

**SB2774**

# Hepatitis Prevention, Education, Treatment & Support Network of Hawai'i

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February 7, 2010

To: Senators

Re: Letter of Support for SB2774

SB2774

RELATING TO ANATOMICAL GIFTS; HIV; AIDS.

Prevents persons with HIV or AIDS from being automatically excluded from organ transplants due to their diagnosis; requires that any procurement organization in the State to maintain donor lists including high risk donors and persons with HIV or AIDS.

**Dear Members of the Senate:**

*My name is Ken Akinaka. I live in Honolulu on 3254 Olu Street. I have been HCV positive since 1968 but was successfully treated over five years ago. I would like to present written testimony strongly in favor of this Bill that will help provide equal access for people living with HIV or AIDS who are otherwise eligible for organ transplants to have the opportunity of the "Gift of Life" of an organ transplant in the future. It will also help advance medicine by starting an organ donor list of people infected with HIV so they can donate otherwise healthy organs to other HIV infect people if needed.*

*Science has greatly improved HIV medications in the last ten years. Many people who are infected with HIV are now living as long as many people are not infected due to these advances in medicine. In order to keep up with technology and help eliminated the health care disparities to marginalized groups like people with HIV, some ethnic groups and rural areas, we often will need legislation that will help them to have equal access to the advances in modern medicine.*

*I believe it is important to have legislation that will keep Hawai'i moving forward with the best advances of science and modern medicine. This legislation appears to be in the right direction and the right time to help eliminate an important healthcare disparity that can cause the premature death of some of our citizens.*

**Hawai'i has the highest rate of liver cancer in the USA. 10,000 to 12, 000 people per year are now dying from liver disease in the US caused by hepatitis C. Many people with HIV disease are also now dying from hepatitis C related liver disease. Certainly there are people with HIV that need kidney transplants. I believe that many people in the HIV community will want to sign up to be transplant donors if given the opportunity to do so.**

**This legislation is important and needed because:**

- There many people who are infected with HIV or have AIDS that may eventually die from the need of an organ transplant unless they are properly and promptly treated.

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- Maintaining a donor list of HIV infected donors will save lives since their useful organs can only be given to a person who needs them that is currently infected with HIV. This list will start to grow so that those transplant surgeons, who currently or eventually will start to transplant organs in people infected with HIV here and in the Western Region of the USA, will be able to access the "Gift of Life" for people with HIV.
- Medical research and improvements in treatment for HIV (and hepatitis C) are changing every year now that more effective treatments have been found.

**In conclusion I would like to restate my strong support for passage of *this Bill. If we wait, it will only take more years to start to build a HIV transplant donor base that can be used to save lives!***

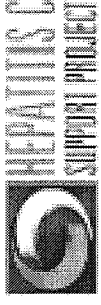
*Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony for the committee.*

Mahalo,

Ken Akinaka, MRA  
Executive Director  
Hepatitis Prevention, Education, Treatment & Support Network of Hawai'i  
3254 Olu Street  
Honolulu, HI 96816  
24 hr. Cell # 808-221-6204  
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I am also a member of:

Faith Action for Community Equity (FACE), Affordable Housing and Health Committees  
Harris UMC, Church and Society Commission  
HepCats, Oahu's Hepatitis C & B Support Group  
Japanese American Citizen's League, Education Committee  
NAACP Honolulu Branch, Executive Committee  
National Hepatitis C Advocacy Council (NHCAC),  
National Association of Hepatitis Task Forces (NAHTF), Board of Directors  
100<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion Veterans Club 100, Headquarters and Descendants Chapters  
Partners In Care, Homeless Providers Coalition  
United Methodist Church, Hawai'i District Church and Society Commission and  
Until recently in 2006 when my term end, I was a member of the Statewide Independent Living Council (SLIC)  
Commission



Hepatitis C Support Project  
A Tides Center Project  
P.O. Box 427037  
San Francisco, CA 94142

February 5, 2010

The Hawai'i State Legislature

On behalf of the Hepatitis C Support Project, a national hepatitis education, support and advocacy organization, I am writing to urge you to support S.B. No 2774—Relating to Anatomical Gifts. As a person living with hepatitis C and working to provide the necessary services to the Hepatitis community I believe the legislation is vitally important to correct disparities and discrimination in care for people living with HIV.

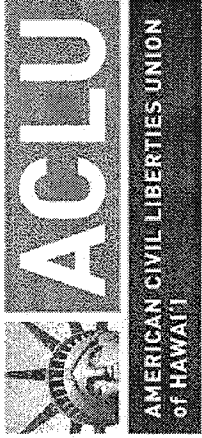
HIV, when treated, is now a chronic condition that can be successfully managed long term and provides many people who are living with HIV to live a long and healthy life. Consequences from HIV disease progression and prolonged use of HIV medications, however, may lead to the breakdown and destruction of vital organs such as the heart, liver and kidneys. These consequences may lead to the need for a life-saving organ transplant. Up until now, people living with HIV in Hawai'i have been denied access to these life-saving procedures. I hope that you will correct this and vote for S.B. 2774.

Thank you in advance for considering this letter and I hope that you will lend your important voice to correct the injustice that has prevented many people from receiving a life-saving organ transplant.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alan Franciscus".

Alan Franciscus  
Executive Director, Hepatitis C Support Project  
Editor-in-Chief, HCV Advocate  
[www.hcvadvocate.org](http://www.hcvadvocate.org) / [www.hbvadvocate.org](http://www.hbvadvocate.org)



Committee: Committee on Health  
Hearing Date/Time: Thursday, February 8, 2009, 2:45 p.m.  
Place: Room 016  
Re: Testimony of the ACLU of Hawaii in Support of S.B. 2774, Relating to Anatomical Transplants

Dear Chair Ige and Members of the Committee on Health:

The American Civil Liberties Union of Hawaii (“ACLU of Hawaii”) writes in support of S.B. 2774, which seeks to prevent persons with HIV or AIDS from being automatically excluded from organ transplants due to their diagnosis and requires that any procurement organization in the State to maintain donor lists including high risk donors and persons with HIV or AIDS.

Although HIV may no longer be a death sentence, a health care provider’s refusal to provide an organ transplant might be. This just and compassionate bill will save lives and end what may be the most egregious example of discrimination against those living with HIV.

The mission of the ACLU of Hawaii is to protect the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the U.S. and State Constitutions. The ACLU of Hawaii fulfills this through legislative, litigation, and public education programs statewide. The ACLU of Hawaii is a non-partisan and private non-profit organization that provides its services at no cost to the public and does not accept government funds. The ACLU of Hawaii has been serving Hawaii for over 40 years.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Laurie A. Temple  
Staff Attorney  
ACLU of Hawaii

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