



February 22, 2012

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 2639HD1  
RELATING TO HIGHER EDUCATION**

**HOUSE COMMITTEE FINANCE**

**HEARING ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23RD, AT 10:00AM, IN  
CONFERENCE ROOM 308**

Aloha Chair Oshiro: The Oahu Veterans Council's delegates are deeply honored to represent the interests of our veterans and their families. Our Legislative Committee voted unanimously to support House Bill 2639HD1.

We are extremely grateful for your efforts to amend the University of Hawaii college-credit equivalency program to include service in the United States armed forces, and require the program to develop a learning assessment to determine eligibility. However, we respectfully ask you to consider a much earlier effective date.

With the nation's largest per-capita, military community to be proud of, Hawaii is doing the right thing for those who serve so selflessly and ask only for the same recognition and respect we would expect for ourselves.

The Oahu Veterans Council respectfully urges your committee to consider passing House Bill 2639HD1 with an earlier effective date; mahalo for allowing us to testify, regarding this extremely important issue.

*Dennis Egge*

Dennis Egge; Chairman, Legislative Committee



1298 Kukila Street, Honolulu, Hawaii 96818  
Email: [sballard@oahuveternascenter.com](mailto:sballard@oahuveternascenter.com); Phone: 808-422-4000; Fax: 808-422-4001  
[www.oahuveternascenter.com](http://www.oahuveternascenter.com)



**OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
(MILITARY COMMUNITY AND FAMILY POLICY)**

4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

DoD-State Liaison Office

**Chair Marcus R. Oshiro, House Finance Committee  
February 22, 2012**

**Testimony of  
Laurie Crehan, Ed.D.  
Quality of Life Regional Liaison  
Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Military Community & Family Policy  
DoD-State Liaison Office**

**HB 2639 Relating to Higher Education; College-Credit Equivalency Program**

**Testimony**

Chair Oshiro and members of the House Committee on Finance, on behalf of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony today on HB 2639, a bill relating Professional and Vocational Licensing; Military Training, Education, and Service. My name is Laurie Crehan. I am with the Department of Defense State Liaison Office which operates under the direction of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, and the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy. A top priority issue this year is to facilitate Service members receiving academic credit for Military Education, Training, and Experience. The policy in HB 2639 will certainly help our transitioning Service members in obtaining academic credit in order to more quickly enter the workforce.

Separating Service members are frequently delayed getting post-Service employment even though they have applicable military education, training and experience which can qualify them for academic credit towards degree requirements. Transitioning Service members leave the military with documented training and experience that can prepare them for civilian employment; however, this documentation is not always used by higher education institutions to qualify them for academic credit. Reported unemployment rates of separating Service members that are higher than national averages have brought attention to supporting issues such as academic credit for service to alleviate this problem.

As of June 2011, one million Veterans were unemployed and the jobless rate for post-9/11 veterans was 13.3 %, with young male Veterans (ages 18 to 24) experiencing an unemployment rate of 21.9%. This number appears to be rising as so many of our troops are returning home from combat. In 2010, according to Defense Manpower Data Center, 2,239 Service members separated or retired back to Hawaii, calling Hawaii home. Many will pursue higher education and training in Hawaii, using their tuition assistance benefits.

The Department of Defense recognizes that if we are going to ask academic institutions to evaluate military training and experience, we have to make it easier for them to do so,

*Improving the Lives of Military Members and their Families*

minimizing any fiscal impact. In this regard, we are evaluating how we make that information more meaningful and available to the academic institutions.

- DoD and the Military Services provide each Service member a transcript of their experience and training which can be used by civilian institutions to assess for possible academic credit:
  - The DoD Verification of Military Experience and Training (VMET);
  - Army/American Council On Education Registry Transcript System (AARTS);
  - Sailor and Marine Council On Education Registry Transcript System (SMART); and
  - The Community College of the Air Force Transcript.
- The American Council on Education (ACE) has established college credit recommendations for the learning experiences, which are published in the *ACE Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in the Armed Services*. Institutions can consider ACE comparability and applicability of the credit in relation to the student's selected program of study.
- Finally, a key aspect of providing accrediting and credentialing agencies the ability to assess military training is making the training programs of instruction (POIs) available to them for review. Currently, the Services each have their own policies and procedures related to development and maintenance of POIs and there is no centralized location for agencies to access them. Ensuring POIs have some degree of standardization and are more easily accessible to accrediting and credentialing agencies and educational institutions will make it easier for them to assess whether the military training courses meet their criteria. DoD is in the process of doing just that.

The policy, as proposed in HB 2639, will establish a more uniformed approach toward awarding academic credit and save time and money for the Service members trying to complete their education.

Another consideration is that the more credit given to a veteran towards a degree or certification, the more classroom space that can be made available to other students, especially in this time of cutbacks.

We look forward to Hawaii's leadership in adopting these requirements to assist our Veterans and thank the members of the committee for your consideration. We appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Dr. Laurie Crehan  
State Liaison  
DoD State Liaison Office  
858-361-1731

**Testimony to the House Committee on Finance  
Thursday, February 23, 2012  
10:00 AM  
Conference Room 308**

**RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 2639, HD1, RELATING TO HIGHER EDUCATION**

**Chair Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee, and members of the committee.**

My name is Charles Ota and I am the Vice President for Military Affairs at The Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii (The Chamber). I am here to state The Chamber's support of House Bill No. 2639, HD1, Relating to Higher Education.

The measure proposes to amend the University of Hawaii college-credit equivalency program to include service in the United States armed forces, and requires the program to develop a learning assessment to determine eligibility.

The Chamber's Military Affairs Council (MAC) serves as the liaison for the state in matters relating to the U.S. military and provides oversight for the State's \$12.2 billion dollar defense industry.

The proposal recognizes that in many cases the professional education and experiences gained by members of the armed forces of the United States meet higher academic standards and are equivalent to courses offered for credit in the university system. Therefore, these professional level courses should qualify for the award of college credits.

We recommend that the bill be approved for further discussion.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify.

Dear Chair Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee and other members of the committee,

My name is Theresa Donnelly, and I am an active duty Lieutenant living in Hawaii attending graduate school at Hawaii Pacific University (HPU) under the Naval War College's Graduate Degree Program.

I am writing in strong support of HB 2639, relating to awarding equivalency credits to students attending the University of Hawaii (UH).

When I attended Worcester State College in 2004-2006, at least 24 of my credits from equivalent active duty training was taken into account, enabling me to complete an undergraduate degree in less than three years. This helped me return to the fleet in optimal time and be commissioned as an officer. I was so pleased that Worcester State allowed me to take advantage of my military training to count toward college credits.

With so many service members forced out of the service, UH can help our troops by accepting these credits, letting them join the workforce quicker and helping them become a productive member of our society.

As a side note, I hope someday we have the University of Hawaii on Navy colleges on base, as I would have seriously considered attending UH instead of HPU had the option been as assessable. Although I don't come from Hawaii, I am a true UH fan with a lot of respect for this fine institution.

I have been happy to hear of more partnerships with UH and the military, including one between Pacific Command's Public-Private partnership directorate (J9) to provide UH students with military security opportunities and a robust internship program. And, I have helped plan two UH military appreciation events, where I felt embraced by the community there.

Thank you for your time in reading my testimony.

Theresa Donnelly  
3021 Anderson Ave  
Honolulu, HI 96818