

mckelvey3

From: Aulii C. [auliikiami@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, March 24, 2008 1:02 PM
To: CPCtestimony
Subject: Testimony in support of the passage of SB 2159 HD1

LATE TESTIMONY

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 (a current mental health counselor in training) am writing to support the passage of SB 2159 HD1, by the full legislative body, and to offer testimony herein for supporting its passage.

I am a local (born and raised) Hilo, Hawai'i resident whose passion and career is at stake without the passing of this bill. Our isolated island and rural nature that de-selects for us among medical practitioners and health providers, massive cuts in the budgets and the general economic turndowns that ripple through human services first, and thus the need for wider coverage and ability to select among various options for the poorer members of our communities in particular.

Research suggests that when people see therapists beforehand, there is SIGNIFICANTLY LESS frequent number of visits to medical doctors in general, not just for mental health concerns, and thus a savings at those levels as well. More adequate numbers of Licensed Mental Health Practitioners providing counseling could prove to alleviate the high need for such services among rural Hawai'i communities due to increased population, returning veteran needs, overload on some already licensed providers, and the need to expand choice options for all recipients.

As a hopeful future local private mental health practitioner, I am also petitioning that the provision of insurance coverage vendorship at this time, along with the Sunset removal, will be a time and money saving means and practice for all professionals, insurers, government and for community members in need of services now and in the future. The University of Hawai'i at Hilo currently offers a counseling program, which grants more local residents an opportunity to secure a career as a professional in the helping field. Certainly the issue of training new therapists each year who can then earn a living is among the above concerns, but serving the larger public's general well-being is at the core of these concerns.

Thank you for the opportunity to present my support for the passage of SB 2159 HD1 (by the full legislative body) and for contributing to fulfilling my passion and dreams of being able to humbly serve the needs of my ohana!

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

'Auli'i K. Canencia
General Delivery
Mt. View, HI 96771

3/25/2008

LATE TESTIMONY

**Joanne Sameshima, LMHC
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(808) 885-4933
Email: star@turquois.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: Joanne Sameshima, LMHC
Kamuela, Hawaii 96743
Phone: (808) 885-4933
Work: (808) 887-7636 extn. 237**

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, in the state of Hawaii, one of
Many purposes of our strong support of **SB 2159 HD1**, are the
Following:

1. To remove the glass ceiling, and to disseminate information
and protect our public.

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2. Protect the title of Mental Health Counselors having met the licensure criteria against others who are unregulated and unlicensed.
3. To increase the beneficiaries of consumers to Mental Health Counselors by establishing third party billing.

My counseling focus has been working with children, adolescents and teens along with their families both through the Department of Education and a limited private practice.

Without the support of **SB 2159 HD1**, there will be limited opportunities and resources for families to seek out qualified licensed mental health counselors to relatively inexperienced counselors who perform counseling services.

I would like to include in my testimony reference from an article in the Honolulu Advertiser, dated March 7, 2008, page 1 and A14. The article's statement of "Hawaii's children aged 12 to 17 were in the second highest range for depressive episodes". The article further postulates of studies, on adults 26 years and older were in the highest category for needing treatment but not getting it....."

The same article also revisited a study which is consistent with other reports that show, "Hawaii has a relatively low **suicide rate but higher Suicide rates for young people**".

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Testimony Cont'd. (Honolulu Advertiser Article).

A statement made by the Executive Director of Mental Health America Hawaii, identifies Hawaii's need which reconfirms our effort to secure the passing of **SB 2159 HD1** which is, "**We have among the highest rates in the nation of teenagers who are planning suicide, attempting suicide or are thinking seriously about suicide. Girls are the highest.**"

In our efforts and with much consideration of the above information, is good reason to support **SB 2159 HD1**.

The high cost of living, two parents working two jobs and therefore, families are less available to their children. The passing of SB 2159 HD1 will ensure the public the availability and affordability through third party billing services from "Hawaii Licensed Mental Health Counselors". This will remove the "glass ceiling", it will broaden Hawaii's children and families their opportunity to receive qualified professional mental health services, not limit their choices.

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.