

TO: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
Representative Ryan Yamane, Chair
Representative Scott Nishimoto, Vice Chair
COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES
Representative John Mizuno, Chair
Representative Tom Browser, Vice Chair

FROM: Eudice R. Schick
PABEA (Policy Advisory Board for Elder Affairs)

SUBJECT: HCR 15

HEARING: Tuesday, March 17, 2009 10:45 a.m. room 329

POSITION: Support of HCR 15

I am offering testimony on behalf of PABEA, the Policy Advisory Board for Elder Affairs, which is an appointed Board tasked with advising the Executive Office on Aging (EOA). My testimony does not represent the views of the EOA but of the Board.

HCR 15 Brings out many of the issues that face our family caregivers. We know that those numbers will greatly increase as our elder population increases. We must find a way of supporting these people. They are employees who are very valuable to both their employer and to their family.

Your support of this resolution is a support for our community, both caregivers and their families.

Eudice R. Schick, Chair PABEA Legislative Committee

TO : HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
Rep. Ryan I Yamane, Chair
Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES
Rep. John M. Mizuno, Chair
Rep. Tom Brower, Vice Chair

FROM: Eldon L. Wegner, Ph.D.,
PABEA (Policy Advisory Board for Elder Affairs)

SUBJECT: **HCR 15 Encouraging stakeholders and interested parties to work together to establish paid family leave or similar wage replacement programs to assist family caregivers.**

HEARING: 10:45 am Tuesday, March 17, 2009
Conference Room 329, Hawaii State Capitol

POSITION: **PABEA supports this resolution requesting that efforts continue among stakeholders and interested persons to work out a feasible manner of providing paid family leave to employed caregivers in order to increase retention in the workforce.**

RATIONALE:

I am offering testimony on behalf of PABEA, the Policy Advisory Board for Elder Affairs, which is an appointed board tasked with advising the Executive Office on Aging (EOA). My testimony does not represent the views of the EOA but of the Board. I am also a professor of medical sociology at UH-Manoa who has worked with elderly services in Hawaii for more than 20 years.

Persons balancing work and caregiving experience much strain, and at critical times it becomes impossible to continue working. Unpaid leave, which is currently provided, jeopardizes the financial stability of households. Furthermore, withdrawing from the workforce results in the loss of experienced workers. Creating both workplace policies and public policies to reduce the strain on caregivers and to enable them to better balance their caregiving and work obligations. This resolution suggests bringing together persons who have different perspectives to work towards viable approaches to address this issue.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI‘I AT MĀNOA

School of Social Work

**Testimony to the Joint House Committee on Health and Human Services
Tuesday, March 17, 2009
Conference Room 329; 10:45am**

RE: H.C.R. No. 15, Encouraging Stakeholders and Interested Parties to Work Together to Establish Paid Family Leave or Similar Wage Replacement Programs to Assist Family Caregivers.

Chairs Yamane and Mizuno, and Members of the Joint Committee,

My name is Wes Lum and I am testifying in support of this measure. I am an Assistant Specialist with the University of Hawaii Center on Aging. My testimony represents my personal opinion and does not reflect the position of the University of Hawaii nor of the Center on Aging.

The resolution encourages stakeholders and interested parties to work together to establish paid family leave or similar wage replacement programs to assist family caregivers.

Employers incur losses in productivity by employees who make workplace accommodations as a result of their eldercare responsibilities, including costs associated with employee replacement, absenteeism, crisis with a family member, workday interruptions, supervisory time, unpaid leave, and reduced hours from full-time to part-time. Eldercare costs to U.S. employers range between \$17.1 billion and \$33.6 billion annually in lost productivity.

Consequently, the growing number of employees with caregiving responsibilities is increasingly impacting employers who traditionally do not see their role as being involved with the private affairs of their employees.

As the needs of employees with eldercare responsibilities become increasingly intrusive in the workplace, employers will be under increasing pressures to adopt new workplace eldercare policies and innovative solutions for employed caregivers. Workplace eldercare policies as well as public policies which would provide support for caregivers in the workplace (such as wage replacement benefits) might increase the likelihood that caregivers will continue as productive employees and will remain in their employment.

For these reasons, I support this resolution. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.