



L A T E

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February 23, 2011

Committee on Ways and Means
Senator David Ige, Chair
Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair

Hearing:

9:00 a.m., Friday, February 25, 2011
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 211

RE: SB293, SD1 – Relating to the Hawaii Tobacco Settlement Special Fund

Comments

Chair Ige, Vice Chair Kidani and members of the Committees on Ways and Means. Thank you for the opportunity to offer these written comments on SB239, SD1 which extends the appropriation of the portion of the Hawaii Tobacco Settlement Special Fund moneys for operating expenses of the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) until June 30, 2015. In addition, this bill increases the portion of Hawai'i tobacco settlement special fund moneys going to the general fund until June 30, 2015.

As the committee members know, the American Cancer Society has been a long time supporter and advocate of JABSOM and the use of Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) funds to build and help operate the Kaka'ako campus. At the same time, the Society has a mission to eliminate cancer as a major health problem in Hawaii through access to quality health care, medical and biomedical research, and public health policies that strongly advocate for an effective and sustainable tobacco control program.

Needless to say, both our medical school and our tobacco control program have equally positive health impacts in the treatment and prevention of cancers in Hawaii. The Society certainly values a robust medical school to teach and train high-quality physicians, biomedical scientists, and allied health workers for Hawaii and the Pacific. We also see equal value in maintaining a viable tobacco control program dedicated to reducing the negative impact tobacco has on the health of our people.

In recent years, the Hawaii Tobacco Prevention and Control Trust Fund has had its yearly allocation from the MSA cut several times from 25% to 12.5% to 6.5% today. This provides slightly more than \$2.8 million annually to the fund. This year, the fund is expected to expend \$8.3 million. At this rate, the trust fund's balance will be almost depleted in eight or nine years.

American Cancer Society Hawai'i Pacific, Inc., 2370 Nu'uuanu Avenue, Honolulu, Hawaii 96817-1714
●Phone: (808) 595-7500 ●Fax: (808) 595-7502 ●24-Hour Cancer Info: (800) 227-2345 ●<http://www.cancer.org>

We believe that the amendment to the measure which reduces the amount of JABSOM's portion of Hawaii Tobacco Settlement Special Fund moneys by one percent each fiscal year starting with fiscal year 2012-2013 until the fiscal year ending June 30, 2015, is a good one and will have the impact of gradually weaning JABSOM from its dependence of tobacco settlement moneys for operating cost. At the same time it encourages the medical school to develop a business plan that will sustain its future operating and program needs.

We are hopeful that from 2015, we will see additional moneys to replenish funds that were lost to the Tobacco Prevention and Control Trust Fund because of the cuts made over the last few years. We can only hope that going forward Hawaii will be able to maintain an effective tobacco control program to address the use rate increases in youth and adult tobacco use.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Massengale", written in a cursive style.

George S. Massengale, JD
Director of Government Relations