

**PRESENTATION OF THE
BOARD OF NURSING**

TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE
Regular Session of 2009

Tuesday, March 3, 2009
3:00 p.m.

**TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL NO. 811, H.D. 2, RELATING TO REGISTERED
NURSES.**

TO THE HONORABLE MARCUS R. OSHIRO, CHAIR,
AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE:

My name is Kathy Yokouchi. I am the Executive Officer of the Board of Nursing ("Board"). I appreciate the opportunity to present testimony on behalf of the Board in strong opposition to House Bill No. 811, H.D. 2.

The purpose of this bill is to remove, for an unlicensed foreign nursing school graduate applying for a registered nurse ("RN") license in Hawaii, the requirement to have the RN's educational credentials evaluated by a professional evaluator. It would allow the RN's school to furnish a "breakdown of educational program for international nursing program form" along with a transcript that is in English or is translated into English.

Nursing is regulated because it is one of the health professions that pose risk of harm to the public if practiced by someone who is unprepared and incompetent. Licensing consists of two components: 1) meeting education requirements and 2) an examination requirement. Both are crucial to determining competency. All nurses must first meet nursing education requirements to be eligible for the national examination.

Forty-five state boards and the National Council of State Boards of Nursing which owns the national examination firmly believe that domestic and international nurses must be held to the same standards of nursing education, training and testing. The days of having separate state nursing requirements are gone. In today's world of natural disasters and terrorism, such as 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina, the need for the nation and its territories to have uniform educational and testing standards is even more acute. In a few years, licensing will move towards global mobility that would allow health practitioners to provide aid to allied countries in need, be it the Philippines, England, the U.S. or other.

The Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools International ("CGFNS") is an immigration-neutral, nonprofit organization and is an **internationally recognized** authority on credentials evaluation pertaining to the education, registration, and licensure of nurses and other healthcare professionals worldwide. CGFNS protects the public by ensuring that nurses and other healthcare professionals educated in 191 countries other than the United States are eligible and qualified to meet licensure, immigration and other practice requirements in the United States. The CGFNS checks each international nurse's history for prior convictions and all foreign licenses must be validated as authentic and unencumbered in every nation that the nurse has been licensed. (The California Board uses an honor system. If a "no" response to questions on prior convictions and disciplinary actions is indicated on the application, the matter is not pursued.)

House Bill No. 811, H.D.2 refers to California's "Breakdown of Educational Program for International Nursing Programs Form" ("Breakdown Form"). In contacting the California Board, it was found that it uses "California standards" and not "U.S. Standards". The cost of retaining reviewers ran to approximately a million dollars a year. Still, they are not able to review Ukrainian, Eastern European, most African, and some South American nurses' credentials because they simply do not have the money to hire more reviewers with expertise in these countries' nursing programs. These nurses are reviewed by the CGFNS.

Soon there will be forty-six states that will require the CGFNS review. The remaining four will be the **gateway** where thousands of international nurses whose credentials are not reviewed by the CGFNS will go through these remaining gateway states. New Mexico and Alaska recently relinquished their state reviews for the CGFNS because the numbers of reviews were in the thousands and they simply could not keep up. California does 1,000 reviews a month. If California decides to abandon its reviews, those numbers will go to the remaining three states. This measure would require Hawaii to be one of the gateways and we would not be able to implement such a program.

The requirement for uniform evaluation is connected to federal immigration laws. Section 343 of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) of 1996 (P.L. 104-208) requires that all international health professionals, except physicians, must be certified by CGFNS or another independent, government-certified organization qualified to issue credentials. The certification and the course-by-course

evaluation process verify that the international health care worker's education, training, or experience meets all applicable statutory and regulatory requirements for entry into the United States.

Hawaii offers foreign school graduates two options: 1) those with "green cards" need only to have their educational credentials evaluated by the CGFNS on a course-by-course basis. No English competency or CGFNS examination is required, 2) those without "green cards" are required to complete the CGFNS certification process which would meet the immigration requirements. (The latter includes an English competency exam, CGFNS exam, and education credentials review.)

In conclusion, the Board believes that preserving uniform licensing requirements for education and examination ensures consumer safety and nurse mobility in times of crisis and emergencies. Uniform requirements lessen confusion for patients, nurses, other health team members and third party payers, as well as legislators and policy makers. Implementing the California model will be **extremely cost prohibitive and not implementable.**

The Board is in strong opposition to this measure and respectfully request that this measure be held in Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to testify against House Bill No. 811, H.D. 2.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Written Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance
March 3, 2009, 2:00 p.m.

by

Virginia S. Hinshaw, Chancellor
and

Mary G. Boland, DrPH, RN, FAAN
Dean and Professor
School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 811 HD2 RELATING TO REGISTERED NURSES

Chair Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee, and members of the House Committee on Finance, thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to HB 811 HD2 which proposes to remove the professional evaluator requirement for foreign nursing school graduates applying for registered nurse licensure in Hawai'i.

The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM) School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene (SONDH) is an educational program preparing registered nurses and advanced practice registered nurses in Hawai'i. The UHM nursing program is fully accredited and recognized as an approved educational program by the Hawai'i State Board of Nursing.

It is critical to preserve uniform licensing requirements to ensure consumer safety and nurse mobility within and between Hawai'i. The current system protects the public by ensuring that a foreign nurse applicant's educational requirements are evaluated by a professional educational third-party, the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CFGNS) International. CFGNS validates international professional education and credentials in support of regulation and educational standards for health care professionals. They are an immigration-neutral non-profit organization, internationally recognized as an authority on credentials evaluation pertaining to the education, registration and licensure of nurses and other health care professionals worldwide. We support the position of the Hawai'i State Board of Nursing on this measure.

SONDH is committed to supporting a collaborative environment for nursing colleagues at the state, national and international levels. We believe the mechanism utilizing a professional educational evaluator for foreign nursing school graduates facilitates a collegial environment for health care professionals while addressing the first and foremost priority for consumer safety. *We respectfully suggest that the Legislature consider a resolution to CFGNS that may encourage a more timely response to applicants who are experiencing challenges with the current system.* Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



Nursing Advocates & Mentors, Inc.

... a non-profit organization with a mission to address the global nursing shortage by providing guidance and assistance for nursing colleagues to obtain their professional license in nursing.

P.O. Box 2034 Aiea, HI 96701
E-mail: bramosrazon@aol.com

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The Board of Nursing pr

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 811 RELATING TO REGISTERED NURSES

March 3, 2009 3PM

Hawaii State Legislature Conference Room 305

Report Title: Registered Nurses; Foreign Graduates; Licensure Requirements

Description: Removes, for a foreign nursing school graduate applying for a licensure by examination for Registered Nurse in Hawaii, the requirement of obtaining a certification from the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS)

**To: Honorable Rep Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair
Honorable Rep Marilyn B. Lee, Vice-Chair
Honorable House Committee Members of Finance**

**From: Beatrice Ramos-Razon, RN, FACDONA
President, Nursing Advocates and Mentors, Inc. (NAMI)**

My name is Beatrice Ramos-Razon. As the Founder and President of NAMI (Nursing Advocates & Mentors, Inc.), we are in strong support of this bill. NAMI's membership is comprised of over 75 volunteer nurses, instructors, allied health care professionals, and Filipino leaders, who are dedicated to improve the health of Hawai'i's people by addressing not only a statewide, but worldwide nursing shortage through the training and mentoring of foreign graduate nurses, many of whom come from underprivileged backgrounds, to pass Hawai'i's nurses board exams.

Before anyone can practice as a Registered Nurse, the practitioner has to pass a board examination for licensure. This National Council Licensure Examination or NCLEX-RN is the first entry level of competence for the Nurse.

The Board of Nursing provides the eligibility for authorization to take the examination. A requirement for a foreign school graduate applying for a licensure by examination in Hawaii is obtaining a certification from the CGFNS-Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools. To accomplish the certification, one has to apply for a certification program or Credentials Evaluation Service Report. The certification program is comprised of a credentials review, qualifying exam, English proficiency

examination which costs \$418. The Credentials Evaluation Service Report analyzes the credentials of the applicant and costs \$ 378. The application for license by examination is \$40.

The fee for application for license by examination to California Board of Nursing is \$126. The requirement for a foreign graduate nurse is to send a form to their nursing school asking the school to send a breakdown of the nursing program and transcripts of records directly to the California Board of Nursing for evaluation. There is an additional fee of \$200 for the authorization to sit in to take the national exam in any state.

The additional requirement by the Hawaii Board of Nursing not only delays the application process but incurs additional costs to the consumers. This barrier has resulted to Hawaii residents to apply for licensure to the California Board of Nursing. I am fully aware of this because I am involved with NAMI-Nursing Advocates and Mentors Inc. a volunteer group providing free RN review classes and mentoring potential nurses. Almost all of the foreign graduate reviewees who go through the program for the year, complete the California Board of Nursing Application. When they get their eligibility to take the exam, they may take the national exam here in Hawaii or any state. When they pass the examination, they are issued a California RN license and if they stay and practice in Hawaii, they can obtain a Hawaii license by reciprocity from the Hawaii Board of Nursing.

This bill is to remove the requirement of CGFNS by the Hawaii Board of Nursing and to adopt rules similar to the other states like California who do their own credentialing and evaluation of the nursing program of the applicants. The new rule may apply only to legal residents in Hawaii or American citizens who obtained their education outside USA. The new rule will not apply to nurses applying for a working visa because US immigration requires a VisaScreen certificate from CGFNS. Passage of the bill will likely increase the number of individuals applying to Hawaii Board of Nursing.

The intent of this bill is not to decrease the standards in anyway, but mainly to facilitate the application process of licensure for foreign graduate nurses. We all share in the common vision of the board of nursing, nursing schools, healthcare facilities and nursing organizations which is the successful licensure of eligible and competent nurses for consumer safety and public good.

Thank you for the opportunity to support this bill.

Sincerely,

Beatrice Ramos-Razon
RN, FACDONA
President, Nursing Advocates and Mentors, Inc
Executive Director, Philippine Nurses Association Hawaii



UNITED FILIPINO COUNCIL OF HAWAII

P.O. BOX 498, Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0498

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 811 HD 2

House Committee on Finance

March 3, 2009, 3 p.m. | Hawai'i State Legislature | Room 308

To: Honorable Rep. Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair
 Honorable Rep. Marilyn B. Lee, Vice-Chair
 Honorable Members of the House Committee on Finance

From: Eddie Agas, President, United Filipino Council of Hawaii

Measure Title:

RELATING TO REGISTERED NURSES

Report Title:

Registered Nurses; Foreign Graduates; Licensure Requirements

My name is Eddie Agas. I am the president of the United Filipino Council of Hawaii (UFCH). I submit this testimony to strongly support this bill on behalf of UFCH, an umbrella organization with member organizations from six islands. UFCH membership is comprised of nearly 5,000 individual members. This bill is important because it benefits not only members of our Filipino community, but also all of Hawaii's people.

UFCH, like the Hawai'i Board of Nursing and the Hawai'i Nurses Association, supports measures to protect public safety and meet State licensure standards for RNs, but we are deeply concerned that while well-intentioned, inefficient licensing regulations of the Hawai'i Board of Nursing are unduly limiting access of internationally trained registered nurses to take the NCLEX (National Clinical Licensure Exam) or nursing license board exam.

In all due respects, the Filipino community would like to know what relationship exists between the Hawai'i Board of Nurses and the CGFNS (Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools), in order to: 1) understand why an exorbitant fee of \$418 is charged, and 2) why it takes so long to evaluate international RNs' transcripts? More than 20 states, such as California and Michigan, have removed such obstacles, and yet have also accomplished evaluating transcripts to ensure that high medical training standards are met.

We understand the unfortunate economic factors that constrain staffing needs to conduct the review of transcripts and assure that international schools and curriculum meet U.S. standards. That is why we are committed to community collaborations to support the Hawai'i Board of Nursing to revisit regulations that facilitate, not inhibit, the eligibility criteria and process of foreign-educated RNs to demonstrate their competencies by having greater access to take and pass the NCLEX. Please vote yes to the bill's proposed changes. Thank you for hearing this bill, and for the opportunity to present our testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

Eddie Agas, President, United Filipino Council of Hawaii

Filipino Coalition for Solidarity

A HAWAII RIGHTS ADVOCACY GROUP • FOUNDED IN 1990

c/o 728 Nunu St. · Kailua, HI 96734 · <http://www.philippinesonline.org/thecoalition/>

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 811 HD 2

House Committee on Finance

March 3, 2009, 3 p.m. | Hawai'i State Legislature | Room 308

To: Honorable Rep. Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair
Honorable Rep. Marilyn B. Lee, Vice-Chair
Honorable Members of the House Committee on Finance

From: Charlene Cuaresma, MPH, President, Filipino Coalition For Solidarity

Measure Title: RELATING TO REGISTERED NURSES

Report Title: Registered Nurses; Foreign Graduates; Licensure Requirements

Description: Removes, for a foreign nursing school graduate applying for licensure by examination for registered nurses in Hawaii, the requirement to obtain certification from the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools. Requires the Board of Nursing to adopt rules requiring submission of the Breakdown of Educational Program for International Nursing Programs form and a certified school transcript. (HB811 HD1)

My name is Charlene Cuaresma. As president of the Filipino Coalition for Solidarity, I want to express appreciation to you for hearing this important bill. Since its inception in 1990, the Coalition has represented more than 50 Filipino community leaders, whose aim is to work for social justice issues to empower Filipinos to make socially responsible contributions to Hawai'i and our global neighbors through education, advocacy, and social action.

I am submitting testimony in strong support of this bill.

As U.S. schools of nursing and health care systems across the country are challenged to meet the demands of training and certifying enough nurses to deliver America's health care needs, internationally educated registered nurses have been sought out for decades to fill this gaping void. The purpose of this bill is to streamline the certification program process, while at the same time safeguarding high nursing standards. This bill is modeled after best management practices of reducing red tape and exorbitant certification fees by a simple updating of board of nursing rules that has been increasingly adopted by the majority of states, including California. The resulting certification process not only retains accountability of credentials and professional nursing skills, but also fast tracks qualified nurses into Hawaii's health care work force.

Respectfully,

Charlene Cuaresma, MPH
President, Filipino Coalition for Solidarity

Filipino American Citizens League

Jake Manegdeg, President
P. O. Box 270126 * Honolulu, Hawai'i 96827

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 811 HD 2

House Committee on Finance
March 3, 2009, 3 p.m. | Hawai'i State Legislature | Room 308

To: Honorable Rep. Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair
Honorable Rep. Marilyn B. Lee, Vice-Chair
Honorable Members of the House Committee on Finance

From: Jake Manegdeg, President, Filipino American Citizens League

Measure Title:

RELATING TO REGISTERED NURSES

Report Title:

Registered Nurses; Foreign Graduates; Licensure Requirements

Description:

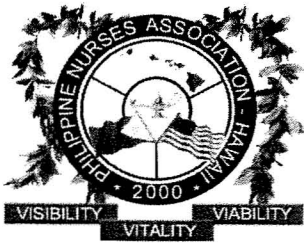
Removes, for a foreign nursing school graduate applying for licensure by examination for registered nurses in Hawaii, the requirement to obtain certification from the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools. Requires the Board of Nursing to adopt rules requiring submission of the Breakdown of Educational Program for International Nursing Programs form and a certified school transcript. (HB811 HD1)

My name is Jake Manegdeg. I am the president of the Filipino American Citizens League. The Filipino American Citizens League was formed over ten years ago to contribute to the advancement of civil rights and social justice for minority groups, underserved populations, and vulnerable communities through education, advocacy, and social action.

I submit this testimony to strongly support this bill. Thank you for hearing this bill and for correcting the error in the above description of the bill. Supporting these proposed changes to the nursing certification requirements still upholds standards and credentials that are essential to practice nursing in Hawaii. These changes are also necessary to address Hawaii's nurses labor force challenges. Thank you for the chance to provide support for this bill. Your help in its passage is greatly appreciated.

Very Sincerely,

Jake Manegdeg
President
Filipino American Citizens League



The Philippine Nurses Association Hawaii

<http://www.pnahawaii.org>

**E-mail: pna_hawaii@yahoo.com or
president@pnahawaii.org**

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LETTER IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 811

Measure Title: RELATING TO REGISTERED NURSES

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

DATE: March 3, 2009, 3 PM

CONFERENCE ROOM 308

March 2, 2009

To: Honorable Representative Marcus R. Oshiro, Chairman
Honorable Representative Marilyn B. Lee, Vice-Chair
Honorable Members of the House Committee on Finance

Dear Sir:

We, the officers of PNA Hawaii, a local organization of Filipino-American nursing and civic organization in Hawaii, and a chapter member of the Philippine Nurses Association of America, Inc (PNAA), supports the Hawaii HB 811 to remove the certification requirements from CGFNS (Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools).

At present, Hawaii law mandated foreign nursing schools to send credentials to CGFNS for evaluation thus add toward the lengthy and costly application processes. Full report fee at \$378.00, or the certificate program fee at \$418.00. To ease the application process, these foreign nursing graduates request their schools to send their credentials directly to California Board of Nursing at a fee of only a meager \$126.00.

The intention of the bill HB 811 is for the foreign nursing graduates to take the NCLEX examination without incurring expenses that CGFNS requires. Instead, we are asking for the Hawaii Board of Nursing to do the credentialing. This bill HB 811 will not compromise the security and safety of the consumers or patients as the opposition has affirmed.

This bill, Hawaii HB 811 entitles only those foreign nursing school graduates that had legally entered the United States of America as green card holder or an immigrant status.

Sincerely yours,

Jose G. Jacob
President, PNA Hawaii



OAHU FILIPINO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

P.O. Box 17531 • Honolulu • Hawaii 96817

Unit Organizations

Alliance of Residential
Carehome Administrators
Aloha Saguibsib Cultural
Foundation, Inc.
Annac ti Bado iti Hawaii
Annac ti Batac
Annac ti Caoayan 2002
Annac ti Kailokuan iti
America
Annac ti Sinait iti Hawaii
Asingan Organization of
Hawaii
Badoc-Pinili Aid
Association of Hawaii
Banna Association of
Hawaii
Bannatiran Association of
Hawaii
Batangas Association of
Hawaii
Bulacan Circle of Hawaii
Caballeros de Dimasalang
Cabugao Sons & Daughters
of Hawaii
Candonians of Hawaii
Caoayan ISAH
Cavitenians of Hawaii
Dingras Association of
Hawaii
Divine Word College
Alumni Association
FilAm Sports USA
Fil American Citizens
League
Filipino Business Women's
Club
Filipino Nurses Organization
of Hawaii
Filipino Women's Civic
Club
GUMIL Hawaii
GUMIL Oahu
Hawaii Filipino Women's
Club
Hawaii Council of Bilingual
Educators
ILAH
Ilocos Norteniens of
America
INCAT Alumni Association
of Hawaii
International Filipino
Society of Hawaii
Kalayaan Phil.-Hi. Int.
La Union Circle of
Hawaii
Lingayen Gulf Club of
Hawaii

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 811 HD 2

House Committee on Finance

March 3, 2009, 3 p.m. | Hawai'i State Capitol | Room 308

To:

Honorable Rep. Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair

Honorable Rep. Marilyn B. Lee, Vice-Chair

Honorable Members of the House Committee on Finance

From:

Cirvalina Longboy, President, Oahu Filipino Community Council

My name is Cirvalina Longboy, president of the Oahu Filipino Community Council. OFCC is an umbrella organization that represents a network of non-profit civic groups with a unified vision to improve the lives of our Filipino communities. I submit this testimony to strongly support this bill, in order to:

- ***Cut the unnecessary and expensive red tape of the Hawai'i Board of Nurses*** regulations, which now has a 6 to 12-month or more log jam that blocks internationally trained registered nurses (RN) to take the NCLEX (National Council Licensure Examination).
- ***Safeguard public safety by ensuring the proper vetting of transcripts and curriculum*** of internationally trained RNs, who are already U.S. citizens or permanent resident immigrants residing in Hawaii.
- ***Follow established best regulatory practices for nursing licensure*** in more than 20 states, including California and Michigan, to enable internationally trained RNs to demonstrate their nursing competencies to protect public health, by passing the NCLEX.

With your help in the passage of this bill, qualified nurses with multi-lingual assets can be of service sooner to meet the needs of Hawai'i's nursing work force and pressing public health disparities. Thank you for hearing this bill, and for the opportunity to provide this testimony in strong support.

Sincerely,

Cirvalina Longboy, President, Oahu Filipino Community Council

Unit Organizations

Magsingal Association of
Hawaii
Narvacan/San Antonio Club of
Hawaii
Nueva Vizcaya Association of
Hawaii
Pasuquinos Association of
Hawaii
Philippine Cultural Foundation
Philippine Nurses
Association of Hawaii
Piddig Association of Hawaii
Sanchez Mira Association of
Hawaii
San Manuel Pangasinan
Association of Hawaii
San Nicolaneos USA
San Nicolas Goodwill
Foundation
San Nicolas Teachers of
Hawaii
Santa Lucia Association of
Hawaii
Sarrat Association of Hawaii
Sarrat International Inc.
Sinait Nt. High School Alumni
of Hawaii
Solsona of Hawaii
Tarlac Mutual Club of Hawaii
TPCP
Kalihi Ballroom, Inc.
Sadiri ti San Nicolas iti Hawaii
Samar Leyte Association of
Hawaii
Sampaguaita/Sunflower Club of
Hawaii
San Juan Association of
Hawaii
San Nicolas Nat. High
Santa Marians of Hawaii
School Alumni
Santa Nicolas Nat. High
School Bingao Annex
Tagalog Association of Oahu
United Bacarreneos of Hawaii
United Group of Home
Operators
United Pangasinan of Hawaii
United Urdaneta Club of
Hawaii
United Vintarinians of Hawaii
Vigan Association of Hawaii



TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 811 HD 2

House Committee on Finance

March 3, 2009, 3 p.m. | Hawai'i State Capitol | Room 308

To: Honorable Rep. Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair
Honorable Rep. Marilyn B. Lee, Vice-Chair
Honorable Members of the House Committee on Finance

From: Ron Menor, Chair, NaFFAA Region XII

Measure Title: RELATING TO REGISTERED NURSES

Report Title: Registered Nurses; Foreign Graduates; Licensure Requirements

Description: Removes, for a foreign nursing school graduate applying for licensure by examination for registered nurses in Hawaii, the requirement to obtain certification from the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools. Requires the Board of Nursing to adopt rules requiring submission of the Breakdown of Educational Program for International Nursing Programs form and a certified school transcript. (HB811 HD2)

My name is Ron Menor, and I strongly support HB 811 HD 2. Thank you very much for the corrected description of the bill inserted above.

The intent of this bill is to facilitate, not slow down, the licensing requirements for international nursing school graduates to meet Hawaii's, as well as the nation's, work force shortage of qualified and certified nurses. Most states, including California, have already removed this requirement to meet the growing pressures and demands of health care delivery systems.

As Chair of the National Federation of Filipino American Associations Region XII, which represents the interests of Filipinos in Hawai'i, Guam, and the Commonwealth of Northern Marianas Islands, we support the significant contributions of Filipino nurses in America's health care systems. NaFFAA Region XII is an affiliate of the National NaFFAA. Washington policy-makers, private industry and national advocacy groups recognize NaFFAA as the Voice of Filipinos and Filipino Americans throughout the United States. We are a non-partisan, non-profit national affiliation of more than five hundred Filipino-American institutions and umbrella organizations that span twelve regions throughout the continental United States and U.S. Pacific territories.

Sincerely,

Ron Menor, Chair, NaFFAA Region XII

To: The House of Representative Committee on Finance
Rep. Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair
Rep. Marilyn B. Lee, Vice Chair

Amended Notice of Hearing

Tuesday March 3, 2009 at 9:30am
Conference Room 308, Hawaii State Capitol

From: Denise Cohen, APRN, MS, BS
Associate Professor of Nursing
Maui Community College

Re: HB 811 Relating to removal for unlicensed foreign school graduate applying for registered nurses license in Hawaii, the requirement for a school transcript to be evaluated. Requires board of nursing to adopt rules requiring submission of the breakdown of educational program for international nursing programs form

My name is Denise Cohen and I have been a nurse-educator in Hawaii since 1992. I appreciate the opportunity to present testimony against HB 811.

The purpose of this Bill is to remove, for an unlicensed foreign nursing school graduate applying for a registered nurse (RN) license in Hawaii, the requirement to have the RN's educational credentials evaluated by a professional evaluator. It would allow the RN's school to furnish a "breakdown of educational program for international nursing program form" along with transcript that is in English or is translated into English. This Bill uses California's in-house evaluation as a model.

Foreign-educated nurses who want to work in the United States must pass the NCLEX-RN. To be eligible to sit for the NCLEX exam, the candidate must have proof that they have graduated from a school of a school on nursing that meets American standards of education for RNs. The purpose of the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS) is to verify that those education transcripts from any foreign school in the world meets the qualifications that is being asked of graduates from domestic schools in the United States. Most if not all approved schools of nursing in United States are accredited by one of two recognized outside accrediting agencies either the National League of Nursing Accreditation Commission (NLNAC) or Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). These agencies have rigorous standards that a school must meet in order to obtain certification. Schools in the United States pay \$10,000 and higher to maintain their certification. In addition any candidate who has an encumbered license goes into a national data base that the BON has access to, therefore making it easier to determine the candidates eligibility in holding an Hawaii license. We have no resources to determine is a foreign school of nursing meets these same requirements.

US immigration policy does require that foreign educated RNs who wish to come to the United States as an RN must have the following: a job offer in the state they wish to migrate to, a VisaScreen certificate from CGFNS and have passed the NCLEX in the

State they wish to practice in. These policies are put in place to protect patients from harm. The VisaScreen certificate attests that the nurse has met the RN candidate's educational requirements and has an unencumbered license. This is similar to what a domestic candidate must do before being granted an RN license in Hawaii. If a candidate has disciplinary proceedings against them from another state Hawaii will not grant them a nursing license. We do not have a similar data base for foreign nurse candidates who wish to practice in the United States nor do we have resources to fund a database.

The Bill being put forth does not seem to recognize that Hawaii will have to deal with applicants from Africa, Eastern Europe, India, Mexico, South America as well as Asia. We do not have the resources to evaluate schools from over 190 countries. While I think it is commendable that the Filipino Coalition is trying to save money for nurse candidates wanting to practice in this country they don't realize that the wait for a small board of nursing to clear them may be a year or longer. California is back logged due to severe downsizing of government and lack of resources. This bill appears to be modeled on California's in-house clearing yet it leaves out that California's BON requires fingerprinting from all its candidates. It is telling that Alaska and New Mexico are stopping their in-house evaluation of foreign nurses' education by recognizing their lack of expertise in ability to evaluate the wide variety of schools from all over the world. New Mexico's BON reports seeing an increase of fraudulent schools of nursing in foreign countries and felt that is was unsafe to continue their in-house evaluation. Both of these states have gone to using CGFNS expert evaluation. It doesn't make sense to put forth a Bill that we do not have the resources to carry out well.

For these reasons it is clear there is a safety issue that is not being addressed in the current bill as it is being passed. Therefore, I respectfully request that this measure be held in committee. Thank for the opportunity to testify on H.B. No. 811

TO: COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Rep. Marcus R.OshIro,ChaIr
Rep. Marilyn B. Lee, Vice Charr

Hearing: Tuesday, March 03. 2009 3:00p.m. Conference Room
308

FROM: Dr. Linda Beechinor, DNP, APRN
Foreign Nurse Recruiter in Hawaii

Re: HB 811, HD 2 Relating to Registered Nurses

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in strong opposition to this bill and in support of the Board of Nursing's testimony. Since I have recruited foreign-educated nurses to Hawaii for over 20 years, I am involved every day in this issue of credentialing these nurses for licensure in Hawaii. I believe this bill will open the public to increased risk for liability, and will certainly increase costs for the Board of Nursing to evaluate complex documents from other countries that the commission on Graduates of foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS) has developed over the past several decades.

I thank you for the opportunity to testify against this bill.

Dr. Linda Beechinor, APRN-Rx
500 Lunalilo Home Rd. # 27-E
Honolulu Hawaii USA 96825
phone: (808) 779-3001
fax (808) 395-7428

E-MAIL <L.Beechinor@hawaiiantel.net>

LETTER IN SUPPORT FOR HB 811

March 2, 2009

HB 811

Report Title:

Registered Nurses; Foreign Graduates; Licensure Requirements

Description:

Removes, for a foreign nursing school graduate applying for licensure by examination for Registered Nurse in Hawaii, the requirement of obtaining a certification from the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS). Requires the Board of Nursing to adopt rules requiring submission of the Breakdown of Educational Program for International Nursing Programs and Transcripts of Records from the nursing school.

**TO THE HONORABLE REP MARCUS OSHIRO, CHAIR,
THE HONORABLE MARILYN LEE, RN, VICE CHAIR,
AND HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE:**

My name is Aurora A. Curameng. I am a Philippine schooled nursing graduate and a Registered Nurse in the State of Hawaii, since 1993.

I am quite appalled by how intricate the application process for NCLEX eligibility has become in our State. During my time, before the advent of computerized adaptive testing (CAT) format utilized in NCLEX, international nurses like myself need only to obtain a certificate of equivalent nursing education from an accredited credentialing education service agency by the Board prior to taking the test.

Contrary to what others believe, HB 811 does not reduce the standards to determine if a foreign nursing graduate qualifies to take the NCLEX. Submission of the breakdown of educational program for international nursing programs and transcript of records, helps in the determination whether a candidate has an educational background comparable or at par with the American standards of education in nursing, and should qualify the candidate to take the examination in the same way as an American counterpart. I strongly believe in equal opportunity for both domestic and international nurses and they must be held in the same standard no matter what.

HB 811 is also trying to address a complaint of exorbitant fees imposed by the private sector and non-profit organization to international nurses, which for many years "have fallen into deaf ears." Our foreign nursing graduates would rather take a circuitous route to their dream of obtaining a license to practice nursing in their home State to save some precious and hard earned monies without circumventing the standard of eligibility to take the examination. Consumer safety is in no way compromised at this juncture. The bill is actually consumer (candidate) friendly.

To ascertain the knowledge, skills and abilities essential to the safe and effective practice of nursing at the entry level is what the NCLEX-RN supposed to harness from each candidate. This is **to ensure public protection and safety**. Likewise, the test is given in **English only** format to make sure that **passers demonstrate proficiency in both clinical and English communication skills**. But this is not the purpose of the bill. The bill is to expedite the process of evaluating potential candidates for the NCLEX and upholding the same standard of licensing requirements.

As a nurse of foreign origin, I am extending full support of this bill to encourage more unlicensed foreign nursing graduates, **who are eligible**, to work towards the fulfillment of their aspiration of becoming a Registered Nurse in the land of opportunity.

Respectfully,

AURORA A. CURAMENG, RN, C, RAC-CT
94-399 Alapine Street
Waipahu, HI 96797
aurorarnc@aol.com
(808) 677-7385
(808) 230-2496

To: Rep. Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair, Rep. Marilyn B. Lee, Vice Chair
and the Committee on Finance
Tuesday, March 03, 2009; 3:00 p.m. Conference Room 308 Hawaii State Capital
Re: HB 811 HD2 RELATING TO REGISTERED NURSES.

Mahalo for the opportunity to speak in Strong opposition to HB811 HD2. I
speak as a registered nurse and a consumer of health care.

This measure would remove the requirement for a foreign nursing school graduate applying for licensure by exam for registered nurses in Hawaii, to obtain certification from the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools. And further requires the Board of Nursing to adopt rules Requiring submission of the Breakdown of Educational Program for International Nursing Program to certified school transcript.

I believe that both of these changes would adversely affect the level of quality and impact safety of care provided by RN providers. Additionally, it is not cost effective and would impose undue hardship on our state as well as BON.

I urge the House Committee on Finance to NOT PASS this measure Mahalo.

O au me ka ha`a ha`a (I am humbly yours),

Lenora Lorenzo MSN, MSA, APRN-RX, BC-FNP/GNP, CDE
Board Certified Family and Gerontological NP, Certified Diabetes Educator
Home Address: 62396 Joseph P. Leong Hwy, Haleiwa Hi 96712
Phone: (808) 637-3073

Healthcare School of Hawaii
98-025 Hekaha St. Suite 4, Bldg. 4
Aiea, Hawaii 96701
808-488-9449
www.healthcareschoolofhawaii.com

LETTER IN SUPPORT OF HB 811

Measure Title: RELATED TO REGISTERED NURSES

DATE: March 3, 2009, 3PM

CONFERENCE ROOM 308

March 2, 2009

To: Honorable Representative Marcus R. Oshiro, Chairman
Honorable Representative Marilyn B. Lee, Vice-Chairman
Honorable Members of the House Committee on Finance

Dear Sir,

I am a foreign graduate nurse from the Philippines and had worked in USA since 1979. I originally applied for nursing licensure in the State of Illinois, and my credentials was evaluated by the Illinois Board of Nursing. I worked in Illinois for 20 years and moved to Hawaii after. I was never required to apply through CGFNS. I am in total support of removing the requirement of CGFNS for foreign nursing graduates in Hawaii prior to taking the NCLEX exam.

Sincerely,

Marianela Jacob MSN, RN

Training Coordinator

Healthcare School of Hawaii

808-488-9449

hsch@hawaii.rr.com

FINTestimony

From: Divina Telan Robillard [divina@hawaii.edu]
Sent: Monday, March 02, 2009 11:02 PM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: bramosrazon@aol.com
Subject: Letter in strong support of HB811; Measure Title: Relating to Registered Nurses March 3, 3pm Room 305

3.03.09

Honorable Rep Marcus Oshiro, Chair, Honorable Marilyn Lee Vice Chair and Members of the House Committee on Finance:

My name is Divina Telan Robillard. I have been a resident of Hawaii since 1982 and a Registered Nurse since 1983. I am writing in continued support of HB811.

I have given up my academic nursing career to be the fulltime caregiver of my husband, Professor Albert Britton Robillard, Professor of Sociology, UH-Manoa. Britt has had ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease) since 1985 but continues to be gainfully employed. It is important for those of us who care for our loved ones at home to have a reliable and large enough pool of nurses to help us provide care as well as avail of nursing help for respite purposes. Keeping unnecessary barriers to keeping this pool viable is not helpful. Without reservation, I urge you to pass HB 811.

For any questions, you can reach me at divina@hawaii.edu.

Mahalo nui loa,

Divina Telan Robillard, RN, MPH
Health and Social Research Consultants
Office: 808-956-6754
Home: 808-262-5797

3/2/2009

LETTER IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB811
MEASURE TITLE: RELATING TO REGISTERED NURSES

2 March 2009

Honorable Rep. Marcus Oshiro, Chair; Honorable Rep. Marilyn Lee, Vice- Chair & Members of the House Committee on Finance:

My name is Clementina D. Ceria-Ulep, a registered nurse and call-in nursing supervisor at Hawaii Medical Center-East and a faculty at the University of Hawaii School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene, Department of Nursing. I would like to support HB 811 which would remove for a foreign registered nurse (RN) graduate applying for licensure the requirement of first obtaining a certification from the Commission on Graduate of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS) before taking the NCLEX-RN examination. The NCLEX-RN Examination is the U.S. Registered Nurse Licensing Exam. Reason: This process of first obtaining the CGFNS certification before being able to sit for the NCLEX-RN examination can be a lengthy process and a barrier in times of nursing shortage when our State depends on foreign RN graduates to alleviate the nursing workforce demand/shortage.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Sincerely,

Clementina D. Ceria-Ulep

Clementina D. Ceria-Ulep, PhD, RN