

# Resolution 21-155 Testimony

**MISC. COM. 416**

BUD

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**From:** CLK Council Info  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 6, 2021 10:34 AM  
**Subject:** Parks and Community Services Testimony

## Written Testimony

Name	Ivo Harink
Phone	+31612707997
Email	ivoharink@hotmail.com
Meeting Date	07-07-2021
Council/PH Committee	Parks and Community Services
Agenda Item	RES21-155
Your position on the matter	Oppose
Representing	Self
Organization	
Written Testimony	
Testimony Attachment	
Accept Terms and Agreement 1	

IP: 192.168.200.67

TO: Members of the Committee on Budget

FROM: Natalie Iwasa  
808-395-3233

DATE: Wednesday, July 21, 2021

SUBJECT: Resolution 21-155, Federal Student Loan Debt - **OPPOSE**

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Aloha Chair Say and Councilmembers,

Thank you for allowing testimony on Resolution 21-155, which urges the President, Congress and the U.S. Secretary of Education to cancel up to \$10,000 of federal student loan debt per person. I oppose this resolution.

Student loans may be used for expenditures other than direct tuition. For decades, many other students have taken loans and fully paid their debt with no expectation of their loans being turned into grants. It is unfair to now allow others to have their debt cancelled resulting in repayment by other taxpayers.

**Please vote "no" on this resolution.**

Testimony in Support of  
Resolution 21-155

Council of the City & County of Honolulu  
Committee on Budget  
Wednesday, July 21, 2021  
9:00am  
Council Chambers

Dear Chair Say, Vice Chair Cordero, and members of the Committee on Budget,

I write this testimony in support of Resolution 21-155: URGING THE PRESIDENT, CONGRESS, AND THE UNITED STATES SECRETARY OF EDUCATION TO CANCEL FEDERAL STUDENT LOAN DEBT.

There are Americans – including many local Hawai'i residents – that accumulatively have over \$1.7 trillion in student loan debt. Having any amount of student loan debt – whether it be \$10,000 or over \$100,000 – presents many challenges for citizens to live normal lives and negatively impacts their overall quality of life. Although every individual's student loan is different and their situations are unique, we see many of our family members, friends, colleagues, peers, and fellow citizens struggle with paying off their debts, often putting off these payments to take care of other essential needs for themselves or their loved ones. The reality is that student loan debt has become more of a lifelong burden than a worthwhile, educational investment that it was meant to be when individuals made the decision to attend college to have a better life for those around them.

Although there is no right or wrong answer to how much student loan debt should be cancelled, I believe some level of forgiveness from our federal government will benefit to stimulate our economy, get citizens on a better track to living their dreams and potentials, and address the racial wealth gap that we see in our country today. Regardless of the decision, having Congress or our federal government's leaders take decisive action on student loan debt will lead to an increase in borrowers' overall health and well-being: people will begin to overcome anxiety and depression over their financial situations, grow in their confidence to succeed, and focus on improving all aspects of their quality of life. I believe this will also lead to more borrowers contributing to and stimulating the economy, as this will allow them to prioritize their financial choices on what is essential and matters to each and every one of us – buying our first home, raising a family, caring for our kupuna and loved ones, investing in ourselves through quality healthcare, and so much more, all to simply live a happy life.

There has been so much progress made to help the people of our state and country feel like they can and should invest in their educational pursuits without feeling the heavy burden of financial debt will be carried on their shoulders for the rest of their lives. From increased

scholarship opportunities for socioeconomically disadvantaged students to free community college plans being implemented across the nation, we are setting those who will shape the direction of this country in the right direction to succeed, live quality lives, and contribute to the state of our economy. Let's continue to make progress here, but also help those who have struggled with the financial burden of student loans for years by cancelling some level of their debt to show our commitment to the betterment of the lives of everyone.

Although this is a federal issue, I commend the Council of the City & County of Honolulu for taking up this resolution and hope that this body stands with our local residents who struggle with student loan debt and support any efforts from President Biden, Congress, or the U.S. Secretary of Education to cancel student loan debt. I am fortunate to not currently have any student loan debt, but know it is important that we all look out for those around us who silently struggle with this and do all we can to make positive change that will ripple more many generations to come.

Mahalo for the opportunity to support Resolution 21-155 and I ask for your vote to pass this out of its committee. Thank you for your service to our city and wishing you well in your deliberations and decision making on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Richard Mizusawa, M.Ed.