

## SAMPLE WRITTEN TESTIMONY

Representative Dwight Y. Takamine, Chair  
Representative Noboru Yonamine, Vice Chair  
Committee on Labor and Public Employment

Hawaii Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition

Tuesday, March 19, 1991

Support for S.B. No. 818, S.D. 1, Relating to Family Leave

The Hawaii Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition is part of a national cooperative group of private and non-profit organizations and individuals committed to improving maternal and infant health in the State of Hawaii through educational and advocacy efforts. We strongly support S.B. No. 818, S.D. 1, Relating to Family Leave, which would give employees working for employers of fifty or more employees the right to 3 months of unpaid parental leave for the birth or adoption of a son or daughter of the employee.

People should not be forced to choose between work and family. We have a situation in the U.S. of supporting children and family in our popular culture but not fully supporting them in our social policies. Compared to other industrialized nations, the U.S. ranks poorly in several key indicators of children's and families' quality of life. We need to develop social and working policies that adequately support new lives and the mental and physical health of families.

Even though a number of businesses are beginning to provide parental-leave options, this act would broaden this protection to more of Hawaii's workforce. Some will argue that such a policy need not be mandated. Child-labor laws had to be mandated, and we are all glad they were. Our society decided that in some cases the family needed legal protection. Unpaid parental leave is a modest but vital step toward recognizing the relationship between job security and family security.

In expanding the options for Hawaii's labor force, we are creating a health-promoting atmosphere and a foundation for future generations of healthy people and healthy families. We urge the committee to pass S.B. No. 818, S.D. 1. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.