

JAN 22 2007

S.B. NO. 1535

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO TUITION WAIVERS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that there is a need to
2 require the University of Hawaii system to provide higher
3 education tuition waivers to all enrolled students who are
4 native Hawaiian (that is, who are for purposes of this Act
5 native Hawaiian or Hawaiian as defined in section 10-2, Hawaii
6 Revised Statutes).

7 Native Hawaiian students comprise approximately twenty-six
8 per cent of Hawaii's public school population and more than
9 eighty-five per cent of those native Hawaiian students finish
10 high school. However, while about half of all native Hawaiian
11 high school graduates go on to attend college, native Hawaiians
12 have the lowest college graduation rates of all ethnic groups in
13 Hawaii. Of those who are able to attend college, far fewer
14 actually graduate with a college degree than students from any
15 other ethnic group in the State. According to the University of
16 Hawaii's Institutional Research Office, native Hawaiians account
17 for only fourteen per cent of the total University of Hawaii
18 student population; this figure includes all native Hawaiians



1 attending the system's three four-year and seven two-year
2 campuses. Further, while more than eighty per cent of the
3 University of Hawaii system's non-native-Hawaiian students
4 return for a second year of college, the percentage of native
5 Hawaiian students returning to college for a second year is
6 nearly ten per cent lower.

7 The low college matriculation and retention rates of native
8 Hawaiians throughout the University of Hawaii system seriously
9 impacts their ability to complete college and earn a degree.
10 Nationwide, more native Hawaiians have dropped out of college
11 than have earned either a two-year associate or four-year
12 baccalaureate degree. According to the 2000 United States
13 census, even though twenty-five per cent of all native Hawaiians
14 have earned some college credits, most have not completed their
15 undergraduate degrees, and only fifteen per cent of all native
16 Hawaiians have earned at least a bachelor's degree.

17 The statistics are even more troubling for native Hawaiians
18 attempting to attain the highest academic degrees in their
19 fields, including master's, professional, and doctorate degrees.
20 Only 3.2 per cent of native Hawaiians statewide have earned a
21 graduate degree of any kind, compared with 8.4 per cent of all
22 Hawaii residents and 8.9 per cent of the total United States



1 population. Further, only 3.6 per cent of the current doctoral
2 candidates at the University of Hawaii are native Hawaiian and
3 nearly seventy per cent of them do not receive any type of
4 financial aid or tuition waivers.

5 The academic stress of earning a college degree is
6 dramatically increased for many native Hawaiian students by high
7 levels of economic stress. Statistically, Hawaiians attending
8 the University of Hawaii are, on average, far more affected by
9 negative economic indicators than students from other ethnic
10 groups. For example, native Hawaiian students who do complete
11 their degrees take, on the average, a full year longer to do so
12 than students of other ethnic groups and many native Hawaiian
13 students must work full- or part-time while attempting to
14 complete their college degrees. This slower-than-average
15 completion rate is due primarily to the consequences of native
16 Hawaiians' poor access to available socio-economic resources,
17 combined with their ongoing need to produce income for
18 themselves and their families and Hawaii's high cost of living.

19 The low numbers of native Hawaiians with college and
20 professional degrees seriously affects the ability of Hawaii's
21 indigenous people to participate in the State's higher education
22 system as professors, deans, administrators, and policy makers.



1 At the University of Hawaii at Manoa, only four per cent of all
2 faculty positions are held by native Hawaiians and less than one
3 per cent of permanently tenured positions are held by native
4 Hawaiians.

5 The purpose of this Act is to require the University of
6 Hawaii to provide higher education tuition waivers for all
7 enrolled native Hawaiian students. This academic and economic
8 support can have far-reaching positive consequences for the
9 State as a whole. As more native Hawaiians are able to earn
10 college degrees, they can pursue the highest levels of academic
11 and professional achievement. Through their participation in
12 networks of civic responsibility in the professional, academic,
13 business, and other arenas, native Hawaiian graduates of the
14 University of Hawaii system will be able to contribute more
15 effectively to the economic and social health of the State of
16 Hawaii and the native Hawaiian people.

17 SECTION 2. Chapter 304A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
18 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated
19 and to read as follows:

20 "§304A- Tuition waivers for native Hawaiians and
21 Hawaiians. Any law to the contrary notwithstanding, the board
22 of regents or its designated representatives shall grant a



S.B. NO. 1535

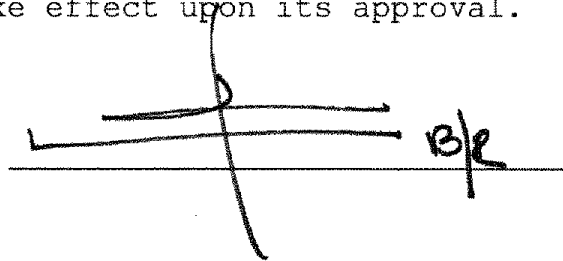
1 waiver of all tuition to each and every student enrolled at any
2 of the university system's ten campuses who is native Hawaiian
3 or Hawaiian as defined in section 10-2; provided that a
4 student's possession of a card issued by the office of Hawaiian
5 affairs identifying the student as a person included in the
6 Hawaiian registry under section 10-19 shall constitute
7 conclusive proof that the student is native Hawaiian or
8 Hawaiian."

9 SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.

10 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

11

INTRODUCED BY:

A handwritten signature consisting of a vertical line intersecting two horizontal lines, followed by the initials "B/R" written to the right of the signature.



Report Title:

University of Hawaii

Description:

Requires the University of Hawaii board of regents to waive all tuition to all native Hawaiian students in the University of Hawaii system.

