

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR - 3 2006

RE: S.B. No. 2563
S.D. 1

Honorable Robert Bunda
President of the Senate
Twenty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2006
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Ways and Means, to which was referred S.B. No. 2563 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO SAGE PLUS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to provide support for the Sage PLUS program.

Specifically, this measure appropriates funds to establish Sage PLUS specialist positions for Kauai, Maui, and Hawaii counties and for operating costs to expand and support the Sage PLUS program on the neighbor islands.

The Sage PLUS program is currently housed and staffed only on Oahu. The program provides services to approximately 186,000 residents receiving Medicare and Medicaid benefits. Volunteers provide limited service on the neighbor islands for residents of Hilo, Kona, Maui, and Kauai, but there is no office or staff support available to them.

Your Committee believes that it is critical to have a staff person situated on each island to ensure that necessary information and assistance about benefits, options, and rights are provided in a timely manner by a knowledgeable person.

Your Committee also finds that the Oahu Sage PLUS office is staffed by two employees whose positions are scheduled to be converted from exempt to civil service status during this calendar



year. Due to the complex nature of Medicare and Medicaid benefits, especially in light of the recent implementation of the federal Medicare Part D drug plan, it is imperative that experienced personnel remain with the Sage PLUS program. Your Committee is concerned that incumbent employees may suffer a loss of seniority, pay, and other benefits when these positions are converted to civil service, unless proper safeguards are in place. Your Committee believes that these employees should not be penalized simply because their positions are being converted from one employment classification to another.

Accordingly, your Committee has amended the measure by inserting a provision that safeguards the salary and benefits of these employees. Your Committee has also amended the measure by changing the specific dollar amounts appropriated to unspecified amounts to promote continuing discussion, and by making technical nonsubstantive amendments.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Ways and Means that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 2563, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Third Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 2563, S.D. 1.


Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Ways and Means,


BRIAN T. TANIGUCHI, Chair



The Senate
Twenty-Third Legislature
State of Hawaii

Record of Votes of the
Committee on Ways and Means
(Bills and Resolutions)

Measure:* SB 2563	Committee Referral: HMS/HTH, WAM	Date: 2/28/06		
<input type="checkbox"/> The committee is reconsidering its previous decision on this measure. If so, then the previous decision was to: _____				
The Recommendation is to: <input type="checkbox"/> Pass, unamended (2312) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pass, with amendments (2311) <input type="checkbox"/> Hold (2310) <input type="checkbox"/> Recommit (2313)				
Members	Ayes	Ayes(WR)	Nays	Excused
TANIGUCHI, Brian T. (C)	/			
TSUTSUI, Shan S. (VC)	/			
ENGLISH, J. Kalani	/			X 5T
ESPERO, Will	/			
FUKUNAGA, Carol	/			X 5T
HOOSER, Gary L.				/
INOUE, Lorraine R.	/			
KANNO, Brian				/
KIM, Donna Mercado	/			
KOKUBUN, Russell S.	/			
NISHIHARA, Clarence K.	/			
SAKAMOTO, Norman	/			X 5T
HEMMINGS, Fred				/
SLOM, Sam	/			
TRIMBLE, Gordon	/			
TOTAL	12	0	0	3
Recommendation: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Not Adopted				
Chair's or Designee's Signature: 				
Distribution: Original Yellow Pink Goldenrod File with Committee Report Clerk's Office Drafting Agency Committee File Copy				

*Do not list more than one measure per Record of Votes.