



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Transportation and Culture and the Arts
Tuesday, March 18, 2025 at 3:00 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 Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, 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 Transportation and Culture and the Arts
Senator Chris Lee, Chair
Senator Lorraine Inouye, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: Tuesday, March 18, 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 or 808.460.6109.

HB-531-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2025 8:29:50 PM

Testimony for TCA on 3/18/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lynn Murakami Akatsuka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB 531, HD 1, a specialty license plate for the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center, that a portion of the proceeds from the license plate would support cancer research, patient care, and community outreach in Hawai'i. This would allow supporters of the Cancer Center, like myself, to publicly do so.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HB 531, HD 1 passage this legislative session.

HB-531-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2025 12:50:36 PM

Testimony for TCA on 3/18/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tai-ni Xia	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Dear Honorable Chairman Lee, Honorable Vice Chairwoman Inouye, and Honorable Members of the Committee on Transportation and Culture and Arts,

I strongly support this bill. Please pass it and increase funding for the University of Hawaii Cancer Research Center.

Sincerely,

Tai-Ni Xia

HB-531-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 7:24:40 AM

Testimony for TCA on 3/18/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keith Kanetani	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair: Senator Lee, Vice Chair: Senator Inouye, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 531 HD1. My name is Keith Kanetani, diagnosed with Stage IV - Metastatic Prostate Cancer in 2021. I am an advocate for the UH Cancer Center and a volunteer with the UH Patient Advocacy Council and the Community Scientist Advocacy Program, in addition to being an advocate with the American Cancer Society, Cancer Action Network. I am in **STORNG SUPPORT** of HB531, which authorizes the issuance of special license plates recognizing the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center, with a portion of the proceeds from these plates supporting cancer research, patient care and community outreach in Hawai'i

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.

I strongly plead with the Committee to pass HB 531, establishing the innovative funding mechanism and further strengthening Hawai'i's fight against cancer.

Sincerely,

Keith B. Kanetani

Hilo, Hawaii, 96720

HB-531-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 11:25:41 AM

Testimony for TCA on 3/18/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lenora Loo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

- My name is Lenora Loo. I am a Faculty Member of the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center (UHCC). My testimony is submitted as an individual and not as a representative of the University of Hawai'i or the UHCC. I strongly support the issuance of a special UHCC license plate to recognize all the important work that is being done at UHCC for the State of Hawaii.

To: Senator Chris Lee, Chair, Transportation and Culture and the Arts
Senator Lorraine Inouye, Vice Chair, Transportation and Culture and the Arts
Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair, Ways and Means
Senator Sharon Moriwaki, Vice Chair, Ways and Means
Members of the Committee on Transportation and Culture and the Arts AND Committee on
Ways and Means

RE: Strong Support of HB 531 – Relating to Special License Plates.

Hearing: Tuesday, March 18, 2025; TIME: 3:00 PM

Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, Chair Dela Cruz, and Vice Chair Moriwaki and Joint Committee Members:

My name is Michelle Hashimoto, a current Pu'unui resident, 1988 graduate of Moanalua High School, and 1992 graduate of University of Hawai'i at Mānoa ... and long time cancer fighter in my community. I am also an advocate for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network and the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center and am currently employed at the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center. I am an **advocate** for HB 531.

As a caregiver for my father who battled cancer, a concerned parent, and an active community member, I am in STRONG SUPPORT of HB531 HD1. Please consider authorizing the issuance of special number plates to recognize the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center.

Cancer is the leading cause of death among Asian Americans and the second-leading cause among Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander individuals. The UH Cancer Center provides important cancer research, access to life-saving treatment including clinical trials, and education which play a critical role in reducing the cancer burden for multi-ethnic residents.

My 86-year old father was diagnosed with esophageal cancer a few months before his passing. Although he didn't pass from cancer, please know that through research studies done at the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center, lifesaving findings help folks like my father get diagnosed earlier as well as have more treatment options and **better health outcomes**. Our families and friends need your support for today and ... for our future.

Research is critical to understanding and reducing cancer disparities, as well as examining gaps in cancer prevention and care delivery that contribute to these disparities. The UH Cancer Center is *saving lives in Hawai'i and the Pacific*.

I humbly ask for your **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB531 HD1 – Relating to Special License Plates.

Sincerely,
Michelle Hashimoto
2533 Stream Drive
Honolulu, HI 96817
(808) 741-5854

HB-531-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 12:05:36 PM

Testimony for TCA on 3/18/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrew Lum	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Andrew Lum, and I am the Director of Fiscal Administration at the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center. I am submitting this testimony as an individual and not as a representative of the University of Hawai'i or the UH Cancer Center.

I strongly support HB531 HD1, which authorizes the issuance of special number plates to recognize the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center. This initiative provides a unique opportunity to raise public awareness about cancer research and prevention while generating additional funding to support the center's mission.

The UH Cancer Center is dedicated to advancing cancer research particularly for Hawai'i's diverse multiethnic population. Special license plates would not only honor the critical work of the center but also allow community members to demonstrate their support for ongoing efforts to fight cancer in our state.

I respectfully urge you to support HB531 HD1 and help bring greater visibility to the vital work being done at the UH Cancer Center.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

HB-531-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 1:35:14 PM

Testimony for TCA on 3/18/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeannette Kojane	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill to allow for the UH Cancer Center to have special license plates. This will help with funding for the Center and the important work that they do.

Mahalo - Jeannette Kojane

HB-531-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 2:46:06 PM

Testimony for TCA on 3/18/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
sheri higa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill to authorize issuance of special license plates to recognize the UH Cancer Center. It's a small and simple method to support the Center and keep them top of mind.

HB 531, HD 1 testimony in strong support.

Submitted 3/15/25 at 8:29 PM

I strongly support HB 531, HD 1, a specialty license plate for the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center, that a portion of the proceeds from the license plate would support cancer research, patient care, and community outreach in Hawai'i. This would allow supporters of the Cancer Center, like myself, to publicly do so.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HB 531, HD 1 passage this legislative session.