



February 5, 2018

To: The Honorable John Mizuno, Chair  
The Honorable Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair  
Members of the House Committee on Health and Human Services

Re: **Strong Support for HB2158**

Hrg: February 6, 2018 at 8:30am room 329

The Hawaii Public Health Association is a group of over 600 community members, public health professionals and organizations statewide 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.

HPHA strongly supports HB2158 which would reduce the use, access, and exposure of tobacco products to youth by prohibiting the issuance of retail tobacco permits and sale of a tobacco product or an electronic smoking device within 750 feet of schools, public parks, and public housing complexes.

Tobacco licensing and zoning laws are effective strategies that impact the density of tobacco retailers, access to tobacco products and location of tobacco retailers. When more tobacco retailers are located in a given area, their overwhelming presence and marketing gives residents and youth in that community the impression that tobacco and electronic smoking devices are available, accessible, and acceptable.

Restricting the sale of tobacco products and electronic smoking devices near schools, public parks, and public housing matters because minority populations, youth, and low-income communities are already disproportionately affected by tobacco. When tobacco store proximity and presence is strong in the community, it perpetuates social norms about tobacco use. Whether you are keiki walking to school or playground, daily exposure to these promotions suggest that smoking or vaping is acceptable.

I strongly support changing our tobacco zoning restrictions to create an area between schools and tobacco stores where our youth will be protected from onslaught of advertising and retail availability of tobacco and e-cigarette products.

HB2158 is a policy solution that can protect our communities from being disproportionately targeted by tobacco, reduce tobacco-related health disparities, and encourages responsible tobacco retailing.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on important health issues affecting people in Hawai'i.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Holly Kessler'.

Holly Kessler, Executive Director  
Hawai'i Public Health Association