

SB 404



Senate WAM Cmte
Wed, Mar 4, 2009
9:30 am
room 211

National Association of Social Workers

Hawaii Chapter

March 3, 2009

TO: Senator Donna Kim, Chair
Members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee

FROM: Debbie Shimizu, LSW
National Association of Social Workers, Hawaii Chapter

RE: SB 404 Relating to the Emergency and Budget Reserve Fund- **SUPPORT intent but prefer SB 1679**

Chair Kim and members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, I am Debbie Shimizu, Executive Director of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), Hawaii Chapter. NASW is the largest professional organization for social workers in Hawaii. **NASW SUPPORTS the intent of SB 404 but prefer SB 1679.**

HRS 328L-3 established the Emergency and Budget Reserve Fund to fund the four purposes stated in SB 404, however, the statute also states that, *“Any act making appropriations from the emergency and budget reserve fund shall include a declaration of findings and purposes setting forth the purposes, the amounts, and the reasons why the appropriations are necessary...”*

The wording in SB 404 does not give enough specifics about the purpose and use of the money to be used and is not in the spirit of the use of the fund. In the past, the Legislature used the Emergency and Budget Reserve Fund to help fund specific public health, safety, and welfare programs whose funds were cut by the administration. It gave you, the Legislature, the control to determine how the funds would be used. Appropriating a lump sum amount allows the administration to use the funds for any program of their choosing and without public input.

We believe SB 1679 is a more appropriate use of the fund and hope you will consider passing SB1679 instead.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.