



February 20, 2018

To: Chair Dela Cruz
Vice Chair Keith-Agaran
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Re: **Strong Support for SB2988 HD1**

Hrg: February 21, 2018 at 10:08am room 221

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 **SB2988 HD1** which will provide funds to continue the **Kupuna Caregivers** program. Through the Kupuna Caregivers program, our dedicated family caregivers, as well as our local small businesses, will receive the support that they deserve and need.

We know the need for the Kupuna Caregivers program is incredibly high for families across Hawaii. Within just a few weeks of launch, the Executive Office on Aging documented over 500 requests for services. Each of those requests represents friends and neighbors who have few other resources to turn to for caregiving support. Kupuna Caregivers is intended to support those caregiving families who are not eligible for Medicaid but are still struggling to pay for the care services they need. They are working full time, sometimes working multiple jobs, and often taking care of young children and an aging kupuna at the same time.

By providing a care benefit of \$70 per day, Kupuna Caregivers establishes a much needed "care floor," ensuring that working families have access to resources to provide care at home. The first year of funding took the important step of establishing the program and could help assist dozens of families across the state. This next step forward needs to fund the program fully to cover all other families who are in desperate need of support offered by Kupuna Caregivers.

Last year, the legislature received national attention for its leadership in creating a first-in-the-nation model to value the time and selfless efforts of family caregivers. We ask you to take this important next step to continue the program we so desperately need.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Holly Kessler, Executive Director
Hawaii Public Health Association