



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committees on Higher Education  
and

Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs  
Tuesday, February 12, 2019 at 2:45 p.m.

By

Donald O. Straney, Vice President for Academic Planning and Policy  
University of Hawai'i System

### SB 849 – RELATING TO VETERANS

Chairs Kim and Nishihara, Vice Chairs Kidani and Wakai, and members of the committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB 849. The bill would revise Section 304A-402, Hawaii Revised Statutes, to waive nonresident tuition and fee differentials for any student who served in the United States Navy on an active ship or a ship decommissioned after the year 2000 that is named after a person, place, or word associated with Hawai'i.

There are currently five active or recently decommissioned ships with names related to a person, place, or name in Hawai'i. These include:

- \* The USS Chung-Hoon, commissioned in 2004 with a crew of 380 people;
- \* The USS Hawaii (SSN-776), commissioned in 2007 with a crew of 134 people;
- \* USS Honolulu (SSN-718), a submarine decommissioned in 2007 with a crew of 12 officers and 98 enlisted;
- \* The USS Kamehameha (SSBN-642) an attack submarine decommissioned in 2002 with a crew of 20 officers and 130 enlisted and;
- \* The USS Pearl Harbor, commissioned in 1998 and still in service with 22 officers and 397 enlisted.

We agree with the intent of the bill, to provide educational opportunities for veterans or those actively serving in the U.S. military. We do, however, believe there are existing mechanisms to achieve this end already in place.

First, we already offer resident tuition rates for veterans as outlined in Board of Regents Policy RP 6.208 and in compliance with the Choice Act, (<http://manoa.hawaii.edu/veterans/residency-requirements/>). Under RP 6.208, UH extends resident tuition rates to all active service members and their families stationed in Hawai'i and to reserve members stationed in Hawai'i. Our current policy is broader and encompasses all branches of the military and all members of the Navy regardless

of the ship upon which they sail. Thus, while this bill is well meaning, it is not clear how it will extend benefits more broadly than existing UH policy.

Furthermore, unlike our current policy, implementing a bill that requires an individual to demonstrate they have served on a specific vessel to receive resident rates will incur unnecessary bureaucracy on the part of the service men and women who may take advantage of this opportunity.

Finally, with the exception of distance education, any service member of one of these vessels would have to be located in Hawai'i to take advantage of the tuition benefits anyway and would then, by definition, be covered under existing UH policy.

Because of the concerns identified here, the University respectfully recommends this bill be deferred. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 849, RELATING TO VETERANS

PRESENTATION TO THE  
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL, AND MILITARY  
AFFAIRS

AND

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

BY

MR. RONALD P. HAN  
DIRECTOR OF STATE OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES

February 12, 2019  
2:45 p.m.

Good afternoon, Chair Nishihara, Vice Chair Wakai and Chair Mercado-Kim, Vice Chair Kidani and members of both Committees:

I'm Ron Han, Director of the State Office of Veterans Services (OVS). I appreciate this opportunity to **provide testimony and comments** for Senate Bill 849.

This measure requires the Board of Regents of the University of Hawaii to waive non-resident tuition and fee differential for Veterans of the United States Navy who served on an active ship or ship decommissioned after 2000 that is named after a person, place, or word associated with Hawaii and who were Honorably discharged. The intent of the measure appears to offer and provide enhanced tuition assistance for deserving Veterans. However, the measure is very specific and delineates only one service component and further narrows the scope of eligible to those who served on a current or decommissioned ship after 2000 that is named for a person, place or word associated with Hawaii. Other service component members also have served in similar capacities that would also fulfill this measure's objective. The question arises why other deserving Veterans whether on a ship or in an aircraft or in facilities similarly named for prominent Hawaii leaders and warriors are not included in this bill?

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of Hawaii's Veterans and their families.

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**SB-849**

Submitted on: 2/9/2019 10:48:30 PM

Testimony for HRE on 2/12/2019 2:45:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Erik Meade	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

I am a U.S. Army veteran.

This bill creates an unequal opportunity using arbitrary logic while surrendering state power to the federal government and should be opposed.

Hawaii does not allow a lottery, but sailors lucky enough to serve on a few certain ships who's name is associated with Hawaii win instate tuition? What about all those other sailors who also serve our country and through that ours' and all other states? What about the other branches of service who's members serve our country and through that ours' and other states? This bill creates an unequal opportunity for service members.

Creating such unequal opportunities I look for the reasoning of excluding so many other's who serve our country and through that our state and find mere coincidence.

Finally, I oppose the idea of Hawaii surrendering it's power to decide who is a state resident for tuition purposed to the federal government based on it's power to name Navy ships.

Please oppose this unequal and arbitrary bill that weakens Hawaii's state rights.

**LATE**

**SB-849**

Submitted on: 2/11/2019 9:16:27 PM  
Testimony for HRE on 2/12/2019 2:45:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Melodie Aduja	Testifying for O`ahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities of the Democratic Party of Hawai`i	Support	No

Comments: