



LATE

To: House Committee on Health
Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair
Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice-Chair

Date: March 24, 2009 - Conference Room 329 – 10:00 a.m.

Re: **SB 423, SD1 RELATING TO HEALTH**

Chair Yamane and members of the committee:

My name is Barbara Kim Stanton, State Director of AARP Hawaii. AARP is a membership organization of people 50 and older with nearly 160,000 members in Hawaii. We are committed to championing access to affordable, quality health care for all generations, providing the tools needed to save for retirement, and serving as a reliable information source on issues critical to Americans age 50+.

AARP strongly supports SB 423. Its purpose is to maximize the availability of the federal disproportionate share hospital allowance to the State.

Hawaii has a population of low-income citizens with limited health care options. Among them are our low-income elderly who are disproportionately affected by the rising costs of health care and other daily expenses. More than one fifth (21.2%) of Hawaii adults aged 60 and older have an income below 200% of the poverty threshold.

By securing these federal funds, Hawaii's Congressional delegation has enabled the State to increase the total amount of funding for Hawai'i hospitals to serve persons who are indigent. The availability of these funds is more critical than ever in light of the State's fiscal downturn, and will provide much needed support to safety net hospitals. These hospitals are struggling to meet the demands placed upon them by the increasing number of uninsured. It is time to help them by utilizing Hawai'i's full DSH allotment. These DSH resources will strengthen their ability to meet the increasing health care needs of our community.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.