



**TESTIMONY OF MARION M. HIGA, STATE AUDITOR,  
ON SENATE BILL NO. 2159, H.D. 1, RELATING TO PROFESSIONS**

**House Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce**

**March 24, 2008**

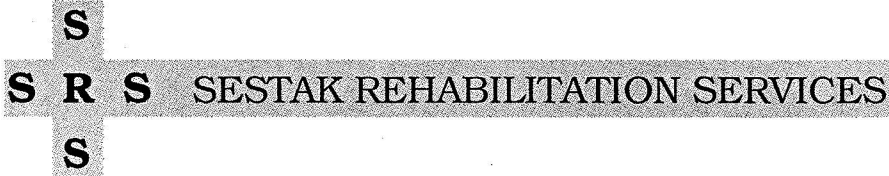
Chair Herkes and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill No. 2159, H.D. 1. This bill repeals the sunset provision for the licensing program for mental health counselors created in 2004 by the Legislature under Act 209.

We evaluated the regulation of mental health counselors pursuant to Section 26H-5, Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) to determine whether the program complies with the policies set forth in Section 26H-2, HRS, and whether the public interest requires that the law establishing the regulatory program should be reenacted, modified, or permitted to expire. We found that even though licensing of mental health counselors is not warranted based on criteria in Section 26H-2, HRS, continued licensing is in the public interest in accordance with Section 26H-5, HRS. From a broader perspective, licensure appears to be achieving several objectives sought by the Legislature when it established the licensing of mental health counselors under Chapter 453D, HRS. Licensure will likely expand the number of qualified professionals who can provide needed mental health services, increase access to services, and reduce the costs of these services.

Based on our findings, we recommend that the repeal date be removed and that the Legislature should consider adding licensed mental counselors to the list of practitioners. Draft legislation is appended in our evaluation report. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

00077



1181 Mapuana St.  
Kailua, HI 96734  
(808) 391-9390

DATE: March 24, 2008

TO: The Honorable Representative Robert N. Herkes, Chair; The Honorable Representative Angus L. K. McKelvey, Vice – Chair and Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce

FROM: Betty Sestak, MS, LMHC, CRC, NCC

RE: **SB2159 HD1: RELATING TO PROFESSIONS**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**I am testifying in strong support of SB 2159.**

I am a rehabilitation counselor who has been in practice in Hawaii since 1976 and am in strong support of licensure for all master and doctoral level counselors in the mental health field. I am gratified that Hawaii State has recognized this and passed the mental health counselor licensure law. Licensure is important to assure the public that mental health providers in Hawaii are competent to provide qualified and ethical services. Licensure provides consistent and accountable standards of practice. It further provides for recourse of the client when they are harmed in some way by a provider who is unethical or incompetent.

I strongly encourage you to pass SB 2159 HD1 out of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce as it will be of benefit to the people of Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and to support this bill.

Betty Sestak, MS, LMHC, CRC, NCC, CCM  
Rehabilitation Counselor

00078

# HAWAII REHABILITATION COUNSELING ASSOCIATION

P O BOX 4385  
HONOLULU, HI 96812



DATE: March 24, 2008

TO: The Honorable Representative Robert N. Herkes, Chair; The Honorable Representative Angus L. K. McKelvey, Vice – Chair and Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce

FROM: Betty Sestak, HRCA Legislative Chair

RE: **SB2159 HD1: RELATING TO PROFESSIONS**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**I am testifying in strong support of SB 2159 HD1.**

The Hawaii Rehabilitation counseling Association represents 50 practicing vocational rehabilitation counselors in the state of Hawaii. Hawaii Rehabilitation Counseling Association has been an active professional association representing the professional needs of Hawaii rehabilitation counselors for more than 30 years. Rehabilitation counselors practice in a specialty area of mental health counseling devoted to those that have physical and mental disabilities.

Licensure is important to assure the public that mental health providers in Hawaii are competent to provide qualified and ethical services. Licensure provides consistent and accountable standards of practice. It further provides for recourse of the client when they are harmed in some way by a provider who is unethical or incompetent.

Hawaii Rehabilitation Counseling Association is in favor of SB2159 HD1 and strongly supports its passage.

I strongly encourage you to pass SB 2159 HD1 out of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce as it will be of benefit to the people of Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Betty Sestak, MS, NCC, CRC, LMHC  
Rehabilitation counselor

00079



**Ka Maui Ola – The Power Of Healing Therapeutic Svcs.**  
A Culturally Based Practice Specializing In Women's Issues, Family Systems,  
Adolescent Concerns & Substance/Alcohol Abuse

DATE: **March 24, 2008**

TO: The Honorable Representative Robert N. Herkes, Chair; The Honorable Representative Angus L. K. McKelvey, Vice – Chair and Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce

FROM: **Joddy Manuwai, LMHC, NCC**  
(808) 222 – 0093  
*KaMauiOla@gmail.com*

RE: SB 2159 HD1, *Relating to Professions*

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**I am testifying in strong support of SB 2159 HD1.**

Aloha `Oukou

The recent events our island has witnessed – the beating death of the woman in Kailua, a mother of five, coupled with the senseless death of baby Cyrus – has given awareness to the people of this state that strengthening the quality of care providers by the mental health care system is a given and an issue that must be addressed. Recent court actions targeting the Hawaii State Department of Mental Health bring an awareness of the need for additional qualified providers to join in effectively meeting the mental health needs in our beautiful state.

The ongoing need for additional mental health providers to address the needs of children and adolescents have been acknowledged by the Department of Health. Currently, the DOH provides intensive in – home services for youth who meet a specific level of criteria. The suggested time period of this path is usually six months and upon discharge, its up to the parent or guardian to continue services through the youth's private insurance. At times this may be difficult; many behavioral health specialists are either over – booked or not accepting new patients. In many cases, the type of private insurance they have makes a difference; many of these youth are Quest plan clients.

In June of 2007, after meeting the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs mandates, I was licensed as a Mental Health Counselor. The following month, when Lingle failed to veto our licensure bill, the door remained open. Although this move by Lingle didn't ensure vendorship, many insurance

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companies – Aloha Care, TriCare, HMAA, UHA, HMA/Summerlin – accepted us as providers. What this did for me personally was open the door to work with the population I am so invested in – my people, the Hawaiian people.

Knowing the importance of supporting the mental health of persons in rural areas, my work began and has continued to revolve around the Leeward Coast. The ongoing goal continues to be providing high quality mental health services that are affordable and easily accessible. Although the lack of resources in the Mental Health Care system [in Hawai`i] continues to make meeting this goal difficult, supporting the continuation of the *Hawai`i Mental Health Counselors Licensure Law* would at minimum enable a qualified resource pool of mental health providers to continue assisting this population that is plagued with homelessness, domestic violence and most prevalent, the alcohol and substance use/abuse. It goes without saying that the ice epidemic here is rampant!

Continuing the *Hawai`i Mental Health Counselors Licensure Law* by having the existing “sunset provision” deleted will be your way of helping to ensure that additional providers who are as qualified as the licensures the Department of Health currently recognizes – Ph.D., Psy.D. LCSW, and most recently, LMFT – are available to continue supporting the mission of the Hawaii Department of Mental Health.

This being said, I thank you for your time and I strongly encourage you, the individuals who have the authority and the ability, to pass **SB 2159 HD1** out of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce as it will be of benefit to the people of Hawaii.

Malama pono,

Joddy Manuwai, LMHC, NCC\*

\*National Board of Certified Counselors

Selina K. Higa, Med, CRC, LMHC  
94-1156 Awaiki Pl.  
Waipahu, HI 96797

DATE: March 24, 2008

TO: The Honorable Representative Robert N. Herkes, Chair; The Honorable Representative Angus L. K. McKelvey, Vice – Chair and Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce

FROM: Selina K. Higa, M Ed, CRC, LMHC  
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor  
Dept. of Veterans Affairs-Honolulu Regional Office

RE: SB 2159 HD1, Relating to Professions

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**I am testifying in strong support of SB 2159 HD1.**

I am currently employed full time with the Dept. of Veterans Affairs, Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment Division as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. We are required to have our Masters degree in Counseling Education with a Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling Major and to be current as a National Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC). However, we are not currently required to have an LMHC at this time. I work with service connected disabled veterans with varying disabilities and some who have severe multiple disabilities that include physical, mental, and emotional disabilities.

We are seeing greater numbers of service connected disabled veterans with multiple injuries due to the Iraq and Afganistan Conflicts and we will continue to see more. We have seen an increase of as many as 100 new applicants a month to our division alone. Many suffer from TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury) and PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) disabilities on top of other physical disabilities and depression due to their multiple injuries. It is definitely helpful and important that I be as qualified as possible to deal with these severely disabled veterans in assisting them with their educational needs and employment needs as a counselor. Having my License as a Mental Health Counselor also assures my supervisor and the Dept. of Veterans Affairs that I am best qualified to meet my veteran's multiple needs. Having that license also helps me to be certain that I am able to address their counseling needs especially when our medical staff is also overwhelmed with the number of new veterans knocking at our doors and the outreach we are doing to service them.

In late February 2008, 3000 Army soldiers returned to Hawaii. At least 10% of them suffer from Mental Health issues such as PTSD and/or Depression and require Mental Health Counseling from Licensed individuals. Therefore, even more Licensed individuals who are qualified to address their mental health needs are essential to properly service those protecting our freedom.

I strongly encourage you to pass SB 2159 HD1 out of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce as it will be of benefit to the people of Hawaii.

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**ALLIANCE FOR PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR LICENSURE**  
(Hawai`i Rehabilitation Counseling Association & Hawai`i Counselors Association)  
1181 Mapuana Street, Kailua, Hawaii, 96734

DATE: March 24, 2008

TO: The Honorable Representative Robert N. Herkes Chair, The Honorable Representative Angus L.K. McKelvey Vice- Chair, and Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce

FROM: Sandra Joy Eastlack, MSCP, LHMC, NCC

RE: SB 2159 HD1, Relating to Professions

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**The Alliance is testifying in strong support of SB 2159 HD1.**

The Alliance for Professional Counselor Licensure supports the 178 mental health counselors who have obtained licensure since July 1, 2005; an estimated 100 to 150 counselors currently working on obtaining their licensure status and those working towards their master's degree in counseling. Most importantly we support the consumers of mental health services.

The purpose of this bill is to make licensure for mental health counselors permanent and to allow for them to be included as providers who may receive payment from the health insurance companies that their clients are insured by.

Licensure for mental health counselors ensures the consumer that they are working with a counselor who has demonstrated a standard of expertise through training, experience and examination as well as following stringent ethical guidelines.

Providing insurance reimbursement for licensed mental health counselors will allow them to earn a living providing mental health services to those in need of these services. With insurance reimbursement it is hopeful that more people will want to enter this field thereby helping to provide needed services in the many areas where they are lacking.

We strongly support the findings of the Legislative Auditor and the provisions of SB 2159 HD1. We want to applaud the Legislative Auditor for her proactive approach, seeing what the need is and addressing it and thereby also saving the taxpayers money, since the insurance issue can be handled at the same time and not have to be continually revisited.

The report supports past testimony and testimony that is presented in this hearing in regard to the need and cost savings that licensed mental health counselors provide.

We strongly encourage you to pass SB 2159 HD1, as is, through the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce.

Testimony of  
Phyllis Dendle  
Director of Government Affairs

Before:  
House Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce  
The Honorable Robert N. Herkes, Chair  
The Honorable Angus L.K. McKelvey, Vice Chair

March 24, 2008  
2:00 pm  
Conference Room 325

**SB2159 HD1 RELATING TO PROFESSIONS**

Chair Herkes and committee members, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on SB 2159 HD1 which makes permanent the protection of the title and practice of professional mental health counselors and which adds them to the list of professionals who may be reimbursed under 431M HRS.

**Kaiser Permanente supports this bill.**

Hawaii was one of the last states to license professional counselors. While national certification has been available, it did not provide the same benefits or protections to the public as state licensure. These masters level mental health clinicians bring valuable skills to the community. Licensing them assures professionalism and the protection of consumers.

In addition, Kaiser Permanente supports including Licensed Mental Health Counselors under 431M HRS. We agree with the auditor that including LMHC's will likely improve access to mental health services. This could be very valuable in the more rural parts of the state where there are fewer health care professions available. To be licensed, mental health counselors are required to have training and experience comparable to advance practice registered nurses, clinical social workers, and marriage and family therapists who are already included in 431M HRS.

We urge you to make permanent this licensing program and to include LMHC's in 431M HRS. Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

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Honolulu, Hawaii 96813  
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**House of Representatives Consumer Protection and Commerce Committee**

**SB 1805, SD1 (SSCR855) RELATING TO GENETIC COUNSELORS. ESTABLISHING A  
LICENSURE PROGRAM.**

To the Honorable Chair Robert Herkes, Vice Chair Angus McKelvey, and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 1805, SD 1 which establishes a licensure program for genetic counselors.

My name is Elaine Marr, and I am a board-certified pediatric genetic counselor with the Hawai`i Department of Health Genetics Program. However, I am not testifying in my official capacity and am instead providing testimony as a private citizen.

**I strongly support the unamended passage of SB 1805, SD 1** for the following reasons:

Genetic counselors work at the crossroads of medicine, technology, and bioethics. It would be suboptimal care for families to place anyone without ABGC credentials and licensure to perform such duties.

The sunrise study reports that the regulation of genetic counselors is not necessary because there is no evidence of harm to consumers that would warrant licensing. This is not entirely true because licensure will distinguish those who are qualified by formal training and credentials from those who are not. Licensing allows the public to be able to more readily identify qualified genetic counseling services and thus protect themselves from substandard services. Since the auditor's report, direct to consumer (DTC) genetic testing has burgeoned. The auditor's report stated that licensure has no bearing on at-home genetic self testing. It does. More harm is present now than ever because the public can order genetic tests that may not have sound clinical validity. The consumer are also not guaranteed interpretation of these results but may potentially make life changing decisions because of them. Genetic test results may also lead one to be susceptible to genetic information discrimination. Furthermore, the Secretary's Advisory Committee Report on Oversight to Genetic Testing due to come out this month states the importance of having trained genetics providers give pre- and post-test information to patients and families. Numerous illustrations are included in this report detailing how the lack of genetics knowledge in non-genetics health care providers can cause harm to patients and families. Licensure of genetic counselors therefore will enable consumers to recognize their choices of optimal versus substandard genetic services that are available to them. Consumers will more readily be able to recognize genetic testing offered by a non-licensed individual and so protect themselves from potential harm in utilizing these unregulated services.

Licensure of genetic counselors will also promote high quality genetic counseling services and thus protect the profession itself from any association of malpractice and incompetent care provided by individuals without licensure requirements. This distinction is extremely important considering genetic counseling often entails helping families face legal, social, ethical issues and malpractice may ensue when these dilemmas are not dealt with by qualified professionals.

Lastly, licensure is a mechanism for genetic counselor billing practices. Health insurers will be able to identify who is qualified to provide genetic counseling services and determine reimbursement models with the new genetic counseling CPT codes. Institutions will then be able to demonstrate that genetic counselors can generate adequate revenue to justify increasing the work force and so attract more genetic counselors to Hawaii. In turn, patients can also expect to have greater access to competent genetic counselors. Currently, pediatric genetic counselors in the State are federally funded or grant funded. These genetic counselors have been awarded grants that allow them to travel to the neighbor islands (Big Island, Kauai, Molokai, Maui, Guam) to provide genetic services to medically fragile children. Hawaii is unique geographically and these services are essential to reduce health disparities in our state. If these grants are withdrawn, genetic services to these children will also disappear. The genetic counselors holding these jobs may also have to leave the state to find employment elsewhere. Therefore licensure establishes a mechanism for patients to have adequate care and genetic services state-wide.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in writing.

Elaine Marr, M.S., C.G.C.

425 Kaipihā Street, Kailua, Hawaii 96734.

Phone: (808) 927-1139      Email: [etmarr@gmail.com](mailto:etmarr@gmail.com)

00086

## Steve Herman, Ph.D.

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March 23, 2008

TO: Representative Robert N. Herkes, Chair; Representative Angus L. K. McKelvey, Vice-Chair; and Members of the House Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce

RE: SB2159 HD 1, Relating to Professions

**I am writing to testify in strong support of SB 2159 HD1.**

I am a professor in the UH Hilo Psychology Department. I was hired in 2005 to teach in our master's program in counseling psychology, which began in August 2005. The counseling master's degree program was specifically designed to fulfill the educational requirements for licensure as a Mental Health Counselor (MHC) in Hawaii and came into being as a result of many years of effort by numerous Hawaii legislators and UH Hilo faculty and administration.

A primary purpose of the UH Hilo master's program is to help meet Hawaii's current and future needs for qualified mental health service providers. Our first class of eight students graduated in spring 2007. **All eight of our first group of graduates are currently employed in mental health agencies here on the Big Island, providing vitally needed mental health counseling services to Hawaii residents.**

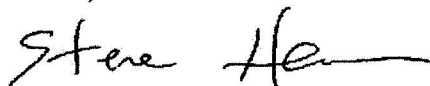
The passage of this bill, including both the repeal of the sunset provisions for MHC licensure in Section 26H-4(b) and the amendment of Chapter 431M in order to grant mandatory insurance reimbursement to licensed MHCs, is vital to (a) the future of the counseling psychology program at UH Hilo (and similar programs at UH Manoa and Chaminade University) and, more importantly, (b) provide Hawaii residents with access to high-quality mental health services.

In the recently released Report 08-06, *Sunset Evaluation: Mental Health Counselors*, the State Auditor recommends that "that Section 26H-4(b), HRS, be amended to remove the repeal date of December 31, 2008 for the licensing of mental health counselors, and that Chapter 431M, HRS, on Mental Illness, Alcohol and Drug Treatment Insurance Benefits, be amended to add licensed mental health counselors to the list of practitioners."

If enacted, SB 2159 HD 1 would accomplish both of the recommendations of the Auditor and will benefit the people of Hawaii for the reasons described briefly in this testimony and in much more detail in the Auditor's report.

For these reasons, I strongly urge you to pass SB 2159 HD 1 out of your Committee.

Thank you for your service to the people of Hawaii,



Steve Herman  
Assistant Professor of Psychology  
University of Hawaii at Hilo

**mckelvey3**

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**From:** Gerald Evans [GeraldEvans@Hawaii.RR.Com]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 21, 2008 6:28 AM  
**To:** CPCtestimony  
**Subject:** SB 2159 HD1, Relating to Professions

Gerald Evans, M.D.  
95-223 Auhaele Loop  
Mililani, Hawai'i 96789

**DATE:**

March 24, 2008  
2:00 PM, Conference Room 325

**TO:**

The Honorable Representative Robert N. Herkes, Chair;  
The Honorable Representative Angus L. K. McKelvey, Vice – Chair  
and Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce

**FROM:**

Gerald Evans, M.D.  
808-561-5668, geralddevans@hawaii.rr.com

**RE:**

SB 2159 HD1, Relating to Professions

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**I am testifying in strong support of SB 2159 HD1.**

In the state of Hawai'i, the number of people who are homeless, disabled and commit crimes has definitely increased due to the ice epidemic/use of amphetamines. Qualified mental health counselors are needed to care for these individuals and their families. Licensed Mental Health Counselors play a most important role in addressing these challenges.

I strongly encourage you to pass SB 2159 HD1 out of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce as it will be of benefit to the people of Hawai'i.

**mckelvey3**

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**From:** Monica Evans [MonicaEvans@hawaii.rr.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 21, 2008 6:11 AM  
**To:** CPCtestimony  
**Subject:** SB 2159, HD1 testimony

Monica Evans, MSCP, NCC, LMHC  
95-223 Auhaele Loop  
Mililani, HI 96789

**DATE:**  
March 24, 2008  
2:00 PM, Conference Room 325

**TO:**  
The Honorable Representative Robert N. Herkes, Chair;  
The Honorable Representative Angus L. K. McKelvey, Vice – Chair  
and Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce

**FROM:**  
Monica Evans, MSCP, NCC, LMHC  
808-625-0112, monicaevans@hawaii.rr.com

**RE:**  
SB 2159 HD1, Relating to Professions

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**I am testifying in strong support of SB 2159 HD1.**

While on active duty in the Army my husband was stationed for 11 months in Iraq. I can attest to the severe strain that families experience while a loved one serves in a war zone. Recent statistics have indicated a steep increase in divorce rates among military related families. The aftermaths of this war will affect all of us for many years to come. Many veterans and their family members need mental health services.

Licensed Mental Health Counselors provide essential care to the families of our veterans. It is imperative that licensure for these mental health professionals continues.

I strongly encourage you to pass SB 2159 HD1 out of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce as it will be of benefit to the people of Hawaii.

**mckelvey3**

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**From:** Monica Evans [MonicaEvans@hawaii.rr.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 21, 2008 6:43 AM  
**To:** CPCtestimony  
**Subject:** SB 2159 HD1, Relating to Professions

**Anita Trubitt, MSW, LCSW  
520 Papalani Street  
Kailua, Hawai'i 96734**

**DATE:**

March 24, 2008  
2:00 PM, Conference Room 325

**TO:**

The Honorable Representative Robert N. Herkes, Chair;  
The Honorable Representative Angus L. K. McKelvey, Vice – Chair  
and Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce

**FROM:**

Anita Trubitt, MSW, LCSW  
808-261-2524  
<trubitt@hawaii.rr.com>

**RE:**

SB 2159 HD1, Relating to Professions

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**I am testifying in strong support of SB 2159 HD1.**

Adequate access to mental health services must be a priority. The citizens of Hawai'i deserve no less. By repealing the sunset date of 2008, the public is assured that much needed care is provided by Mental Health Counselors who possess the required education, training and supervision.

I strongly encourage you to pass SB 2159 HD1 out of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce as it will be of benefit to the people of Hawai'i.

**To:** Representative Robert N. Herkes  
Chair, Consumer Protection and Commerce Committee (CPC)  
[CPCtestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:CPCtestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov)  
March 24, 2008, 2:00P.M. Rm. 325

**Reference:** SB2159 Relating to Professions...mental health counselors  
In favor of passage of SB2159

Chairman Herkes and Committee Members

I am Dr. James Deutch and I am a Lecturer in the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences, University of Hawaii at Manoa. By history I have been a Licensed Clinical Social Worker for nearly 50 years. In Hawaii we are terribly short of licensed mental health practitioners. The Department of Family and Consumer Sciences is currently developing a master's program in family counseling which will go far to meet the current mental health deficit. The program we will be submitting will be built on the academic requirements of the current Mental Health Counselor licensure law. If the law is allowed to sunset, our program may never come to fruition. That would be a terrible thing to happen to our community. Please pass SB2359, as amended by the House Health Committee.

Thank you,

Dr. James A. Deutch, LCSW  
3407 Paty Dr.  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822

**To:** Representative Robert N. Herkes  
Chair, Consumer Protection and Commerce Committee (CPC)  
[CPCtestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:CPCtestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov)  
March 24, 2008, 2:00P.M. Rm. 325

**Reference:** SB2159 HD1 Relating to Professions...mental health counselors  
**SUPPORT** passage of SB2159 DH1

### Chairman Representative Herkes and Committee Members

Thank-you for the opportunity to provide personal testimony in support of SB2159. I am Barbara Yee, Professor and Chair of Family and Consumer Sciences at UHM. I am testifying in support of SB2159 passage as a private citizen. A critical mass of mental health counselors, specifically family counselors, is needed to address professional mental health workforce shortages in the State of Hawaii and the well-being of citizens in this state. Mental health counselors help address development of resiliency in the face of individual and family crises. Preventive mental health counseling help families to create effective life solutions and circumvent problems before they develop into major crises.

Family research and program development are needed in Hawaii and at the national level. The National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine recommend that research studies should address the following questions :

- How do nurturing familial social relationships (such as parent-child, sibling, marital, and grandparent-grandchild relations) support the development of social capital within individuals, families and communities?
- How do family and community contexts affect individual development?
- How can family, health and behavioral research address multiple levels of influence on a person (e.g., individual, family, community, culture)?
- How can knowledge of lifespan development issues be used to promote health and resiliency in individuals, families and communities?

The Human Development and Family Studies program addresses the research and development priorities of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD 2002), namely, the need for further work on:

- Race and ethnicity, particularly in regard to health, economic and social disparities.
- Intergenerational relations, including the ways in which resources, values, and behaviors flow between children, families, and communities.
- The status of our nation's increasingly diverse children, and the influence of families, communities and public policy on child health and well-being.
- Sexuality, particularly in regard to health and family relationships.
- "Translational research", in which scientific findings are better integrated with public policy, programs, and practice.



The proposed program addresses the major needs defined by the Children's Research Initiative of the National Science Foundation (NSF, 2001), namely, the need to:

- Understand human development by integrating findings from different levels of analysis (e.g., from neural and genetic to behavioral, cultural, and social levels of analysis).
- Translate findings from the study of complex developmental issues into pragmatic public policy.
- Understand the effects of media on children's brain development, learning and social adjustment.

The proposed program also addresses eight national priorities established by the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration of Children and Families (DHHS/ACF, 2004).

These are the need for research and development in the areas of:

- Fatherhood
- Healthy marriages
- Intergenerational and familial social support
- Strengthening rural families and communities
- Positive youth development
- Prevention
- Enhancing early literacy and school readiness
- Welfare reform.

FAMR collected data from community regarding workforce needs for Masters graduates in this area. A needs assessment of 35 community service agencies (Martini, Reyel, Wei, 2007) found that the human services sector looks to the university to provide:

- Research descriptions of healthy family structures and processes found in Asian-American, Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander families;
- Information on preventive features that protect family members from developmental risks;
- Information on risk factors that increase the probability of family members running into trouble;
- Information on how to work effectively with families from Asian and Pacific Island cultural groups;
- Policy guidance for government funding of human service agencies;
- Demonstration programs of "best practices" that address family and societal problems;
- Methods for evaluating demonstration programs and existing community programs;
- Workforce training, standardization and certification in family human services and education;

Approximately 40% of undergraduate FAMR students surveyed in 2006 stated that they wanted to pursue a graduate degree and/or employment in human and family development, family or youth counseling.

Barbara Yee  
Honolulu, HI  
dragonboomer@aol.com

**mckelvey3**

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**From:** david sheridan [miosis1@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 21, 2008 10:12 AM  
**To:** CPCtestimony  
**Subject:** SB2159 HD1

I am writing to urge passage of SB2159 HD1, relating to Licensed Mental Health Counselors. I am LMHC licensee #20, and work in the US Department of Veterans Affairs Community Based Mental Health Clinic in Hilo.

I frequently receive referrals for Iraq conflict veterans experiencing combat related mental health concerns. However, unless they have been determined to have a compensable service related disability, (a process that can take years) I am extremely limited in the services that I can provide through the US Dept of Veterans Affairs. In those cases, I refer to providers in the community. Of the two psychologists on the island I know with training in trauma related disorders, neither are accepting new patients. There is one licensed mental health counselor in lower Puna experienced in trauma related disorders that I have arm-twisted into providing services, and one in Waikoloa. One is not able to accept insurance, the other is on only two insurance panels. I do not know of any mental health providers of any kind in upper Puna, Ka'u, South Kona, or Hamakua districts that are trained to treat trauma related disorders. Publicly funded mental health services in Hilo, Puna and Ka'u are absolutely swamped, and none, so far as I know, are able to provide treatment for trauma related disorders. Passage of SB 2159 alone will not solve the critical shortage of mental health providers on the Island of Hawai'i. However, it will make it possible for the Licensed Mental Health Counselors on the island to expand their services, and provide reimbursed treatment to a significantly increased number of individuals struggling with mental health concerns. It will also, hopefully, encourage more practitioners to move here or stay here. Thank you for your consideration  
David Sheridan, 2 Road, Pole 44, Mountain View

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00094

3/24/2008

**mckelvey3**

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**From:** Jane Jamison [kinijamison@earthlink.net]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 21, 2008 10:13 AM  
**To:** CPCtestimony  
**Subject:** SB 2159 HD1 is scheduled for hearing on Monday, March 24 in the House Commerce and Consumer Protection Committee at 2 PM in Conference Room 325.

**Jane Jamison MS**  
**95-1059 Hoalia Street**  
**Mililani, Hawaii 96789**  
**kinijamison@earthlink.net**

**DATE:** March 24, 2008

**TO:** The Honorable Representative Robert N. Herkes, Chair; The Honorable Representative Angus L. K. McKelvey, Vice - Chair and Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce

**FROM:** **Jane Jamison MS, LMHC, LPC, NCC 808-626-8505**

**RE:** SB 2159 HD1, Relating to Professions

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**I am testifying in strong support of SB 2159 HD1.**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB2159 HD1.

Licensed Mental Health Counselors have been a vital part of the counseling profession for years in most every state in the United States except for a few. Today's society is in crisis due to economic, social, cultural, and war-related issues. The family system is no longer what it once was, a place for safety, health, and well being. Families are no longer able to sustain their household on one income, children are left alone to fend for themselves, divorce, drug addiction, and the negative impact of war on our soldiers and their families are creating stress that increases the inability to function which also results in more criminal activity and domestic violence. Mental Health Counselors are well trained in all areas of counseling and are able to reach the various populations in need.

With the introduction of mental health services in Hawaii's educational system by mandate of the Felix decree, many LMHC's, etc, are providing services to children during very critical developmental periods of their life. Their clinical training makes them highly qualified to provide these services through the DOE and provide excellent adjunct services to the School Counselors in our schools. With the many armed service facilities that station our brave soldiers who are fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as our many veterans, PTSD, Traumatic Brain Injury, and drug addiction need to be addressed by those well trained to provide them with the appropriate mental health support and counseling.

Hawaii is a state that is located in the middle of the Pacific, which makes it isolated and remote. Our state is made up of eight islands that require important medical, mental health, and social services to be disbursed across these islands. As we know, Hawaii struggles to keep doctors here due to many reasons. As a state, we also have limited number of psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers. Mental Health Counselors are absolutely necessary to providing the services our state requires to help ensure and facilitate positive well-being for our citizens, and most importantly, our keiki, who are Hawaii's and our country's future.

Mental Health Counselors can and will provide cost-effective mental health services. As stated above, Hawaii struggles with keeping doctors and mental health providers in the state due to a variety of issues. When an individual, an Ohana, a couple, a veteran, etc. need mental health services, they are many times forced to wait a long time to be seen due to the busy schedules of the limited amount of mental health professionals on Oahu and most significantly on the outer islands. Adding Licensed Mental Health Counselors to the list of practitioners who may provide mental health services that must be covered under health insurance policies will help alleviate the

long waiting period for our people to utilize mental health services, will help effectively service more of our people especially on the outer islands, and will facilitate important health and well being for the people of Hawaii. With the limitations that managed care provides its subscribers, Mental Health Counselors can provide services that will be not only beneficial to our clients but also beneficial to health insurance companies. It is a win-win situation.

I strongly encourage you to pass SB 2159 HD1 out of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce as it will be of benefit to the people of Hawaii.

Mahalo.

Most Respectfully,

Jane Jamison MS

∞ LPC - Licensed Professional Counselor (some states use this title)

∞ NCC - National Certified Counselor

**mckelvey3**

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**From:** Gay Barfield [okika@aloha.net]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 21, 2008 1:20 PM  
**To:** CPCtestimony  
**Subject:** Support for Mental Health Counselors Legislation  
**Importance:** High

**TO: House Commerce and Consumer Protection Committee  
MEETING TIME AND PLACE - 2 pm, March 24, 2008, Room 235**

**Aloha Committee Chair Herkes and Committee members,**

**I am writing to support the passage of SB 2159 HD1, by the full legislative body, and to offer testimony herein for supporting its passage.**

**While I have voiced additional reasons for support in previous oral and written testimony, essentially my support is due to the high need for mental health services among rural communities due to increased population, returning veteran needs, overload on some already licensed providers, and the need to expand choice options for all recipients, and finally to provide parity for all mental health clinicians.**

**I would also suggest that providing insurance coverage vendorship at this time, along with the Sunset removal, will be a time and money saving means and practice for all concerned, professionals, insurers, government and for clients now and in the future; therefore I encourage expeditious passage of this aspect as well.**

**I will appreciate confirmation of receipt of this message. Mahalo for your positive vote on this issue.**

**Gay Leah Barfield, Ph.D., Lic. MFT  
Therapist in Private Practice and Instructor at UHH  
Masters Program in Mental Health Counseling  
Office: 101 Aupuni, Suite 250, Hilo, Hawaii 96720**

DATE: March 24, 2008

TO: The Honorable Representative Robert N. Herkes, Chair; The Honorable Representative Angus L. K. McKelvey, Vice – Chair and Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce

FROM: Milton Anderson Ph.D., LMHC

RE: SB 2159 HD1, Relating to Professions

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**I am testifying in strong support of SB 2159 HD1.**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony.

This is in support of repealing the Sunset Law and the continued Licensing of Mental Health Counselor in Hawaii.

In addition to the many benefits to the people of Hawaii, by providing additional mental health professionals to meet our needs and life challenges, Mental Health Counselors are particularly important to the Native Hawaiian community.

Mental Health Counselors' stress cultural competence in counseling and are more likely to be sought out, by those member of our indigenous community who would otherwise avoid mental health intervention.

With "Ice" use and domestic violence reaching epidemic proportions, we need the knowledge, experience and cultural competence that Licensed Mental Health Counselors provide.

As a member of the Royal Order of Kamehameha I, it is my obligation to advocate those conditions that would preserve, protect and nurture our community. With this sacred obligation in mind, I urge you to support the continued Licensure of Mental Health Counselors.

Me ka pu'uwai ha'aha'a,

**DATE: March 24, 2008**

**TO: The Honorable Representative Robert N. Herkes, Chair; The Honorable Representative Angus L.K. McKelvey, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce**

**FROM: Cheryl Nagano-Ige, LMHC, Mental Health Supervisor, Honolulu, Hawaii**

**RE: SB 2159 HD1, Relating to Professions**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

I am testifying in strong support of SB 2159 HD1.

Licensed mental health counselors can only strengthen Hawaii's mental health care system by providing the people of Hawaii with greater access to qualified mental health professionals. There are many populations in Hawaii that are underserved and overlooked by our health care system. These populations include children and adolescents, the homeless, veterans, and those suffering from substance abuse and addiction. When people face barriers to accessing health care, such as limited access to qualified mental health care professionals, they tend to not seek help, which in turn only exacerbates the societal problems of drug use, homelessness, domestic violence, and crime in Hawaii. Furthermore, underserved populations exist on all islands so imagine what it must be like on the neighbor islands and in rural areas, as it becomes even more difficult to obtain highly qualified mental health care providers in these areas. If Hawaii can give these populations greater access to the quality help they need to address their mental health concerns, there is a greater chance of strengthening their abilities to become healthier, skilled and productive individuals. In turn, their reliance on the "system" will decrease, saving taxpayer dollars spent on incarceration and public assistance programs.

I have worked in the mental health field for nearly 8 years and no matter what agency I have worked for there were always families and clients waiting to receive services and never enough qualified mental health professionals to provide services. Allowing counselors to remain licensed in Hawaii ensures that the people of Hawaii will have greater access to high quality mental health care services provided by professionals who have met established licensing criteria.

For these reasons, I encourage you to pass SB 2159 HD1 out of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce.

00099

***Susan M. Bergman, M.Ed.***

*P.O. Box 61741*

*Honolulu, Hawaii 96839-1741*

DATE: March 24, 2008

TO: The Honorable Representative Robert N. Herkes, Chair; The Honorable Representative Angus L. K. McKelvey, Vice – Chair and Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce

FROM: Susan Bergman, LMHC

RE: SB 2159 HD1, Relating to Professions

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. I am testifying in strong support of SB 2159 HD1. I have served as a public servant in the capacity of regular education teacher, special education teacher, school counselor and mental health counselor. As a teacher I witnessed children in mental pain. They displayed distressful behaviors presenting as acting out overly & covertly, physiological problems, and low self-esteem, due to mental health traumas of various degrees, stemming from home, family, and/or society issues. When I attempted to find counseling assistance for them, the schools did not have people available to meet many of the children's needs. This included my experience with my own child as she faced the daily horrors of possibly losing her mother to cancer. Following 18 hours of cancer surgery, I needed to learn to walk again & had a year of chemo therapy. My daughter was devastated, fearful that I would die. Being a teacher at the time I tried to find counseling services in the schools. I was told there was nothing available for her because she didn't have learning problems, though at home she experienced nervous ticks and nightmares. Under the circumstances, I could not afford to have her see a psychologist. She latched onto her teacher of her gifted and talented class as her person to help her through. I am thankful for that person, but due to insufficient affordable mental health service availability, that time in her life left scars that needed to be addressed later when she became a young adult who could seek services for herself.

Due to my experience as a teacher and as a parent, I became a school counselor and mental health counselor. As a school counselor I did my best to address school and other counseling issues within the school setting. Unfortunately, students and their parents who required more than I could provide as a school counselor, I still found a dead end in seeking assistance, because their issues were not school related. Since I was also working part time as a mental health counselor, I attempted to use professional networking to find services for students and their parents. To my dismay, there were not enough affordable mental health professionals to meet the needs.

Devoted to my belief that children can not learn when they are traumatized on whatever level of hurt or sadness due to family, home, and/or society, I recently retired from my 30 years of service as a teacher and school counselor to be a full time mental health counselor. I want to help meet the needs of the children I could not help in the school setting. I received my Mental Health licensure in 2005 because I

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wanted to fill the void in our community which is desperately lacking adequate numbers of licensed mental health professionals to cover its mental health needs. I have been preparing and transitioning over the past several years from the school setting to the community setting. As an island state, Hawaii is alone and far from other immediate professional mental health resources. We have limited psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers. Licensed Mental Health Counselors who are required to meet established standards of performance are eminently necessary for providing quality services our state has as a demand in our schools and community. Managed care provider limitations can be bridged by Licensed Mental Health Counselors, resulting in a benefit to our people and the health insurance companies. As a state we need to practice aloha in every part of our lives, including meeting mental health needs of our people. It is hard for people to feel aloha when hurting. We can make this a win-win situation by creating more aloha. I strongly encourage you to pass SB 2159 HD1 out of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce as it will be of benefit to the people of Hawaii.

DATE: March 24, 2008

TO: The Honorable Representative Robert N. Herkes, Chair; The Honorable Representative Angus L. K. McKelvey, Vice – Chair and Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce

FROM: Valerie T. Poindexter

RE: SB 2159 HD1, Relating to Professions

Aloha Honorable Representative Robert N. Herkes, Chair; The Honorable Representative Angus L. K. McKelvey, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce,

My name is Valerie Poindexter and I was born and raised in a rural plantation community in the district of Hamakua on the Big Island of Hawaii. I want to thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 2159 HD1.

The benefit of licensure to the public can be examined in the access to mental health care services across socio-economic and geographic lines. In the State of Hawaii, the public's access to mental health care services is severely limited within Medicare, Medicaid and Quest guidelines. Since "licensed" providers are recognized by Medicare, Medicaid and Quest; and "certified" providers are not, it is essential to the public, especially those of limited means, that Mental Health Counselors be licensed.

The importance of access to mental health treatment is best understood through what happens if the public does not have access to mental health services. Work productivity goes down; more people are homeless or in jail; health outcomes for people with heart disease; chronic pain, cancer, etc., go down; and the need for medical care, including hospital admissions, goes up (from information developed by the Coalition for Insurance Parity, January 12, 2000).

Rural communities in the State of Hawaii have always and continues to suffer disproportionately from a shortage of health care services, especially in the mental health profession. In 2002 the National Mental Health Information Center reported that an estimated 148,947 youths in the State of Hawaii, between the ages of 9-17, had serious emotional disturbances. And the numbers only continue to increase because of the shortage of affordable health care services in our rural communities and in our urban communities as well. This alarming number also does not include youths who are homeless or institutionalized.

The National Mental Health Information Center also reported in 2002 that an estimated 949,384 adults, 18 years and older, in the State of Hawaii had serious mental illness. This alarming number also does not include adults who are homeless or institutionalized.

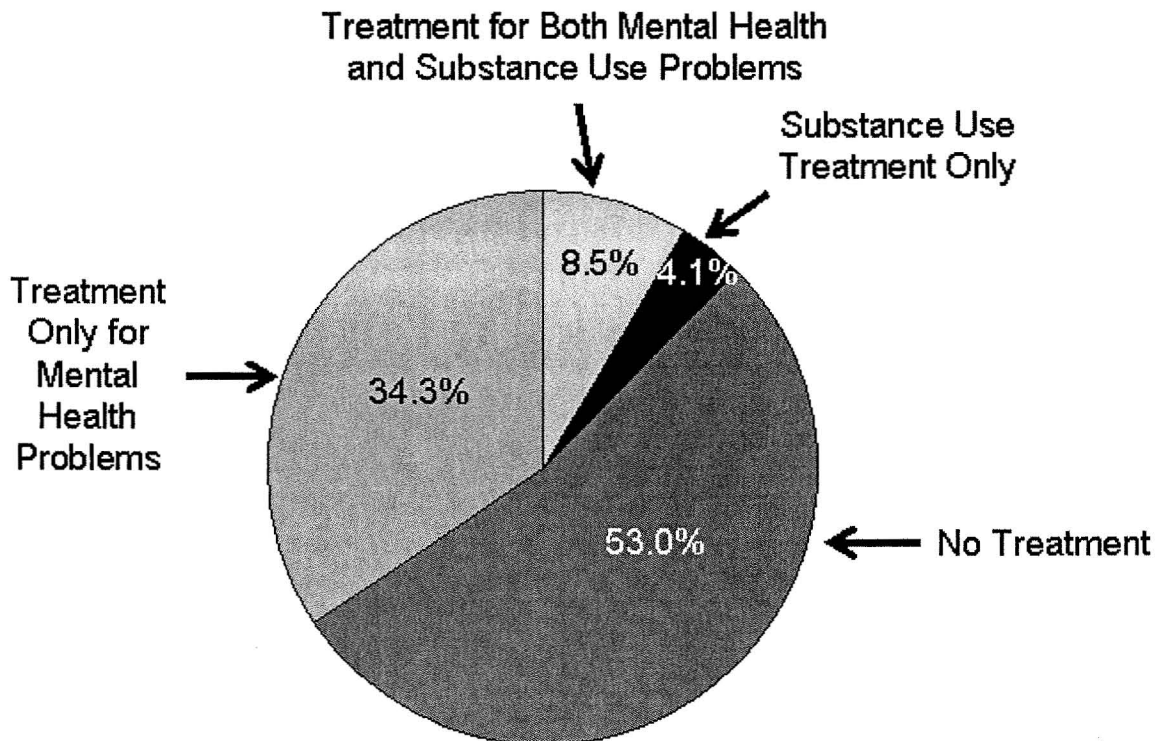
Population growth along with persons with mental health problems and co-occurring disorders will be disastrous for the State of Hawaii if they are left untreated. According to the US Census Bureau and in the State of Hawaii, leading the growth in population from 2005 to 2006 was Hawaii County with a growth rate of 2.8 percent, followed by Maui County (+1.2%), Kauai

County (+1.0%), and Honolulu County grew the least at 0.6 percent. Please note that these statistics are lower than actual because these are only known reported cases.

Over the past several years, the districts that have seen the fastest population growth are Hamakua, Puna, South Kohala, North Kohala, Kau, and North Kona.

Hawaii County's growth rate has far outpaced that of the state as a whole. Yet health care services in our rural communities still remain to be minimal. To make matters worse, there is no viable public transportation connecting the Puna district with other communities on the Big Island, nor is there any viable public transportation within the district itself. It is the same situation for the Kohala District. Our rural communities are suffering, especially where booming sugar industries made its last mass exodus 12 years ago, in 1996, with nothing to replace it, causing a major upheaval in all aspects of peoples lives, especially their mental health. A majority of people affected have gone untreated for all these years because of the lack of affordable mental health services in their communities.

The State of Hawaii has spent millions of dollars to battle the Crystal Methamphetamine "Ice" Epidemic, however, they failed to recognize the importance of mental health services that were simultaneously needed to fight this battle. A person who has both an alcohol or drug problem and an emotional/psychiatric problem is said to have a co-occurring disorder. To recovery fully, the person needs treatment for both problems. Recent studies show that over half of adults with co-occurring disorders receive no treatment for either disorder. The results from the 2005 National Survey on Drug Use and Health are as follows:



**5.2 Million Adults with Co-Occurring SPD and  
Substance Use Disorder**

*The 2005 National Survey on Drug Use and Health goes on to say that an estimated 24.6 million American adults, over age 18, reported experiencing "serious psychological distress"<sup>(SPD)</sup> during the preceding year. More than an estimated 30 million adults reported experiencing at least one episode of major depression during their lives.*

*Researchers gathered the information by administering the K6 instrument to respondents as part of the larger survey. The scale consists of six questions about symptoms of emotional distress experienced by respondents during one month in the prior year at a time when they were feeling their worst emotionally.*

*The six items ask about symptoms related to feelings of depression, anxiety, restlessness, and hopelessness and were scored on the basis of their frequency. The scale ranges from 0 to 24 points, and respondents with a score of 13 or higher were classified as experiencing serious psychological distress.*

*Women reported more psychological distress than did men. Additionally, in 2005 adults who used illicit drugs during the previous year were significantly more likely to report serious psychological distress than those who did not use an illicit drug.*

Studies show that in order for our rural and urban communities to receive the necessary affordable mental health services, we need to reduce professional competition. A study entitled: STATE LICENSURE LAWS AND THE MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONS: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE RURAL MENTAL HEALTH WORKFORCE was completed in October of 2002 by the Maine Rural Health Research Center, whose mission is to inform health care policymaking and the delivery of rural health services through high quality, policy relevant research, policy analysis and technical assistance on rural health issues of regional and national significance. As indicated in their findings, evidence of the "guild environment" existed in current licensure laws. Licensed professions continue to seek limitations on the scopes of practice for other professions to protect their professional niche. When a profession seeks to secure exclusive rights to a specific practice, they must argue that other professions are not qualified in this area – an argument based on quality, often expressed as years of education. A profession may set extensive requirements for entry into the profession, such as many hours of supervised practice, or requiring a doctorate. Requiring that only members of the profession can supervise, or that a certain number of hours of supervision must be face-to-face, further establishes an explicit "gateway" into the profession, similar to an apprenticeship in a traditional guild. These strategies are rational means of protecting the market for a profession's services in an environment where there are ample members of multiple professions competing for market share. Please DO NOT allow this type of competition to fester in the State of Hawaii. Stand strong and protect our people and provide them with the necessary health care services that are desperately needed and long overdue. Allow our Licensed Mental Health Counselors to continue the excellent work that they have been providing for the past several years. Do not strip our communities of this benefit.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my testimony and I encourage all of you to support our rural and urban communities and its mental health care needs.

**Max J. Lawson, Jr. MA, NCC, LMHC  
(Hawai'i License #111)  
Pahala, Hawai'i 96777  
Telephone: (808) 928-2040**

DATE: March 24, 2008

TO: The Honorable Representative Robert N. Herkes, Chair; The Honorable Representative Angus L. K. McKelvey, Vice – Chair and Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce

FROM: **Max Lawson, Licensed Mental Health Counselor #111**

RE: SB 2159 HD1, Relating to Professions

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**I am testifying in strong support of SB 2159 HD1.**

Representative Herkes, Representative McKelvey and Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce, Aloha:

In my view, and in my job as a School Based Behavioral Health Specialist for the Department of Education, my current license not only enhances but ensures high quality service to the children of Hawai'i. I hold myself to a high ethical standard that licensure encourages and so I follow through with treatment planning necessary for the mental health provisions of our children. In our district of Ka`u we have several youth who would be considered profoundly mentally ill. Licensure enhances their ability to receive high quality care as required through provisions of the IDEA law and Hawai'i's own Chapter 56/60. Additionally, as the Department of Education now bills Medicaid for mental health services received for our youth, services provided by a licensed mental health therapist with vendorship provisions further enhances the bottom line of the Department of Education and better utilizes the money available to the State. Therefore, you are urged to respond boldly in this regard and pass this measure on this date. Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

I strongly encourage you to pass SB 2159 HD1 out of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce as it will be of benefit to the people of Hawaii.

Respectfully submitted for your perusal,

Max J. Lawson, Jr. MA, NCC, LMHC (Hawaii License #111)

Receipt requested.

00105

**To:** Representative Robert N. Herkes  
Chair, Consumer Protection and Commerce Committee (CPC)  
[CPCtestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:CPCtestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov)  
March 24, 2008, 2:00P.M. Rm. 325

**Reference:** SB2159 Relating to Professions...mental health counselors  
In favor of passage of SB2159

Chairman Herkes and Committee Members

My name is Chelsey Abe and I am a student at the University of Hawaii. I am a junior majoring in Family Resources. I grew up in Pearl City and graduated from Pearl City High School. While growing up I saw many parents raising their children using corporal punishment as well as yelling and screaming at them in the name of discipline. I always thought to myself that there must be a better way to be a parent. The knowledge I have gained through the Family Resource program has shown me that the behavior of these parents were actually causing their children to rebel both in the home and at school. I pledged that if I ever went to college I would learn how to help these dysfunctional families. I want to do graduate work in the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences' new family-counseling program, which leads to licensure as a mental health counselor. I know that licensure is mandatory if one is to become a professional and work in a professional setting.

Your support of Senate Bill 2159, which eliminates its sunset provision, is an essential key to my becoming a professional family counselor and being able to serve the community where I grew up. I strongly believe in the health and wholeness of the family unit. With this bill, my aspiration to help those families in need will be made possible. Thank you.

Chelsey C. Abe  
Student, University of Hawaii  
Family and Consumer Sciences

**mckelvey3**

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**From:** John Hinkle [flyboy@hawaii.rr.com]  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 23, 2008 10:02 AM  
**To:** CPCtestimony  
**Subject:** SB 2159 HD1Testimony

**John R. Hinkle**

400 Hobron Lane #710  
Honolulu, HI 96815

DATE: March 24, 2008

TO: Representative Robert N. Herkes, Chair, Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce  
Representative Angus L. K. McKelvey, Vice – Chair, Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce  
Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce

FROM: John R. Hinkle, LMHC

RE: SB 2159 HD1, Relating to Professions  
Dear Committee Members:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony. I am testifying in strong support of SB 2159 HD1. The passage of this bill will enable professional mental health counselors in the State of Hawaii to continue to be licensed as part of our state's health-care system. This is extremely important for several reasons.

Licensing guarantees the continued quality of mental health care in Hawaii by ensuring that the highest quality of mental health services are provided by professionals in the mental health profession who meet or exceed the stringent criteria for licensure.

Equally important, by having the existing "sunset provision" deleted, we can help ensure that much needed additional mental health professionals will be available to support the mission of the Hawaii Department of Mental Health.

Given the training that mental health counselors receive in addressing and providing effective mental health care to children and adults, the continuation of the Hawaii Mental Health Counselors Licensure law will enable these highly educated and trained professionals to address the mental health needs of the citizens of Hawaii.

Counselor training programs emphasize cultural competence throughout their curriculums. Professional mental health counselors are well prepared as culturally competent mental health professionals.

Mental Health Counselors receive training that focuses on ways in which they can effectively implement violence prevention interventions as well as working with the victims of violence in our community. In light of the rising level of violence occurring in our state, these professionals provide a much needed service.

Many of the veterans returning to Hawaii from the Iraq war are experiencing a broad range of mental health problems, including post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation. Continuing the Hawaii Mental Health Counselors Licensure Law will enable qualified mental health

counselors to continue to address the mental health needs of these veterans and their families.

Licensing of mental health counselors has helped stimulate interest and growth in enrollment in graduate counseling programs. This is extremely important for Hawaii, as the demand for highly qualified and trained mental health professionals continues to grow. Our statistics point to an ever increasing number of mental health issues including domestic violence, substance abuse, child abuse, unwed mothers, post traumatic stress disorder, and suicidal ideation, to name but a few. Professional mental health counselors are qualified to address these issues and to affect positive outcomes.

By removing the "sunset" and making licensing permanent, Hawaii will be able to expand the types of services available to clients while simultaneously improving their access and reducing their costs. Hawaii has a shortage of licensed mental health professionals. Licensing professional mental health counselors increases the availability of mental health professionals, reduces costs, and benefits the consumer of mental health services. I believe this is the outcome intended by Section 26H-5, HRS.

As a Licensed Mental Health Counselor in Hawaii, I encourage you to pass SB 2159 HD1 out of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce. Mahalo!

Sincerely,

John R. Hinkle, M.S., LMHC



**mckelvey3**

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**From:** m. jamison [m.jamison@ieee.org]  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 23, 2008 10:29 AM  
**To:** CPCtestimony  
**Subject:** SB 2159 HD1 on 3/24/2008 Committee on Commerce Protection and Commerce (2PM)

DATE: March 24, 2008

TO: The Honorable Representative Robert N. Herkes, Chair; The Honorable Representative Angus L. K. McKelvey, Vice - Chair and Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce  
FROM: **Michael A. Jamison, Retired Engineer, 271-0479**

RE: SB 2159 HD1, Relating to Professions

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**I am testifying in strong support of SB 2159 HD1.**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB2159 HD1.

When I lived on the mainland, I worked with a licensed counselor who provided me with excellent mental health services. I had gone to psychologists and psychiatrists for mental health services however it was the mental health counselor who provided me with the best support. Also of importance was the cost-effectiveness of receiving services by a mental health counselor through my health insurance. I was able to obtain timely, effective, and affordable mental health services.

I strongly encourage you to pass SB 2159 HD1 out of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce as it will be of benefit to the people of Hawaii.

Most Sincerely,

Michael A. Jamison

00109

DATE: March 24, 2008

TO: The Honorable Representative Robert N. Herkes, Chair; The Honorable Representative Angus L. K. McKelvey, Vice – Chair and Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce

FROM: Kathy Stovall-Roberts parent of school based counseling recipient, Michael Stovall-Roberts P.O. Box 231, Haleiwa HI 96712

RE:: SB 2159 HD1, Relating to Professions

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**I am testifying in strong support of SB 2159 HD1.**

My son Michael (nicknamed “Manny”), has received school based services from Mrs. Teresa Guidry-Shigemasa MSCP, LMHC, Registered Play Therapist- Supervisor almost 3 years. He was in a pre-school special education environment school year 2005-06, and through the course of services has improved significantly, was placed in an inclusion (special ed/general ed) pre-school setting for school year 2006-07. He is currently being monitored and assessed, and per recent reports, not only is Manny included with the general population of kindergarteners this school year 2007-08, with minimal monitoring, the team is looking at the strong possibility of placing Manny in a general education environment for first grade, and rescinding him from counseling services.

I believe much of my son’s success at school is the direct result of his working with Mrs. Shigemasa and as a parent, I always appreciated that Mrs. Shigemasa was (is) a licensed mental health provider. I was assured as a consumer, that if ever I felt a need to file a grievance regarding services (or lack of services), that I have the protection of the state licensing board in which to file such grievance.

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I strongly encourage you to pass SB 2159 HD1 out of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce as it will be of benefit to the people of Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Kathy Stovall

I strongly encourage you to pass SB 2159 HD1 out of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce as it will be of benefit to the people of Hawaii.

00111

DATE: March 21, 2008

TO: The Honorable Representative Robert N. Herkes, Chair;  
The Honorable Representative Angus L. K. McKelvey, Vice – Chair  
and Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce

FROM: Wendy Pagador, M.Ed, NCC.  
P.O Box 17  
Laie, HI 96762

RE: SB 2159 HD1, Relating to Professions,  
**March 24, the House Consumer Protection and Commerce  
Committee at 2 PM**

I am testifying in strong support of SB 2159 HD1.

I believe it is very important to continue the Mental Health Counselors Licensure Law in Hawaii. I live on the North Shore of Oahu and plan to pursue licensure and serve the population here.

Requiring mental health counselors to be licensed will, I believe, help the public in three ways: it will educate the public about the counseling profession; increase the amount of counselors available to the public and decrease the potential amount of harm from dual relationships in counseling that can occur in small communities.

1. The licensure law pushes me and others to pursue continuing education and provide a quality service. It is important for those seeking help to know they have rights and can expect a certain standard, and that there are clear places where they can report if they do not receive a good service. That is what each of us as members of the public, can expect when we are seeking services of any licensed profession. I believe the continuation of the Mental Health Counselors Licensure Law will educate the public about the availability and usefulness of counseling and furthermore help them to understand standards of counseling as they can compare it to licensure in other professions.

2. I have been told by several male counselors that they have difficulty finding referrals to female counselors in this area for female clients and that there is a need for this population on the North Shore. It is difficult, both in time and money, for people from the North Shore to travel far to receive counseling services. Such travel often requires them to take time off work or to find daycare services, which can also make it difficult for clients to keep counseling a confidential issue. Often those who are able to travel to the city for services are required to wait, even though their situations would benefit from being seen sooner. I think, for the above reasons, there are many who do not receive counseling. With the continuation of the licensure law for Mental Health

00112

Counselors, third paying parties will know the level of service being provided by mental health counselors and will be able include them in services available, particularly providing a better service to rural communities such as those in the North Shore.

3. One more issue that we experience living in a small community is the complication of dual relationships. There is potential for subtle, but great harm in counseling those we know in other ways besides a professional relationship. I believe when there is a shortage of help; counselors are tempted to blur this ethical code in order to help someone that might have difficulty finding counseling help otherwise. Clients sometimes do not understand the ethical issues of dual relationships at all. Requiring mental health counselors to be licensed will not only help more counselors to be available for referral, but will also make the public more aware of ethical standards to which licensed mental health counselors must adhere. This should help decrease risk of harm that may occur due to dual relationships in counseling in smaller communities.

SB 2159 HD1 I believe will help the Hawaii public in the area that we live on the North Shore, and the public in general by helping them know more about the counseling profession, the service they should receive and increase the availability of that service.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony. I strongly encourage you to pass SB 2159 HD1 out of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce.

Sincerely,

W. Pagador

mckelvey3

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**From:** Kenneth Fields [openmindcounseling@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 23, 2008 5:57 PM  
**To:** CPCtestimony  
**Subject:** SB 2159 HD1

**Kenneth Fields MA, NCC, LMHC**

**DATE:** March 24, 2008

**TO:** The Honorable Representative Robert N. Herkes, Chair; The Honorable Representative Angus L. K. McKelvey, Vice – Chair and Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce

**FROM:** **Kenneth Fields**  
  
(808) 250-9925

**RE:** SB 2159 HD1, Relating to Professions

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**I am testifying in strong support of SB 2159 HD1.**

There is little question that mental health is important to the well being of our community. It is equally important that the public have access to qualified mental health professionals who are required to meet established standards of performance. By providing state licensure to professional mental health counselors, the state ensures that the public has available such qualified individuals from whom they can seek assistance.

I strongly encourage the repeal of the sunset clause regarding mental health counselor licensure and encourage the state of Hawaii to support mental health through establishing a permanent law which allows for licensure of mental health counselors.

I strongly encourage you to pass SB2159 HD1 out of the Committee on Consumer Protection

and Commerce as such an action will benefit all the people of Hawaii.

DATE: March 23, 2008

TO: The Honorable Representative Robert N. Herkes, Chair; The Honorable Representative Angus L. K. McKelvey, Vice – Chair and Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce

FROM: **Erica Godoy, MA Counseling Psychology**  
(808)333-6896  
godoy@hawaii.edu

RE: SB 2159 HD1, Relating to Professions

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**I am testifying in strong support of SB 2159 HD1.**

I graduated from the University of Hawaii at Hilo's master's program in counseling psychology in May 2007. I strongly encourage you to pass SB 2159 HD1 out of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce as it will be of benefit to the people of Hawaii. The purpose of this program is to help meet Hawaii's great needs for qualified mental health professionals. I graduated with seven other students and we are all working in the mental health field on Hawaii Island.

The passage of this bill is imperative to the success and continuation of the counseling psychology programs at UHH, UH Manoa, and Chaminade and also to ensure Hawaii residents access to quality mental health services.

For these reasons, I strongly urge you to pass SB 2159 HD 1 out of your Committee.

Thank you for your service to the people of Hawaii,

Erica Godoy  
MA, Counseling Psychology  
The Institute for Family Enrichment



DATE: March 24, 2008

TO: The Honorable Representative Robert N. Herkes, Chair, The Honorable Representative Angus L.K. McKelvey, Vice – Chair and Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce

FROM: Andrew Breton, LMHC NCC  
419 Atkinson Dr. #1203, Honolulu HI

RE: SB 2159, Relating to Professions  
Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce  
Hearing March 24, 2008 2:00 p.m.  
Conference Room 325

Chairman and members of the committee,

Thank you for hearing this bill and for the opportunity to provide testimony for SB 2159. I strongly support the SB 2159, a bill to repeal of the sunset clause of the Mental Health Counselor law. There are several reasons for my support.

1.  
On September 27, 2006, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) announced that the State of Hawaii had been awarded an 11 million dollar grant to create a sustainable, fully integrated, comprehensive, statewide mental health system and to implement a system-wide transformation process. After an extensive needs assessment that included all agencies that fund or provide mental health services/supports, the consumers of those services, and the families of those that receive services, one of the grant's key conclusions is that Hawaii needs to: **"Declare a State-wide emergency in hiring mental health workers in the private and public sector"** and address this need.

Mental Health Counselors could be in a key position to help Hawaii achieve this goal.

- The MHC license is a license to practice. While the preparation for a Mental Health Counselor is tough, it is not intended to produce academic professionals, but rather practicing professionals.
- Master's level degree programs tend to attract more local candidates, while the competition for Ph.D. slots is nationwide and candidates often pull up roots to enroll in a different geographic area for either doctorate or post-doctorate positions.
- As a Master's level degree, Mental Health Counselors have a lower earning potential, and are therefore more likely to remain in Hawaii rather than leave the islands for better pay on the mainland.
- Degrees in counseling are offered on Oahu and Hawaii. This further increases the attraction to people interested in the helping professions who are local to Hawaii and local to at least one rural, traditionally underserved area.

- The counselor training programs in the State of Hawaii emphasize cultural competence throughout their curriculum. National surveys indicate that the counselor training program at the University of Hawaii is rated in the top five programs in the United States in terms of promoting counselors' cultural competence.
- The accreditation process for counselor training programs allows for some flexibility in training, so people who cannot afford to be unemployed for the years necessary for a Ph.D. can work towards a master's degree in counseling while keeping up with other responsibilities for the majority of their schooling. In my office of 20 people, two people are pursuing a degree in counseling. Both are local women: one with teenage sons, and another in her late twenties.

Mental Health Counselors could help Hawaii in another important way. In terms of the percent of federally matching funds (FMAP), in 2007 Hawaii ranked 31st out of 50 States and the District of Columbia. When you omit the 12 States that have only a 50% match, Hawaii ranked 31st out of 39.

(Figures are according to <http://aspe.hhs.gov/health/fmap07.htm>.)

Part of the reason Hawaii is not taking advantage of federally matching funds is the lack of Qualified Mental Health Professionals or QMHPs. QMHP is a designation of certain licensed professionals to supervise unlicensed aides and case managers. Without supervision by a QMHP, a potentially reimbursable Medicaid service cannot be certified; without certification Hawaii cannot seek matching funds.

Needless to say, lack of supervision by a Qualified Mental Health Professional also has consequences for the people receiving mental health services.

Although there has been discussion about sponsoring Mental Health Counselors to receive the QMHP designation, this cannot realistically be pursued with the uncertainty of the license represented by the sunset clause. With the sunset clause in place, it is less likely that people in Hawaii who are interested in the helping professions will invest their time in a degree whose endpoint may not be a license to practice. With fewer counselor candidates, there is one less solution for the crisis in mental health service personnel.

2.

Specifically relating to the necessity of regulation in the public interest: While the comments in the Auditor's report are appreciated, there is an inconsistency in the report. It states that little evidence was found that the practice of counseling would harm the public as only two complaints have been filed. However, earlier in the report it states that most counselors work in state and local government agencies (page 1), at the Department of Health, Department of Human Services, Salvation Army and Hina Mauka (page 4). Each of these agencies and departments has their own complaints procedure, and the consumers would more likely be familiar with these complaints procedures than the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs. Therefore, complaints would more likely be filed directly with those agencies than the Regulated Industries Complaints Office. Ultimately then, complaint data neither supports nor fails to support the necessity of public protection.

On the mainland over a decade ago, I was a member of several State mental health organizations. In every quarterly newsletter, there was a listing of a number of professionals who either voluntarily or involuntarily surrendered their licenses. While this translates to a small number of professionals in any particular geographic area, such a leverage to protect the public would not have been available without the statutory authority. I liken the law to a policeman – when you really need one to protect you, it's nice to have them around.

3.

I appreciate the foresight of the auditor's report to support amendments of Chapter 431M, HRS. This, of course, saves the committee and legislature future time and effort.

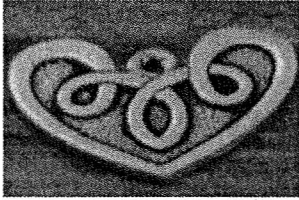
Along those lines, I want to reinforce Exhibit 2.1, which demonstrates the similarity between various other professions that serve the mental health needs of consumers. I did a similar crosswalk that included Ph.D. psychologists, and concluded that the difference was in courses on the biological and cognitive bases of psychology (four courses), an additional course on assessment, and the dissertation. In other words, in terms of clinical preparation, the training was about equal. I mention the above with not only pride in my profession, but also to answer any critics who say that mental health counselors lack preparation to practice without the supervision of a Ph.D. or an M.D.

With any expansion of 431M, some parties may say there will be an increased cost, particularly to Hawaii's employers. This can be a complicated area to discuss. I would urge the committee to also consider that behavioral health issues cause 217 million missed workdays annually, account for 7.6 percent of total health care dollars, are the fifth leading cause of short-term disability and the third leading cause of long-term disability (figures are according to Partnership for Workplace Mental Health, a program of the American Psychiatric Foundation). Therefore, expanding the workforce who can deliver mental health services would likely pay for itself.

The suggestion to leave the decision providing coverage to the employer as the one who will ultimately bear the additional cost seems good on the surface. In actuality, there has never been a case of an employer deciding to expand their mental health service providers. Employers, especially small and medium-sized employers, often leave those kinds of decisions to government officials and insurance companies.

For the above reasons, I urge you to repeal the sunset clause in the Mental Health Counselor statute and support the proposed amendment to 431M, HRS.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



## Triscele Services

DarLene Jones, MS, NCC, LMHC  
Where obstacles can become opportunities  
(808)551-5632

DATE: March 24, 2008

TO: The Honorable Representative Robert N. Herkes, Chair; The Honorable Representative Angus L. K. McKelvey, Vice – Chair and Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce

FROM: DarLene Jones, MS, NCC, LMHC  
[dmjones@hawaii.edu](mailto:dmjones@hawaii.edu); (808)551-5632

RE: SB 2159 HD1, Relating to Professions

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. I am testifying in **strong support** of SB 2159 HD1!

Mental Health Counselors directly work with many of our children, youth, and adults here in Hawaii. The profession is a noble one and licensing the body has provided much needed professional standards to the work; holding us to a higher and more uniform standard throughout the state. Licensing allows the public to know that these particular professionals have completed rigorous training and completed supervised practical experience to meet national credentialing standards. These individuals have assisted in addressing the growing need for mental health care in the State of Hawaii.

Licensing Mental Health Counselors has added qualified professionals to the pool of professionals working and meeting the needs of the people of Hawaii. In addition, the number of our women and men in the military returning from war with mental and emotional needs has increased dramatically. The many physical, mental, and emotional problems they are experiencing impacts their lives as well as rippling out into the community at large. It is imperative that qualified professionals be available to assist the myriad of concerns we counselors find through our work.

As a community college counselor, I have been amazed at the number of our young people experiencing mental and emotional problems that they seem unable to resolve on their own. Some problems can be solved rather quickly while others are chronic and long standing. Our community is dealing with an increase of substance abuse and the violence and criminality that rides its coattails. Licensed mental health counselors play an important role in providing the mental health services that are essential in helping individuals overcome their substance abuse issues throughout the State of Hawaii. In my private work, I see many different kinds of concerns and feel qualified to handle their issues.

I am extremely concerned that after much hard work and effort getting mental health providers licensed we may lose the privilege shortly. We have the opportunity to build our local pool of professional people here in Hawaii by keeping this law in effect. One of the important functions

the Hawaii Mental Health Counselors Licensure Law serves is to guarantee that high quality mental health-care services are provided to the people in this state by professionals who meet the established criteria for licensure. The deletion of the existing "sunset provision" in the current law would enable qualified mental health counselors to become licensed and ensure that high quality mental health-care services will continue to be offered to the people of Hawaii by these professionals. This would mean qualified people could address the needs in all areas of the state, including the neighbor islands and the more rural sections of Hawaii.

For all these reasons, I seek YOUR support in ensuring the passage of SB 2159 HD1 so qualified professionals can continue to serve our citizens here in Hawaii. Thank you for your consideration with this matter.

Sincerely,

Darlene Jones, MS, NCC, LMHC  
Windward Community College  
Career & Workforce Development  
Employment Training Center  
and  
Triscele Services  
Mental Health Counselor  
License #174

I strongly encourage you to pass SB 2159 HD1 out of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce as it will be of benefit to the people of Hawaii.

**mckelvey3**

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**From:** Sheriann Daniels [rcioaconsulting@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 23, 2008 7:23 PM  
**To:** CPCtestimony  
**Subject:** SB 2159

**DATE:** March 24, 2008

**TO:** The Honorable Representative Robert N. Herkes, Chair; The Honorable Representative Angus L. K. McKelvey, Vice – Chair and Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce

**FROM:** **Sheri Daniels, MSCP, CSAC. LMHC**

Child and Family Service

333 Dairy Road, #201, Kahului, Maui 96732

(808) 877-9853

**RE:** SB 2159 HD1, Relating to Professions

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**I am testifying in strong support of SB 2159 HD1.**

**As a Licensed Mental Health Counselor on Maui , it is important to support this bill as it will allow for the continued availability of LMHC in the neighbor island communities, where there is already a limited number of professionals in the counseling field.**

**LMHC are just as essential to social services and mental health services as are our social worker and other human service professionals in the field as we help people and communities become stronger.**

**The need for LMHC (and other licensed professionals) has increased with the need by various government bodies requiring the licensed professional to provide the services in the community. This is already a challenge in the neighbor island areas where there is already a shortage of advanced degreed individuals.**

I strongly encourage you to pass SB 2159 HD1 out of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce as it will be of benefit to the people of Hawaii.

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Never miss a thing. Make Yahoo your homepage.

**mckelvey3**

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**From:** Karla M Filibeck [karlaf@hawaii.edu]  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 23, 2008 10:16 PM  
**To:** CPCtestimony  
**Subject:** Reference: SB2159 Relating to Professions...mental health counselors

**To:** Representative Robert N. Herkes

Chair, Consumer Protection and Commerce Committee (CPC)

[CPCtestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:CPCtestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov)

March 24, 2008, 2:00P.M. Rm. 325

**Reference:** SB2159 Relating to Professions...mental health counselors

In favor of passage of SB2159

Chairman Herkes and Committee Members

My name is Karla Filibeck and I am a junior at the University of Hawaii majoring in Family Resources. I have a dream. I want to study to be a mental health counselor helping high school girls who have become parents. Looking back at my high school days, I saw babies having babies. Mature two parent families find it difficult to properly raise and discipline children. Young inexperienced single parents need great amounts of help. The parenting skills I am learning at the University have given me insight and courage to reach my goals as a high school parent educator. Please do not let the mental health counselor licensure law sunset. It would be a disaster to so many. Please vote Yeah on Senate Bill 2159.

Aloha,

Karla Filibeck

3/24/2008

00124



Student, Family Resources

University of Hawaii at Manoa

**mckelvey3**

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**From:** Suk-Yee Chan-Harris [chanharr@hawaii.edu]  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 23, 2008 11:42 PM  
**To:** CPCtestimony  
**Subject:** support SB2159 HD1

DATE: March 24, 2008

TO: The Honorable Representative Robert N. Herkes, Chair;  
The Honorable Representative Angus L. K. McKelvey, Vice - Chair and Members of the  
Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce

FROM: Lily Chan-Harris  
PO Box 1671, Keaau HI 96749

RE: SB 2159 HD1, Relating to Professions

I am testifying in strong support of SB 2159 HD1.

I am a student at the University of Hawaii at Hilo Counseling Psychology master's program. My aim is to complete the educational requirements for licensure as a Mental Health Counselor (MHC) in Hawaii and serve the community, especially the youth population.

The passage of this bill, including both the repeal of the sunset provisions for MHC licensure in Section 26H-4(b) and the amendment of Chapter 431M in order to grant mandatory insurance reimbursement to licensed MHCs, is vital to (a) the counseling psychology program I am enrolled in and, more importantly, (b) provide Hawaii residents with access to high-quality mental health services.

In the recently released Report 08-06, Sunset Evaluation: Mental Health Counselors, the State Auditor recommends that "that Section 26H-4(b), HRS, be amended to remove the repeal date of December 31, 2008 for the licensing of mental health counselors, and that Chapter 431M, HRS, on Mental Illness, Alcohol and Drug Treatment Insurance Benefits, be amended to add licensed mental health counselors to the list of practitioners."

If enacted, SB 2159 HD 1 would accomplish both of the recommendations of the Auditor and will benefit the people of Hawaii for the reasons described briefly in this testimony and in much more detail in the Auditor's report.

For these reasons, I strongly urge you to pass SB 2159 HD 1 out of your Committee. Thank you very much for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,  
Lily Chan-Harris

DATE: March 24, 2008

TO: The Honorable Representative Robert N. Herkes, Chair; The Honorable Representative Angus L. K. McKelvey, Vice -Chair and Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce

FROM: Laura M. Sullivan, Licensed Mental Health Counselor, #36, State of Hawaii, 84-740 Kili Drive, #1027, Waianae, HI 96792, Phone: 808-695-1221

RE: SB 2159 HD1, Relating to Professions

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. **I am testifying in strong support of SB 2159 HD1.** More licensed mental health professionals are needed to give quality mental health counseling to families and children here in Hawaii. By licensing Mental Health Counselors, the state of Hawaii can guarantee that the people here in Hawaii receive ethical and good- quality treatment. Licensure of Mental Health Counselors, particularly with the deletion of the "sunset provision" in the current law enables the good people of Hawaii to continue to receive quality care from qualified Mental Health Counselors.

In the rural areas of Oahu and the neighbor islands, there are currently not as many qualified mental health professionals to meet the mental health needs of families. Licensing qualified Mental Health Counselors will ensure that effective mental health care is given to families in Hawaii, including the rural areas. Many families in Hawaii face economic stressors, and stressors such as job changes, separation, divorce, health problems, drug and alcohol addictions. All of these problems can cause depression and other mental health problems. Therefore, the families of Hawaii are entitled to the best mental health care they can receive from Licensed Mental Health Counselors. Licensed Mental Health Counselors also deserve to be included to the list of mental health professionals that are receiving covered benefits. I strongly encourage you to pass SB 2159 HD1 out of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce as it will be of benefit to the people of Hawaii.

Sincerely,



Laura M. Sullivan, LMHC

00127

Margaret J. Cadiz, MSW, QCSW, LSW  
[MargaretJCadiz@hawaii.rr.com](mailto:MargaretJCadiz@hawaii.rr.com)

**DATE:**

March 24, 2008  
2:00 PM, Conference Room 325

**TO:**

The Honorable Representative Robert N. Herkes, Chair;  
The Honorable Representative Angus L. K. McKelvey, Vice – Chair  
and Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection and  
Commerce

**FROM:**

Margaret Cadiz [MargaretJCadiz@hawaii.rr.com](mailto:MargaretJCadiz@hawaii.rr.com) (808)349-7144

**RE:**

SB 2159 HD1, Relating to Professions

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**I am testifying in strong support of SB 2159 HD1.**

It is regrettable that not every citizen in our state has sufficient access to mental health services. By licensing qualified mental health counselors, opportunities for such care will be more readily available. The Auditor's Sunset Evaluation concludes that the licensing program of mental health counselors should be reenacted. I concur.

I strongly encourage you to pass SB 2159 HD1 out of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce as it will be of benefit to the people of Hawaii.

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00128