



March 23, 2014

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

TO: Senator Brian Taniguchi, Chair
Senator Gilbert Kahele Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Higher Education

FROM: Dr. Robert Hirokawa, President, Hawaii Public Health Association

SUBJECT: **SUPPORT - GM 590: Michelle Tagorda, Gubernatorial Nominee to the University of Hawaii Board of Regents**

Aloha Chair Taniguchi, Vice Chair Kahele and Members of the Senate Higher Education Committee:

I am pleased to testify on behalf of Ms. Michelle Tagorda, who has been nominated as the student representative for the University of Hawaii Board of Regents. The Hawaii Public Health Association (HPHA) represents a membership of over 600 students, professionals, and practitioners in the field of public health from various disciplines statewide. HPHA's mission is to promote public health in Hawai'i through leadership, collaboration, education and advocacy, and our vision is health equity in Hawai'i and the Pacific and a strong public health workforce able to effectively respond to health challenges.

Michelle is an exceptional young woman who is currently working towards her master's in public health degree at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. In her current role as one of two student representatives on the HPHA Board, Michelle has attended our Board meetings and participated in discussions as a full voting member, served on the planning committee for National Public Health Week, and also participated in our recent strategic planning event. Michelle is very collaborative within HPHA and responsive to Board issues. She will be representing Hawaii's public health students in an upcoming American Public Health Association panel in November.

Michelle has been a full partner in our efforts to address public health issues since she joined our Board in September 2013. I speak for our entire Board in recommending her to be confirmed as the Student Representative on the UH Board of Regents.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on Michelle Tagorda's nomination.