



February 17, 2019

To: To the Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health
The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
The Honorable Stanley Chang, Vice Chair

Re: **Strong Support for SB549**

Hrg: February 20, 2019 at 9:15 AM at Capitol Room 229

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 SB549, which promotes healthy beverage options by making the default beverage offered in restaurants with children's meals a healthy drink.

This bill will help support families by providing more healthy choices for kids. Instead of getting a sugary drink by default, the meal will come with water or milk. Sugary drinks are the single largest source of added sugars in our kids' diets, making up half of all sugars consumed. Soda and fruit punch are already too high in sugar for kids, yet it is usually the default beverage served with children's meals. Consuming just one sugary drink a day significantly increases a child's risk to type 2 diabetes, becoming overweight, and developing tooth decay. It is never too early for children to practice healthy eating habits such as eating well and exercising regularly. Food establishments are an ideal venue for children to practice these healthy habits and to make it easy for families to make the healthy choice.

Our keiki are sweet enough. This is a step in the right direction to support parents' efforts to protect their children's health. I strongly support SB549 and respectfully ask you to pass this out of committee.

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
Hawaii Public Health Association