

TESTIMONY TO THE TWENTY-FIFTH STATE LEGISLATURE, 2009 SESSION

To: House Committee on Human Services

From: Hawaii Disability Rights Center

Re: House Bill 1355
Relating to Public Procurement

Hearing: Monday, February 2, 2009, 8:15 AM
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

Members of the Committee on Human Services:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony supporting House Bill 1355, Relating to Public Procurement.

The Hawaii Disability Rights Center, formerly known as the Protection and Advocacy Agency of Hawaii (P&A) is the agency mandated by federal law and designated by Executive Order to protect and advocate for the human, civil and legal rights of Hawaii's estimated 180,000 people with disabilities.

We support this bill. Statistics at home in Hawaii and around the country demonstrate that the unemployment rate among individuals with disabilities is substantially higher than that of the general population. While there may be many factors accounting for this, it is also true that the ADA has made great strides and many barriers to reasonable accommodations and modifications in the workplace have been and can be eliminated. It is an important policy to provide incentives to businesses to hire such individuals. In addition to maximizing their potential, the benefit to society of an increase in the number of economically productive citizens is clear. For those reasons, we support this bill.

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

From: Daintry Bartoldus
Sent: Friday, January 30, 2009 11:16 PM
To: HUSstestimony
Subject: HB 1355

Testifier's name with position/title and organization; Daintry Bartoldus, MSW student at UH

- The Committee the comments are directed to; Committee on Human Services
- The date and time of the hearing; February 2, 2009, 8:15am
- Measure number; HB 1355

Representatives,

Thank for this opportunity to present my testimony. I would like to express my support for HB No 1355 which will encourage employers to hire individuals with developmental disabilities.

Hawaii remains in the bottom 3 states with the employment of individuals with developmental disabilities according to the America Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

Many individuals with a developmental disability have difficulties providing references of previous employment because they have never had a job before, this gives them a disadvantage in the job market. With the job market getting even tougher due to unemployment rates going up,

HB 1355 will give individuals with a developmental disability a much needed boost within the job market. Please pass HB 1355. Thank you