



**HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION**

AFSCME LOCAL 152, AFL-CIO

888 MILILANI STREET, SUITE 601 • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-2991



Randy Perreira *Executive Director*  
Tel: 808 543-0011 Fax: 808 528-0922

Nora A. Nomura *Deputy Executive Director*  
Tel: 808 543-0003 Fax: 808 528-0922

Derek M. Mizuno *Deputy Executive Director*  
Tel: 808 543-0055 Fax: 808 523-6879

The Twenty-Fourth Legislature, State of Hawaii  
Hawaii State Senate  
Committee on Human Services and Public Housing  
Committee on Judiciary and Labor

Testimony by  
Hawaii Government Employees Association  
February 5, 2008

**S.B. 2044 – RELATING TO CAREGIVERS**

The Hawaii Government Employees Association supports the purpose and intent of S.B. 2044. The purpose of this bill is to amend the Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) law (Chapter 392, HRS) by allowing an employee to collect up to four (4) weeks of TDI benefit payments to care for a family member who suffers a “serious health condition,” as defined in Section 398-1 HRS (family leave law).

The proposed changes to Chapter 392, HRS, maintain the existing eligibility for benefits, excluded services, waiting period, weekly benefit amount and other features. However, now, in addition to being able to collect TDI benefits if the eligible employee suffers a qualifying disability, the employee can use up to four (4) weeks of the 26 weeks of TDI benefits if the family member has a “serious health condition.” Providing wage replacement benefits are an appropriate and productive means of supporting family caregivers.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in support of S.B. 2044.

Respectfully submitted,

*for* Nora A. Nomura  
Deputy Executive Director



**Testimony to the Senate Committees on Human Services & Public Housing and  
Judiciary and Labor  
Tuesday, February 5, 2008 at 1:15 p.m.  
Conference Room 016, State Capitol**

**RE: SENATE BILL NO. 2044 RELATING TO CAREGIVERS**

Chairs Chun Oakland and Taniguchi, Vice Chairs Ihara and Hee, and Members of the Committees:

My name is Jim Tollefson and I am the President and CEO of The Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii ("The Chamber"). The Chamber does not support SB 2044.

The Chamber is the largest business organization in Hawaii, representing 1100 businesses. Approximately 80% of our members are small businesses with less than 20 employees. The organization works on behalf of members and the entire business community to improve the state's economic climate and to foster positive action on issues of common concern.

This measure amends the temporary disability insurance law to permit an eligible employee to collect up to 4 weeks of temporary disability insurance benefit payments to care for a family member with a qualifying disability.

The Chamber commends the Legislature for seeking ways to address the current situation of caregivers and supports a statewide effort to address the growing number of family caregivers especially those who work while providing care. However, we believe this measure is not the appropriate vehicle and that existing laws provide adequate protection and leave for employees needing to care for their elders, such as the Family Medical Leave Act and the Hawaii Family Leave Law, rather than TDI, which purpose is to address the employee's own illness.

Additionally, we believe this measure may impose additional costs on businesses especially on small companies. Because of the limited resources, companies who have a restricted number of employees will have to shoulder additional responsibilities, in turn, become overworked, eventually leading to an unstable work environment. Furthermore, the cost of doing business in our state continues to rise. This measure will undermine employers' efforts to cut costs to remain viable, all while retaining employees and providing continued benefits to employees.

The Chamber believes that employers and employees can balance work and caregiving through voluntary programs and/or incentives. Employers understand the hardships that some employees are experiencing and care about the well-being of their employees. Many businesses are already providing a level of flexibility for employees who are in the difficult situation. Businesses, recognizing the need to address the situation, will continue to seek ways to address the current concerns through their own efforts.

In light of the above, The Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii does not support SB 2044 in its present form. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



# HAWAII TEAMSTERS AND ALLIED WORKERS, LOCAL 996

Allied with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

1817 Hart Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96819-3205

Telephone: (808) 847-6633  
Fax: (808) 842-4575

---

Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair  
Senator Les Ihara Jr., Vice-Chair  
Committee on Human Services and Public Housing

Senator Brian Taniguchi, Chair  
Senator Clayton Hee, Vice-Chair  
Committee on Judiciary and Labor

Glenn Ida  
PAC Co-Chair  
295-1280

Feb. 5, 2008, 1:15pm, room 016

Support of SB2044, Relating to Caregivers.

The Hawaii Teamsters Local 996 negotiates and enforces more than 50 contracts serving 6000 members in various industries in Hawaii and Guam. Some of the companies offer options that include paid leave for FMLA depending on the size and operation of the company.

OTS, Inc., TheBus allows me to get paid leave for up to 20 days from our sick leave or vacation bank. I was fortunate to have this arrangement available to care for my Mom after by-pass surgery, May 2006. I am able to continue on this FMLA with pay to provide the transportation for the follow up appointments along with being there for the consultations with her doctors. I believe that by being there to provide the care for her needs at home made her more comfortable and happier which aided in her recovery.

SB2044 would give others the opportunity to care for their loved ones with some financial assistance. All the good intentions will not stop bills from coming and there's the added expense of gas, parking for further Doctor visits, and medications they might need.

The Hawaii Teamsters Local 996, Supports SB2044.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.