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March 15, 2019

Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair
Representative Mark J. Hashem, Vice Chair
Representative Amy A. Perruso, Vice Chair
Committee on Lower and Higher Education

Dear Chair Woodson, Vice Chairs Hashem and Perruso, and Committee Members:

RE: HCR 143/HR 132 Urging the University of Hawai'i to Study the Feasibility of Establishing a Hawai'i Community College Distance Learning Center in the Puna District

Puna, with a land mass about the size of Oahu, is the largest geographic area in the State of Hawai'i without an institution of higher learning. Its residents, perhaps attracted by the relative affordability of housing, are among the state's lowest income and suffer the highest poverty rates. Much of the district lacks access to reliable, high speed internet, making on-line or web-based learning a challenging hardship, and the long commute to Hilo and its "big city amenities," like the University of Hawai'i at Hilo and Hawai'i Community College, may be prohibitive for reasons of both time and money.

The establishment of a distance learning center within the Puna district would provide essential access to post-secondary education within a reasonable commute distance, thereby enhancing opportunities for students to develop their skills and improve their futures without leaving their home district.

I appreciate this Committee's support of SB 457, SD1, on this same subject, and ask that you support this Resolution and Concurrent Resolution as well.

Respectfully Submitted,

Harry Kim
MAYOR