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Dear Ways and Means Committee Members:

My name is Catherine Ikeda and I am the Operations Manager for Hart & Huntington Tattoo Co. - Hawaii in Waikiki. I am testifying in support of Bill 2283. The Bill was initially drafted to allow temporary licenses to be issued to a visiting tattoo artist thereby allowing for tattoo conventions to be held in Hawaii with the participation of tattoo artists from around the world.

During the Senate Health Committee hearing, the Department of Health testified that due to the low incidence of health problems associated with tattooing, the Department preferred implementing a registration system versus the current licensing structure. The current Senate draft indirectly accomplishes the purpose of the original Bill because an artist wishing to attend a Hawaii tattoo convention would simply need to register.

Hart & Huntington supports the current draft of the Senate Bill because from a business standpoint, it is difficult to hire artists because currently, the licensing exam is given only twice a year generally in July and January. Consequently, our company must wait for months sometime in order to be able to employ an artist. The proposed registration system would assist our business immensely. As for ensuring that qualified artists are employed, it would behoove each shop to screen their prospective artists because a shop's reputation is extremely important due to the permanence and personal nature of tattoos.

We support the Department of Health's recommendations as to implementation of a registration versus licensing system.

Sincerely,

CATHERINE IKEDA

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