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March 19, 2019

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair
Committee on Higher Education

Dear Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, and Committee Members:

RE: SCR 77/SR 54 Encouraging the Legislature to Fund the Hawai'i Rural Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Program

It seems a bit unusual to have a legislative resolution encouraging the Legislature to take an action, but I certainly support the idea behind SCR 77 and SR 54.

The shortage of health care providers in Hawai'i has been well documented, by all accounts is getting worse, and is of major concern. It appears that a program of loan repayment is currently in operation and is working to attract providers to federally designated health professional shortage areas, and to geographic areas of Hawai'i found to be underserved.

Two bills which would have funded the program, SB 1404 and HB 902, both died in the House. Unless there is a flaw in the program of which I am unaware, I hope that your Committee will recognize the importance of this issue and see the value of the repayment program. Passing SCR 77 and SR 54 would be a positive step, although I would also hope that you consider incorporating such funding in your priority list of add-ons for the State budget.

Respectfully Submitted,

Harry Kim
MAYOR