



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## ‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

### Legislative Testimony

### Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Finance  
Thursday, February 20, 2025 at 2:00 p.m.

By  
Naoto T. Ueno, Director  
University of Hawai'i Cancer Center  
And  
Michael Bruno, Provost  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

#### HB 531 HD1 – RELATING TO SPECIAL NUMBER PLATES

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of HB 531 HD1, which authorizes the issuance of special license plates recognizing the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center (UH Cancer Center), with a portion of the proceeds from these plates supporting cancer research, patient care, and community outreach in Hawai'i. The UH Cancer Center is the only National Cancer Institute (NCI)-designated cancer center in the Pacific. It is dedicated to saving lives through groundbreaking research and state-of-the-art cancer care. As an NCI-designated center, we play a critical role in advancing cancer treatments tailored to the unique needs of our diverse population in Hawai'i and the broader Pacific region.

#### **Investment in the UH Cancer Center is an Investment in the Health and Well-being of Our Community**

Cancer remains the second leading cause of death in Hawai'i, affecting thousands of local families each year. More than 70,000 people in our state are living with cancer, and annually, 2,300 Hawai'i residents lose their lives to this devastating disease. The UH Cancer Center, in collaboration with major healthcare and community partners—including The Queen's Health Systems, Hawai'i Pacific Health, Adventist Health Castle, Kuakini Medical Center, and John A. Burns School of Medicine—continues to make significant strides in cancer prevention, early detection, and treatment.

Funding from special license plate sales will directly support vital initiatives such as:

- Expanding access to cutting-edge clinical trials for Hawai'i residents, particularly for cancers that disproportionately affect our communities.
- Conducting groundbreaking research on cancers that impact Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, Filipinos, and other at-risk populations.
- Strengthening our community outreach and education programs to promote cancer prevention and early detection efforts.

## **Investment in the UH Cancer Center is an Investment in Economic Growth**

Beyond improving health outcomes, investing in the UH Cancer Center contributes to Hawai'i's economy by attracting federal research grants, forging partnerships with leading pharmaceutical companies, and drawing world-class researchers and oncologists to our state. Our work positions Hawai'i as a global leader in cancer research and care, ensuring that residents have access to the best possible treatments without having to leave the state for specialized care.

Funds raised through the special license plate program will help sustain and expand the Center's ability to provide state-of-the-art research and patient care, bringing direct benefits to our local workforce, healthcare industry, and economy.

## **A Commitment to a Future Free from Cancer**

The introduction of a UH Cancer Center special license plate provides the public with a meaningful way to show their support for cancer research and treatment in Hawai'i. By purchasing these plates, residents can contribute to life-saving initiatives that will improve health outcomes for generations to come.

We strongly urge the committee to pass HB 531 HD1, establishing this innovative funding mechanism and further strengthening Hawai'i's fight against cancer.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.



Committee on Finance  
Rep. Kyle Yamashita, Chair  
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: Thursday, February 20, 2025

**ACS CAN SUPPORTS HB 531 HD1 – RELATING TO SPECIAL NUMBER PLATES.**

Cynthia Au, Government Relations Director – Hawai'i Guam  
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

Thank you for the opportunity to **SUPPORT** HB 531 HD1: Relating to Special Number Plates.

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), the nonprofit, non-partisan advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society advocates for public policies that reduce death and suffering from cancer. ACS CAN works with federal, state, and local government bodies to support evidence-based policy and legislative solutions designed to eliminate cancer as a major health problem.

ACS CAN supports specialty license plates for the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center (UH Cancer Center). This year, more than 9,000 residents from Hawai'i will be diagnosed with cancer, with more than 2,000 residents expected to die from the disease.

The UH Cancer Center provides important cancer research, access to life-saving treatment including clinical trials which play a critical role in reducing the cancer burden for multi-ethnic residents. Sustainability of the National Cancer Institute (NCI) designated UH Cancer Center is vital for cancer screening, prevention, treatment, and education, significantly reducing the cancer burden in Hawai'i and the Pacific. UH Cancer Center is the only NCI-designated cancer center in the Pacific and top 4% of all cancer centers in the U.S.

Specialty plates would allow supporters of the cancer center to publicly do so and create additional funds for the UH Cancer Center.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Government Relations Director Cynthia Au at [Cynthia.Au@Cancer.org](mailto:Cynthia.Au@Cancer.org) or 808.460.6109.

**HB-531-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/19/2025 12:24:47 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lourdes Vergara Marcelo	Lou's Quality Home Health Care Services	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Re: HV 531 , Motor Vehicles Number Plates for the U.H. Cancer Center .

I agree with ther bill submitted to issue identifying license plates to the U.H/ Cancer Center staff.

Thank you

Lourdes Vergara Marcelo , RN

808 623 7109

**HB-531-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/18/2025 4:06:50 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Crissy T. Kawamoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo for the opportunity to voice **STRONG SUPPORT** for HB531 HD1, which authorizes the issuance of special number plates to recognize the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center.

**HB-531-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/20/2025 1:06:07 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mark Willingham	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Mark Willingham. I am a Community health educator at the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center. My testimony is submitted as an individual and not as a representative of the University of Hawai'i or the UH Cancer Center. I support specialty license plates for the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center. This year, more than 9,000 residents from Hawai'i will be diagnosed with cancer, with more than 2,000 residents expected to die from the disease. Specialty plates would allow supporters of the cancer center to publicly do so and create additional funds for the UH Cancer Center. Thank you!