



January 27, 2014

LATE TESTIMONY: Written Only

To: Representative Mark N. Nakashima, Chair
Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice-Chair
Members of the House Committee on Labor and Public Employment

From: The Hawai'i Public Health Association

Re: HB2097 Relating to Employment - SUPPORT

Dear Chair Nakashima and Committee Members,

The Hawai'i Public Health Association (HPHA) supports the passage of HB2097 and the amendments to Chapter 398 of the Hawai'i Revised Statutes.

HPHA believes that a need exists to provide compensation for employees on leave, in accordance with the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA), who are providing care for their newborn children or other family members, as parents or caregivers. Evidence to support the need for this bill's passage includes:

- The number of children with parents or their only parent working has increased by 13% since the drafting of the FMLA.
- Seven percent of people who filed for bankruptcy in 2010 cited costs associated with the birth of a child as the cause.
- By 2020, approximately 40% of the workforce will be providing care for frail parents or other elders.
- Only 11% of U.S. workers have access to paid family leave through their employers.
- Women, as primary caregivers of infants, children and elderly parents, are affected disproportionately by the unavailability of paid family and medical leave.
- As employees, women are a source of income for a household, and in some cases the sole source of income. Therefore, income lost during maternity leave has significant economic impact of her entire family.
- Hawai'i has one of the highest rates of grandparents as primary caregivers for grandchildren.
- In Hawai'i, there are many families who are have both parents employed but cannot afford to take unpaid leave.

Because HPHA is committed to addressing key social determinants that affect health, we support this measure that helps to address economic conditions that affect family health and well-being. HPHA also supports a Temporary Caregiver Insurance (TCI) for parenting and caregiving of children and other family members based on the following factors:

- Paid leave makes fiscal sense for small and large businesses because the business owners are not the ones to contribute to an employee's replacement income, and therefore, employees are the ones solely funding the TCI.
- TCI reduces turnover costs. A 2011 study of California's family leave program found that it would save approximately \$89 million per year by improving employee retention and reducing costs associated with hiring and training new employees.
- This additional form of paid leave will add an incentive for employees to compete for quality jobs.
- TCI is revenue neutral, meaning TCI is a self-sufficient, employee-funded program. This would ensure that TCI will not be an additional financial burden to employers.
- Paid leave helps to keep families off of public assistance and saves the State money to devote resources for elder care by promoting immediate and long term health outcomes for mothers, children, and aging relatives.

Our 600 plus Hawaii Public Health Association members statewide ask for your strong support on this important quality of life and health bill.

Mahalo.

Attached: HPHA Fact Sheet – Who We are

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FACT SHEET

About Hawaii Public Health Association

HPHA is an association of community members, public health professionals and organizations dedicated to improving public health. HPHA also serves as a voice for public health professionals and as a repository for information about public health in the Pacific.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to promote public health in Hawai'i through leadership, collaboration, education and advocacy.

Vision

Our vision is health equity in Hawai'i and the Pacific and a strong public health workforce able to effectively respond to health challenges.

Values

- HPHA believes that health is a basic human right, and consequently seeks to be a voice for social justice.
- HPHA recognizes the value of diversity and that specific problems and solutions arise for poor, rural and indigenous populations.
- HPHA believes that decisions based on evidence-based principles form the core of public health practice.
- HPHA is determined to be autonomous, independent and transparent.

HPHA strives to promote health equity and overall well-being by:

- providing leadership and education on public health issues
- promoting advocacy and supporting coalitions for healthy communities, populations and environments
- fostering networks and training opportunities for public health professionals

Leading the Way for Public Health in Hawai'i

HPHA works to ensure good public health within our state, and provides a strong link between Hawaii's public health professionals and the American Public Health Association with which we are affiliated, as well as to other State Public Health Associations and organizations. We work to ensure the highest quality public health workforce; build a strong collective voice for sound public health policies; protect funding for core public health services, and increase awareness and community action to address the root causes of persistent health inequities in our society. We are a large network of public health professionals and partner organizations that recognize that individual health is strongly influenced by the social conditions in which a person is born, lives and works.