

Representative Josh Green, M.D., Chair
Representative John A. Mizuno, Vice-chair
Committee on Health
Hawaii Centers for Independent Living

Friday, February 8, 2008

Opposing HB 2171, Relating to Health

Hawaii Centers for Independent Living is a non-profit organization operated by and for people with disabilities to ensure their rights to live independently and fully integrated in the community of their choice, outside of institutional care settings. As a non-profit, statewide resource, HCIL serves people of any age with any type of disability. HCIL was founded on the historical constitutional beliefs of civil rights and the empowerment of people with disabilities to have equal access, opportunities, and choices in life, no matter how severe their disability.

We oppose HB2171, Relating to Health.

HB2171 would offer a tax credit to those wishing to construct new long-term care facilities in Hawaii. Most such facilities presently existing in the state are run by nonprofit entities, which already pay no tax and therefore would not benefit from a tax credit. Thus, it appears to us that the bill is designed to favor for-profit, commercial developers, most likely from out of state. We feel that our tax dollars would be far better spent on improving our existing health care infrastructure, rated by at least one authority as the worst in the entire nation, rather than bringing large corporate developers into the state to build new facilities without any means to ensure that they do not eventually fall into the same state of disrepair that characterizes our health care facilities today. In addition, the bill as written makes no assurance that any new facilities that are built will serve low-income people who receive Medicaid or Medicare. New private facilities that “cherry-pick” only those with the ability to pay would do little to address the larger issue of long-term care availability in Hawaii.

We urge the committee not to pass HB2171. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.