



February 23, 2017

Chair Jill Tokuda
Vice Chair Donovan Dela Cruz
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

SUPPORT FOR SB 534 RELATING TO KUPUNA CARE

The Hawaii Public Health Association emphatically **supports Senate Bill 534**, which creates the Kupuna Caregivers program to aid working caregivers in Hawaii. We believe this bill is a positive first step to improve the health of our kūpuna as well as their caregivers.

The Hawaii Public Health Association (HPHA) is an association of over 600 community members, public health professionals and organizations statewide dedicated to improving public health. HPHA also serves as a voice for public professionals and as a repository for information about public health in the Pacific.

It has been well documented on various peer-reviewed journal articles that the health of caregivers is negatively impacted as they care for the health of a loved one. The Centers For Disease Control and Prevention's *A Public Health Approach to Translating Research into Practice* states that "family caregiving has been associated with increased levels of depression and anxiety as well as higher use of psychoactive medications, poorer self-reported physical health, compromised immune function, and increased mortality."

Yet family caregivers are a critical national health care resource. Families often are a primary source of home care and support for older relatives, contributing services that would cost hundreds of billions of dollars annually if they had to be purchased. We simply could not survive as a community without the support that family caregivers provide.

Working caregivers have a difficult task of balancing work and life balance, typically finishing a full day of work only to continue to their duties at home. These working caregivers need the respite services provided by Kupuna Caregivers program established **by Senate Bill 534**. This bill would fund up to \$70 a day for the respite that working family caregivers need in order to stay active in the workforce while caring for their kupuna at home.

The Hawaii Public Health Association fully **supports Senate Bill 534** and urges you vote to pass the measure today.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Holly Kessler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Holly Kessler, Executive Director
Hawai'i Public Health Association