

It doesn't take much time to watch the recordings of BoR meetings to witness how Regent Abercrombie eats away at time, to give speeches, that further delays the Board's ability to go through its order of business.

Although some of his questioning provides benefit, we should consider whether or not there is balance in his strong words as made on January 4, 2024 against the Sunshine Law, and his reference that an "idiot" could hold them accountable to the decisions they make that are not compliant with said law, that requires transparency and accountability to allow the public to be informed and make informed decisions to share their opinion.

Regent Abercrombie in that same meeting would further criticize student voice. At this meeting for the Presidential Selection Process, where students, staff, and community members requested inclusion on selecting the next UH President, Abercrombie stated, "This isn't a free for all! Where you shoot your mouth off to the Press, some of the people who had testified for example today, gave a nice sober presentation to the Board of Regents. I've listened to some of the people here shooting their mouths off on television about what's going on." None of these comments are about ethical decision-making, but rather being cautionary of the public eye in-making the decision. Further intimidating us students in utilizing our right to Free Speech!

Furthermore, on January 18, 2024, he chose to reinforce the internal audit rather than pursue

an independent audit on Student Housing. As a student and Resident of Hawai'i who has for years heard the horror stories about the dorms and their dilapidated conditions, this expectation that internal accountability shall suffice rather than an independent audit, is repeated negligence of a past practice.

Regent Abercrombie, on September 7, 2023, encouraged our body to get involved, and support student empowerment and education. On February 15, 2024, ASUH continued to follow this advice and expressed our concerns on the direction of the University, potential conflicts of interests, and further transparency on the research occurring at the University. In return our body was subject to nearly nine minutes of ridicule for the three minutes allotted for our own testimony. His ridicule subjected students to McCarthyism. Is this what the Senate would like to approve, those who ridicule student voices at meetings that often are not accommodating to the Students they serve?

I have witnessed first-hand, Regents laughing at the Title IX joke from Regent Hanning at the Governance Committee meeting on the same day, including Abercrombie. When Regents know the compliance of the University on Title IX continues to be questioned. Did Abercrombie or any of them criticize such behavior? No, but it was fine to ridicule the student voice, in fact complimented.

I therefore, request that the Senate Committee on Higher Education not confirm former Governor Abercrombie to the Board of Regents. This behavior should not be condoned by the Senate, and the Senate ought to demonstrate that no one who belittles students ought to serve as a Regent. We go into debt to pay for education, and when we engage in the way this University is governed we should not be subject to ridicule, nor be criticized for speaking to the media.

I hope that Governor Green, and the members of this committee can understand our concerns and choose to search for a Regent who can better reflect the ideals of a University that values its students opinions, doesn't make jokes of laws that protect against sex discrimination and transparency, and is driven toward a future that is informed by the voices of tomorrow and not anchored in their own political legacies.

These behaviors are dangerous for the University, students, the public, and all those it serves.

Mahalo,



Bronson Azama
111th ASUH President

GM-596

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 5:40:56 AM

Testimony for HRE on 2/27/2024 3:00:00 PM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Meagan Harden	Testifying for Academic Labor United (ALU)	Oppose	In Person

Comments:

My name is Meagan Harden, and I am the Academic Labor United College of Social Sciences Chair. On behalf of ALU, I **strongly oppose** the election of Mr. Neil Abercrombie to the Board of Regents Gubernatorial Committee. Not only has Mr. Abercrombie has not supported ALU's constitutional right to collectively bargain, but he has also failed to prioritize meaningful graduate student representation in the Presidential Search Process.

Patrick McCain
910 Kapahulu Ave. #609
Honolulu HI 96816

The Honorable Donna Mercado Kim
Chair
Committee on Higher Education
Hawaii State Senate

Re: GM 596 Submitting for confirmation to the Board of Regents of the University of Hawaii, Gubernatorial Nominee NEIL ABERCROMBIE, for a term to expire 06-30-2028.

Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani and members of the Senate Committee on Higher Education, my name is Patrick McCain and I am here in support of GM 596, Neil's nomination to the Board of Regents.

In the dozen years that I worked for Neil Abercrombie, here in the State Senate, in the Honolulu City Council and in the US House of Representatives, he has always had a very deep love for the State of Hawaii, the University of Hawaii and in particular the students at UH.

Neil is smart, well educated (UH), well traveled, well read, fun to be around and kind. He understands politics and as a creature of the first branch of government he appreciates the role that this committee has to play.

We are fortunate to have someone with his talent willing to serve. I am grateful to you folks for your consideration to this measure and I am grateful for your public service.

Mahalo

Patrick McCain

GM-596

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 11:48:53 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/27/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ernie K. Wilson	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Although (Former Governor & US Congressman) Neil Abercrombie is only now being reviewed for approval to a five-year term representing the City & County of Honolulu due to a delay in the hearing/confirmation process, he has served as a Regent on the UH Board of Regents (BOR) since July 2023 (the original beginning date of his five-year term).

Although (Former Governor & US Congressman) Neil Abercrombie is only now being reviewed for approval to a five-year term representing the City & County of Honolulu due to a delay in the hearing/confirmation process, he has served as a Regent on the UH Board of Regents (BOR) since July 2023 (the original beginning date of his five-year term). During this almost eight-month period, Gov. Abercrombie has shown that he has the knowledge and understanding of what it takes and how to operate in an environment where you exist to serve the public as well as, other constituencies, especially in the field of research and the corporate business arena. His experience as an educator and politician has provided him with the experience to both see, think, and act strategically. All of this makes Neil a valuable addition to the BOR with the challenges both local and international that the institution faces today and even more challenging in the future. . I therefore strongly support Neil's confirmation to the BOR.

GM-596

Submitted on: 2/23/2024 8:37:15 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/27/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jesse K. Souki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Senate Committee on Higher Education:

I appreciate the opportunity to register my support of the confirmation of Neil Abercrombie to the Board of Regents of the University of Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your consideration.

GM-596

Submitted on: 2/23/2024 9:30:49 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/27/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ronald Taniguchi, Pharm.D., MBA	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the confirmation of Neil Abercrombie to the Board of Regents. Mahalo

GM-596

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 8:51:48 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/27/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laurie Tochiki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to support the appointment of Neil Abercrombe to the University of Hawaii Board of Regents. He is contributing his unique experiences to the work. He has approached the work with enthusiasm and a deep commitment to the students, faculty and staff of the University.

Thank you for your consideration.

Laurie Tochiki

GM-596

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 5:28:42 AM

Testimony for HRE on 2/27/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Diane Paloma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the confirmation of Neil Abercrombie to the UH Board of Regents. Mahalo.

GM-596

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 8:03:02 AM

Testimony for HRE on 2/27/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Wayne S. Higaki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

It is my honor to offer my support to Neil Abercrombie and I ask for your positive confirmation for his nomination by Governor Green.

SHAN S. TSUTSUI

12th Lieutenant Governor of the State of Hawaii

Testimony of
Shan S. Tsutsui

Before the Senate Committee on
HIGHER EDUCATION

Tuesday, February 27, 2024
3:00 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 229 & Video Conference

In Support of
GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE 596

Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Regents of the University of Hawaii, Gubernatorial Nominee, Neil Abercrombie, for a term to expire 06-30-2028

Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and members of the Senate Committee on Higher Education:

Today, I am privileged to have the opportunity to testify in support of the nomination of the Honorable Neil Abercrombie to the Board of Regents of the University of Hawaii. I have not only had the great honor of serving as Governor Abercrombie's Lieutenant Governor, but I also call him a friend.

From graduate assistant and lecturer, state legislator, city council member, member of Congress, and governor of the state of Hawaii, the University of Hawaii has been the centerpiece of his life at every stage for over six decades. A cornerstone of his service to the people of Hawaii. It is a constant reminder of the university system's important role in Hawaii, our nation, and around the world.

Now, the University of Hawaii system is uniquely positioned to benefit directly from this lifetime of excellence. From issues like TMT, the university as a significant economic driver, the role of intercollegiate athletics, how to work with the legislative and executive branches, academic freedom, fair and equitable tuition for all, his relationships in Congress and around the world, and so on. What Neil Abercrombie brings to the table in terms of experience, counsel, standing, and, most importantly, having been there in a leadership capacity at each step of the way is invaluable to the University of Hawaii.

He is critical to the selection process of the next president and moving the University of Hawaii forward. Undoubtedly, he will devote every fiber of his being to doing this job well. Not for himself but for the future generations of Hawaii leaders and scholars for whom the UH holds promise.

Thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to comment.

GM-596

Submitted on: 2/23/2024 11:45:16 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/27/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
M. Leilani DeMello	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Kāko‘o ‘ole au i kēia pila. I do not support this bill

Mahalo,

M. Leilani DeMello

‘Ōla‘a, Puna, Hawai‘i

GM-596

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 5:31:29 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/27/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paula Chun	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Former Governor Neil Abercrombie's current actions on the BOR shows that he is ignorant of the issues facing the UH. He does not hold the current administration responsible for the conditions of the dorms. His efforts show that he is content with business as usual. He was a mediocre U.S. Representative and a horrible governor that is partially responsible for the current exodus of Hawaii residents to the mainland. He needs to be replaced with someone that wants to improve the UH and want students to get the best education.

GM-596

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 2:01:18 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/27/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jill L Nunokawa	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha to all the Members of the Senate's Committee on Higher Education,

Jill Nunokawa, and I am submitting written testimony against GM 596, in my personal capacity and without titles.

I know the nominee has a long career in politics and feels he has a wealth of knowledge to bestow upon the University of Hawaii. The nominee speaks endlessly about his career and his background, however he lacks the mastery of self control and patience with and respect for others. He has consistently proven that his words, beliefs and dogma are the only ones to be considered regarding board decisions and actions. Although at times, he is capable of offering insightful and helpful ideas, he is unable to comprehend and integrate diplomacy, democratic principles and the needed temperment to sit on the board of regents given its purpose at the University of Hawaii. He is not sitting on the Armed Forces Committee in Congress and he is completely blinded by his former congressional decisions and support of the UARC and militarizing our public institution of higher education. As I testified at the BOR meeting earlier this month, the regents will have to decide the way forward regarding militarizing and privatizing the public school system at UH. There will be lively public debate and disagreement, a hallmark of a democratic nation, that will occur at UH and within our communities. We cannot support any chilling effects caused by a board of regent member who bullies, intimates and retaliates against brave students, faculty, staff, and community members who oppose his pro war, pro military and pro privatization priorities at UH.

For these reasons, and many more, I am vehemently opposed to GM 596 being confirmed to serve on the Board of Regents of the University of Hawaii. I also ask this seasoned committee to caution and remind candidates to the Board not to retaliate against testifiers should they be confirmed.

Mahalo

GM-596

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 3:05:55 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/27/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kuikeokalani Kamakea-Ohelo	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Subject: Opposition to Confirmation of Gubernatorial Nominee, Neil Abercrombie

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the confirmation of Neil Abercrombie as a member of the Board of Regents of the University of Hawai'i. While I typically refrain from public criticism, I believe it is crucial to address the concerning conduct exhibited by Mr. Abercrombie during his tenure as an interim Regent, appointed by Governor Josh Green.

As you consider his confirmation tomorrow via GM596, I urge you to take into account Mr. Abercrombie's actions and statements that have raised serious doubts about his suitability for this position. I had the unfortunate experience of witnessing firsthand his disregard for transparency and accountability, as well as his disrespectful attitude towards community advocates.

During various meetings and hearings, Mr. Abercrombie's comments regarding sunshine laws and government transparency were deeply troubling. His dismissive language towards community advocates, labeling them as "idiots," showcased a lack of respect and a failure to engage in constructive dialogue. Such behavior is not befitting of a member of the Board of Regents, whose role is to oversee a place of higher education that values inclusivity, open dialogue, and respect for diverse perspectives.

Furthermore, I was dismayed by Mr. Abercrombie's tendency to subject students to an environment that stifles freedom of expression and discourages open debate. This kind of approach is detrimental to the intellectual growth and development of students who should be encouraged to explore different viewpoints and engage in critical thinking.

Moreover, his constant reminders of the political legacies of himself and his colleagues raise concerns about his ability to approach his role with impartiality and objectivity. It is essential for a member of the Board of Regents to prioritize the best interests of the university and its stakeholders, rather than being anchored to personal political agendas.

Additionally, I would like to draw attention to Regent Hanning's comment regarding Title IX. This comment further highlights the need for careful consideration of the individuals being appointed to the Board of Regents and their commitment to promoting a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students.

In conclusion, I believe that Mr. Abercrombie's conduct and statements cast doubt on his ability to fulfill the responsibilities of a member of the Board of Regents. His disregard for transparency, disrespectful attitude towards community advocates, and his apparent bias towards personal political legacies raise serious concerns about his suitability for this position.

I encourage community members and UH students to voice their concerns and make their voices heard on this issue. It is vital that the Board of Regents consists of individuals who uphold the highest standards of ethical decision-making, transparency, and commitment to the well-being of the university community.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Kū'ike Kamakea-Ohelo

Waimānalo, HI. 96796

Kuike.farmaloha@gmail.com

GM-596

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 2:59:27 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/27/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Max Bielawski	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I as a student of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, oppose the confirmation of Neil Abercrombie as a UH regent. His recent comments regarding how he views us is a clear indication he does not have what is best in mind for us and future students. Additionally how can we trust someone who was the first incumbent governor in the history of the state of Hawai'i to lose to a primary challenger and the second to not win a re-election. Clearly someone with your lack of talent and largely who is unpopular across the entire aisle of Hawai'i politics, you should not be in any leadership position. You will never have the support or the heart of the people, and you should stay in your lane.

LATE

GM-596

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 4:22:15 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/27/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
bruce watson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I would just like to briefly state I am disgusted and disappointed that Neil Abercrombie, the human who referred to those who protected Maunakea as having "found their cultural roots six minutes ago" was even nominated for this position. I am further disgusted and disappointed in his treatment of students since. I would also like to express my disappointment and disgust at the current regents who refused to act on behalf of the students, those who sat quietly and did nothing to protect and defend them as Neil disrespected them. An alii is an alii because of the people. A school is a school because of its students. Neil Abercrombie must not be confirmed.

GM-596

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 11:08:12 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/27/2024 3:00:00 PM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kapua Medeiros	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kim and Members of the Higher Education Committee,

I ask that you please OPPOSE the Confirmation of Neil Abercrombie to the Board of Regents. I also ask that you do your due dilligence to insure that the Next Appointee for Confirmation has the Required Respect for Other's Opinions. A UH Board of Regents member should understand and Respect all opinions as valid, and most certainly should NOT refer to anyone as "Idiots". And should have Hawai'i and its Residents best interest at the forefront of all his/her actions just as importantly as all Students and Faculty of the University of Hawai'i.

Again as a very engaged and concerned community member I am in Strong Opposition to Neil Abercrombie's Confirmation to the UH Board of Regents.

Me ke aloha nui,

Kapua Medeiros

Monday, February 26th, 2024

LATE

To: Hawai'i State Senate Committee on Higher Education

From: Lennie Espinoza

Opposition to the Approval of Neil Abercrombie as a UH Regent.

Saludo Chair Mercado Kim, and honorable members of the Higher Education Committee,

My name is Lennie Espinoza and I am a community leader and alumni of UH Hilo. Class of 2023, I was a dormer at Hale Ikena F204 and F303 from Fall 2022 to Fall 2023. I am writing in opposition to the former governor of Hawai'i Neil Abercrombie being confirmed into the UH Board of Regents, and request that the Higher Education Committee vote against his appointment. Through first hand experience as a UHH student, I firmly believe that Abercrombie not only does not reflect the values and visions of UH students, but is actively going against what we want and deserve as student leaders and academics. He does not reflect the future we as current/former students want for UH, and simultaneously demeans student voices when they simply ask questions about decisions made at leadership levels. His behavior coupled with his disdain and disregard of both Sunshine Laws and Title IX is a huge indicator that he is not the right person to be the Honolulu County Regent.

The University of Hawai'i prides itself in the diverse and majority Indigenous student body seen across campuses, yet consistently employs and supports individuals with little to no respect for us. Abercrombie's inability to listen to students reflects the colonialist practices of education and policy he embodies. UHH is an Indigenous school—talking story is how we create and move towards change. His lack of respect for conversation and young voices in of itself shows his inability to connect and uplift the UH student body. We deserve regents who see us, respect us, and support us. My time as a UH student (2019-2023) has shown me that despite this false sense of admiration, UH leadership, specifically regents like Abercrombie, **do not hold space for Indigenous and local students** to properly share their voice, and consistently suppress them when they do.

Along with this, as a 2 spirit LGBTQIA+ community member and activist, the lack of respect and support there is for queer students across campuses is disgusting and unacceptable. In housing, we are placed with genders that we do not identify with or are isolated due to the university "not knowing what to do with us". We are **dead-named, misgendered**, and consistently **disrespected** by both student staff and administration. Despite Chris Holland's lies during the last Board of Regents meeting (02/15), UHH and UHH housing is well aware of the issues 2STGNC+ UHH students face. I, as well as my transgender siblings on campus, have

brought up our issues **repeatedly**, going to Chris Holland, UHHS, and the Office of Equal Opportunity on many separate occasions.

Despite our consistency, UH has not taken any serious steps that can be felt by LGBTQIA2S+ students on campus. 2STGNC+ students are seen across campuses fulfilling roles that are vital to the wellbeing of our student body. We are club presidents, editors, dancers, and writers. We are student workers, teacher assistants, and event planners. We are the face of UH, and we deserve regents who not only acknowledge this but work to uplift and support us. This means opposing the colonial practices and policy that directly harms us both on and off campus. Former Governor Abercrombie does not do this. He is not only out of tune with the modern UH student body, but **he shows no effort in learning and understanding our wants and needs as the future of UH.**

It seems that Abercrombie prioritizes colonial and military powers over the mana of the student body. May I remind the Higher Education committee that no matter what UH supports, the majority of **UH students and alumni do not condone the colonial ideologies and practices staff perpetuates.** The students of UH, especially UH Hilo, stand in extreme opposition to the partnering of UH and American Imperialist institutions and the inclusion of their colonial practices in our education, from policy making to classroom pedagogy. If UH is to take pride in their student body, it is in their best interest to support the Indigeneity that flows through us. We can no longer stand and watch as Hawai'i state entities appoint leaders who do not carry enough respect for us to create positive change, let alone let us speak.

As a UHH alumni, I find myself hesitant to show pride in my school due to the lack of care the board of regents and UH leadership as a whole show for our student body. As the Higher Education Committee, the treatment of students, who are the heart and soul of the University of Hawai'i, should be of utmost importance to you. We deserve attentive, active leaders, and Chair Neil Abercrombie has proven he does not fulfill this need. I hope you all listen to the voices of UH students, and choose a regent who stands for the values, needs, and identities of **all** past, current, and future students. Thank you.

- Lennie Espinoza

LATE

GM-596

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 8:16:02 AM

Testimony for HRE on 2/27/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Healani Sonoda-Pale	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Regent Abercrombie's public rants against tuition paying students is an abuse of power.

He has also made it very clear that he is willing to sell out the University's educational mission to the US military for warfare.

His behavior and lack of any gatekeeper in terms of what he espouses at BOR meetings will only open up UH to lawsuits and cause more strife.

LATE

GM-596

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 8:54:27 AM

Testimony for HRE on 2/27/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alfred Medeiros	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai kākou, as a Kānaka Maoli student of UH, I'm in opposition of GM596 and think it's astounding on how a person like former Governor Neil Abercrombie can yell at students the way he did, belittling the people as they ask for their voices to be heard in an aggressive and ignorant fashion as he's done. He don't deserve to be in the position he's been given, as he doesn't know how to not only speak to people, but also treat them right. Please remove Neil Abercrombie and place somebody more suited for this position and chosen by the people, for the people and Hawai'i and that we the students would like. Mahalo nui

LATE

GM-596

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 9:13:44 AM

Testimony for HRE on 2/27/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Malia Marquez	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Kākou,

Mr. Abercrombie has displayed UN-PONO behavior with his remarks on certain "people" and "groups". For him to even be considered to such a high position such as the Board of Regents is really disturbing. A person that can call others "idiots" and "groups of people" shows gross and rude behavior. His remarks of our own people, kanaka maoli also shows racism and prejudice. Mr. Abercrombie deserves NO title to such a board. I Strongly OPPOSE GM596. Mahalo.

LATE

GM-596

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 9:20:57 AM

Testimony for HRE on 2/27/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mialisa Otis	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose Abercrombie's nomination for reasons of his actions of his prior service.

LATE

GM-596

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 9:48:18 AM

Testimony for HRE on 2/27/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
cheryl burghardt	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I OPPOSE 596 GM Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Regents of the University of Hawai'i, Gubernatorial Nominee, NEIL ABERCROMBIE, for a term to expire 06-30-2028

This is another example of same faces, different places. This appointment would not benefit the students of UH for whom the BOR has a direct responsibility. Here would be an example of why his appointment would be concerning: <https://www.civilbeat.org/2013/05/gov-invites-uh-regents-to-his-office-to-discuss-uh/>

Please let the Governor know that there have to be other people who would be better for this position and OPPOSE this nomination.

I OPPOSE

LATE

GM-596

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 10:12:45 AM
Testimony for HRE on 2/27/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Inez Z Larson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair,

I adamantly oppose the appointment of Neil Abercrombie to the Board of Regents for the University of Hawai‘i. I am an undergraduate in the Hawaiian Studies department. I have personally and intimately witnessed a large number of University community members from diverse departments, including many faculty and staff, who support my position as a Hawaiian Studies major. It has been communicated to me the decades of sacrifices that most faculty and staff have made to the University as a Hawaiian place of learning. As I continue my educational path towards my PhD in Hawaiian Studies I do not wish to be under Neil Abercrombie’s leadership. I want quite the opposite for the University. I want our faculty and staff to be happy at work. I want them to be nurtured and appreciated for the many decades that they have been giving of themselves towards a better Hawai‘i. Anything I can do to make their jobs easier, I will do. So with this intention, I submit my testimony. Not only for the comfort it would afford me to not have him around, but for the many others who live, work, study, and play happily and in good mental space at UH systems who find this man to be cringe. Please don’t do this to our beloved home, UH Mānoa. His appointment would be a major fail. Mahalo.

Miss Inez Zoyla Larson

Undergraduate: Bachelor's in Hawaiian Studies - Mo'olelo ‘Ōiwi

2888 Uē ka lani, ola ka honua. When the sky weeps, the earth lives

Tuesday, February 27, 2024

LATE

To: Hawai'i State Senate Committee on Higher Education

Opposition to Approving Former Governor Neil Abercrombie as a UH Board of Regent

Aloha mai kākou e Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the Higher Education Committee,

My name is Kyla-Marie K.T. Kauhailhao and I am a graduate student of UH Hilo. I am writing in opposition to the former governor of Hawai'i Neil Abercrombie being approved to the UH Board of Regents, and am requesting the Higher Education Committee to vote against his appointment. It is my firm belief that the former governor of Hawai'i does not reflect the future in which we as students want for the future of the UH. Abercrombie's behavior demeaning student voices when they simply ask questions about decision made at the leadership levels and the partnerships and funds that the UH partakes in, coupled with his disdain and disregard of both Sunshine Laws and Title IX is a huge indicator that he is not the right person to be the Honolulu County Regent nor a Regent of the University of Hawai'i.

The University of Hawai'i is in a very interesting position currently. We are the most diverse school student-wise nationally. We support a variety of programs, including many Indigenous and Hawaiian undergraduate and graduate level programs. And yet, despite all of the diversity and good that the university does, the upper levels of leadership do not respect the diverse voices of their students and faculty/staff. The last regent meeting had shown this through the location alone. Why would you have a Board of Regents meeting up at the Pharmacy College, where most of the student body at UH Hilo does not access? Why hold it during school hours when most students have classes? And why encourage students to come when we are just going to be chastised for not knowing enough?

Abercrombie's disregard for our concerns about UARC and the partnerships the UH partakes in, telling us that the DOD is where the money is, shows that he cannot comprehend a future for the UH that is not entrenched in the military. At a time when many Indigenous and Hawaiian scholars, students, faculty, and staff are expressing concerns about military affiliation and a

calling for divestment from military funding/demilitarism, this shows that Abercrombie cares more about the legacy that he and his honorable, late Congressman have created.

This is not the students trying to attack his character. Neil Abercrombie has made large contributions to Hawai'i during his political career that has helped Hawai'i in tremendous ways. However, this is us making a stand about the future we want. His insistence to not only take any questions or criticism of the UH personally, but also to not listen to the voices of the youth and the students of the school he serves is not only frustrating and disappointing. For Hawaiian, local, and other Indigenous students, whose desires are divestment and demilitarization, it is dangerous and scary. Coupled with the fact that Abercrombie also has a problem with Sunshine Laws as a Regent, it does not create an environment of transparency nor does it encourage true conversation with discourse and discussion, especially on the issues in which Abercrombie is "passionate" about. This behavior allows the perpetuation of such an environment that furthers a lack of transparency and of colonistic ideals in which the students of UH, including UH Hilo, are in strong opposition again.

It is my sincere hope that Governor Green, the Chair, Vice Chair, and all the honorable members of the Higher Education Committee will hear the voices of the students in which the UH serves, and will be able to choose a Regent who better reflects the hopes and ideals of a University that listens to the voices of its students, faculty, and staff. We hope for a Regent who is open to criticism, doesn't belittle the seriousness of issues surrounding Title IX and Sunshine Laws, and is driven towards a sustainable future for the future students of the University of Hawai'i, even if that future is different from what they imagine.

Mahalo nui loa for your consideration,

Kyla-Marie K.T. Kauhahao

LATE

GM-596

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 11:21:49 AM
Testimony for HRE on 2/27/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hannah Hartmann	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Committee Chair and Committee Members,

I am writing in extreme OPPOSITION to Regent Neil Abercrombie's confirmation. I have personally witnessed him bully and harass students with opposing views who are just trying to participate in university-affiliated political processes. This does not create a safe environment for anyone, and this harmful behavior is unacceptable.

Please do NOT confirm Regent Neil Abercrombie to the Board of Regents.

Mahalo,

Hannah Hartmann

University of Hawai'i Alumni '23

Pāpa'ikou, 96781

LATE

GM-596

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 11:38:46 AM

Testimony for HRE on 2/27/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kyle K Kajihiro	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Interim Regent Abercrombie's outburst at the last BOR meeting towards ASUH representatives was shocking in its bluster and condescension. Yet he showed a concerning lack of reflection on the substance of students' concerns, namely, the lack of transparency and accountability surrounding a classified military research center. He erroneously claimed that UH competes for all of its military research contracts. In fact, the original UARC / Applied Research Laboratory contract was awarded as a *sole source award*, meaning no competition. Once established as a UARC, task orders from military sponsors are also awarded without competition. Where is the audit of the UARC? The Project Kai e'e scandal, which was a precursor to the UARC, was the focus of an NCIS investigation, in which criminal charges were narrowly averted when RCUH inexplicably returned the tainted \$50 million contract. I am disappointed that given his privileged access to information about military funded research at UH, Interim Regent Abercrombie chose to attack the messengers rather than address the serious concerns they raised about the corrupting influence of money, power, and secrecy.

LATE

GM-596

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 12:10:13 PM
Testimony for HRE on 2/27/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jazerick Hata	Testifying for ASUH	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Jazerick Hata, I am a Senator at Large for ASUH at the Mānoa Campus, and I stand opposed to neil abercrombie being on the Board of Regents. Not only has he undermined the student voice but repeatedly degraded it's value, he has on record numerouslly lashed out at students and acted in an unprofessional manner unfitting of a Board of Regent. I believe that someone younger, and more qualified should serve on the board. We need an individual who can serve with integrity, professionalism, and who can put the voice of democracy above personal bias and past sentiments.

I believe in the democratic process and believe that the State Legislature will support the voice of the students. Currently the situation at the University is unsustainable and is in need of quick and effective intervention by the Senate.

LATE

GM-596

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 1:00:12 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/27/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kawaiola Kapuni	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha. I am a UH student and am testifying to strongly oppose the confirmation of Neil Abercrombie as a UH regent. He has not made it a priority to truly work with and listen to students, and has rather treated his position as a top-down authority figure. As such, he has failed to decolonize the hegemonic structure of the university, which runs counter to the long-standing initiatives of students and faculty across the years. He is simply not fit for this role, and should not be considered at all costs.

LATE

GM-596

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 1:29:11 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/27/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marti Townsend	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

With all due respect to Mr. Abercrombie, it is time for his generation of political agents to enjoy a well-earned retirement. He worked so hard and did so much, shouldn't he have a pleasant break? There are many very well qualified local leaders who are willing and able to fill this important role. There is nothing inherent to the role of UH Regent that requires or benefits from the experience Mr. Abercrombie has accrued. Indeed, the challenges plaguing the University would likely benefit much more from the attention of younger people offering new solutions.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer this testimony in opposition to Mr. Abercrombie's appointment to the Board of Regents?

LATE

GM-596

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 3:30:06 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/27/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lynda Williams	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

As a parent of a UH Manoa student I oppose the confirmation of Neil Abercrombie to serve on the UH board of regents. After listening to several instances of his ranting with anger regarding freedom of speech and the military, I think he is mentally incompetent to hold the position. Honestly, had I known that such mentally incompetent people were being put at the helm of UH, I would have reconsidered allowing my son to attend there. The former governor is 85 and showing signs of dementia. Why does he want to serve anyway? Why in the world did Governor green nominate him? He should be mentoring a younger generation of leadership. The nomination of Ambercrombie is a classic example of cronyism and it's an embarrassment. It's your job as leaders of the state to correct the governors bad choice and stop this poor appointment.

Mahalo,

Lynda