

Legislative Relations Committee Report -2017 to 2018

Leeward CC Faculty Senate

Summary

This legislative round, the Committee focused on the following items.

OER

First, the OER (Open Education Resources) bill introduced by the Higher Education Committee chaired by Senator Kahele stirred controversy. In its original form, SB2328 (did not pass) stated:

“Beginning with the 2020-2021 school year, requires all courses at all campuses within the University of Hawai‘i system that require the use of instructional materials to exclusively use instructional materials from the open educational resources at the University of Hawai‘i, under certain conditions.”

SB 2328 was met with strong UH System-wide opposition due mostly to the authors’ uninformed position on OER ; but also to faculties’ perceived overreach into their sacred realm of academic freedom. Proponents of OER also were concerned with the SB2328’s top-down mandate and its negative impact on an otherwise vibrant and growing movement. SB 2328 died in its second reading. “Both houses decided OER is a good idea but will devote a committee to further study it.” The committee has yet-to-be identified; funding for its activities has yet to be disclosed.

HAWAI‘I PROMISE

A second item closely followed was HB2501(passed), also named the Hawai‘i Promise bill, which:

Establishes the University of Hawaii Community College Promise Program to provide scholarships for the unmet direct cost needs of qualified students enrolled at any community college campus of the University of Hawaii system. Appropriates funds to establish and implement the program.

Other companion Hawai‘i Promise bills were introduced; one of note included extending funding to include all campuses of the UH System. HB 2501 was the only Hawai‘i Promise funding passed and funded. It also codified an annual recurring sum of \$700,000.

NO-SMOKING ON UH CAMPUSES

The intent of a third bill, SB 134 (passed), would directly impact the quality of life on UH campuses. This bill “Prohibits smoking and tobacco use, including the use of electronic smoking devices, by any person on the premises of the University of Hawaii.”

OTHERS

Two other bills closely followed died in Committee. One capped increases in UH tuition based on the change in the States median household income. The other would have established collective bargaining rights for UH Graduate Student hires.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

A final bill closely followed by the Committee related to environmental protection and clean air. SB 3095 (passed):

“Beginning 1/1/2019, requires all users of restricted use pesticides to be subject to a requirement to report on their use of restricted use pesticides to the Department of Agriculture (DOA). Prohibits the

use of a restricted use pesticide on or within 100 feet of a school during normal school hours beginning on 1/1/2019. Prohibits the use of pesticides containing chlorpyrifos as an active ingredient beginning 1/1/2019; provided that the DOA shall grant any person, upon request, a temporary permit allowing the use of pesticides containing chlorpyrifos through 12/31/2022..."

The passage of this bill after years of unsuccessful attempts due to heavy industry lobbying is a huge win for the residents of the Hawaiian Islands.

FINAL STOP

All bills that passed the 2018 Legislature still require Governor Ige's signature to become law. Ige's deadline, June 25, 2018, is fast approaching. In an election year where Ige is presently polling double digits behind his female opponent, the Committee hopes that this would factor into the Governor's decision to support measures that benefit the health and welfare of the general public.