

LATE

Date: March 14, 2017
Time: 1:15 pm
Place: Conference Room 414

To: Senate Committee on Higher Education
Senator Kaiali'i Kahele, Chair
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair

Re: Support for HB1276, Relating to Taxation

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. The Graduate Student Organization (GSO) at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa writes in **support** of HB1276, Relating to Taxation. The GSO represents approximately 4,700 graduate students at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

The net cost of graduate education has soared in the last several decades, as has corresponding student debt. An analysis of Department of Education data shows a surge in overall student debt between 2004 and 2012, with debt for graduate students accounting for some of the most dramatic increases in student borrowing during this period. Median debt has increased from \$40,000 to almost \$60,000 from 2004 to 2012.¹

With students facing decades-long trends of stagnant wages and skyrocketing costs of living, the State of Hawai'i should demonstrate its support for the ambitions of its students to earn a quality education. A state income tax deduction for student loan interest paid on qualified education loans would be a small, sensible, and meaningful move in this direction. For these reasons, we urge you to **support** HB1276. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

1. [Delisle, J. "The Graduate Student Debt Review." The New America Foundation. March 25, 2014.](#)