



February 9, 2014

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

To: The Honorable Mark M. Nakashima, Chair
The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice-Chair
Members, House Committee on Labor & Public Employment

From: Hawaii Public Health Association

Subject: **HB 2278 RELATING TO MINIMUM HOURLY WAGE - SUPPORT.**

Aloha Chair Nakashima, Vice-Chair Yamashita and Members of the Committee;

The Hawaii Public Health Association (HPHA) is respectfully submitting testimony in support of HB 2278, regarding raising Hawaii's minimum hourly wage to \$10 an hour by January 1, 2017. HPHA is an association of over 600 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 (see attached HPHA fact sheet).

While HPHA tends to focus on legislation that has a direct impact on public health in Hawaii, the HPHA is providing testimony on this bill, because an employee's salary has an impact on their quality of life as well as personal and public health status. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that the 2013 population totals approximately 1,404,054 people in the State of Hawaii. Of that population, between 2008-2012, 10.8% of those people are living below poverty level, compared to the U.S. poverty level estimate of 14.9%. While the disparity seems favorable compared to the US, over 4.1% in Hawaii can be attributed to individuals who work multiple jobs, earning a cumulative salary that puts them in an income range that keeps them just out of poverty.

An increase in minimum wage can result in several favorable outcomes, including but not limited to: (1) people may not need to work multiple jobs, allowing more people currently looking for work to move into these positions and contributing to increasing the labor participation rate; (2) employees will be able to afford living necessities, specifically health care; and (3) employees and employers will benefit from the reduction in risk of illness and other health hazards associated with working multiple jobs..

The HPHA believes that this measure will have a positive effect on both a micro and a macroeconomic level which has lasting effects on almost all aspects of peoples' lives, including health, overall quality of life and greater future opportunities. It is for these reasons that we support the passage of this measure.

Thank you for your consideration of our supportive testimony on HB 2278.

Mahalo.

Attached: HPHA Fact Sheet – Who We are