
HOUSE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE AUDITOR TO CONDUCT A STUDY ON THE POTENTIAL
EFFECTS OF ALLOWING GRADUATE STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
HAWAII TO UNIONIZE.

1 WHEREAS, graduate students perform a variety of teaching
2 and research functions that are necessary and vital to the
3 overall strength and accomplishments of a successful university;
4 and
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6 WHEREAS, while graduate students are first and foremost
7 students, their enthusiasm for their subject matter and
8 engagement with the academic material encourage continued
9 intellectual inquiry and discovery among faculty members; and
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11 WHEREAS, at research universities, such as the University
12 of Hawaii at Manoa, graduate students are in the trenches,
13 collaborating on research with faculty members that often leads
14 to innovative ideas, which in turn can attract research grants
15 to the University; and
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17 WHEREAS, the teaching and grading assistance that graduate
18 students provide to faculty members allows the University of
19 Hawaii to continue to offer undergraduates a quality educational
20 experience; and
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22 WHEREAS, graduate assistants at the University of Hawaii
23 have not received meaningful compensation increases since 2004,
24 while the already-high cost of living in Hawaii has steadily
25 increased; and
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27 WHEREAS, disparities exist between actual salaries and
28 benefits provided to graduate assistants at the University of
29 Hawaii at Manoa and comparable institutions across the United
30 States; and
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32 WHEREAS, budget shortfalls have increased class size and
33 workload, the burden of which has largely fallen on the
34 University's graduate student assistants; and



1 WHEREAS, recent attempts to adjust employee pay scale steps
2 for graduate assistants do not take into account the differences
3 in extramural funding and variations between different
4 University departments; and
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6 WHEREAS, changes in the economic climate have also resulted
7 in the elimination of offices and administrative positions
8 crucial to graduate assistants' successful employment
9 experience; and
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11 WHEREAS, without a dependable and accessible avenue to
12 obtain assistance with grievances, employment issues that
13 graduate assistants face go unattended and unresolved; and
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15 WHEREAS, graduate assistants are not currently authorized
16 to organize to advocate for their own employment rights; and
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18 WHEREAS, universities throughout the country enjoy positive
19 working relationships with graduate student unions that fairly
20 advocate for their graduate student members; now, therefore,
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22 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
23 Twenty-seventh Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
24 Session of 2013, that the Auditor is requested to conduct a
25 study on the potential effects of allowing graduate students of
26 the University of Hawaii to unionize; and
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28 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Auditor is requested to
29 include in the study consideration of graduate student working
30 conditions, pay in relation to relevant cost of living and in
31 comparison to graduate students at institutions where graduate
32 students are unionized, differences in workload based upon
33 academic department, and potential costs to the University as an
34 employer; and
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36 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study include information
37 regarding the effects of any mandated increase in graduate
38 assistant compensation for graduate assistants at the University
39 of Hawaii at Manoa and the possible effects of mandatory five-
40 year funding for doctoral students; and
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