

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



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DIRECTOR OF HEALTH

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In reply, please refer to:
File:

House Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce

**H.C.R. No. 165, URGING ALCOHOL RETAILERS AND LICENSED PREMISES
UNDER CHAPTER 281, HAWAII REVISED STATUTES, TO POST A SIGN IN
OR ABOUT THE PREMISES WARNING WOMEN NOT TO DRINK ALCOHOL
BEVERAGES DURING PREGNANCY.**

**Testimony of Loretta J. Fuddy, A.C.S.W., M.P.H.
Director of Health**

April 11, 2012

1 **Department's Position:** The Department supports this resolution urging alcohol retailers and premises
2 licensed under Chapter 281, Hawaii Revised Statutes, to voluntarily post a sign in or about the premises
3 that women should not drink alcoholic beverages during pregnancy.

4 **Fiscal Implications:** No fiscal implications.

5 **Purpose and Justification:** Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder ("FASD") is the umbrella term used to
6 describe a range of disorders caused by prenatal alcohol exposure. These disorders include fetal alcohol
7 syndrome, alcohol-related neuron-developmental disorder, and fetal alcohol effects or alcohol-related
8 birth defects disorder. Alcohol exposure during pregnancy produces, by far, the most serious
9 neurobehavioral effects in the fetus (Institute of Medicine Report to Congress, 1995). The affects of
10 alcohol on the fetus varies depending on the amount and frequency of alcohol used during pregnancy
11 and at different stages of fetus development—the outcomes are unpredictable and can lead to serious
12 birth defects and life-long disabilities. There is no known safe amount of alcohol or safe time to drink
13 alcohol during pregnancy.

1 Because FASD affects all aspects of a child's life throughout his/her lifetime (cognitive,
2 social/emotional, physical/mental health, school/work activities, independent living, justice system, etc.)
3 and requires support in all areas, the costs can be staggering. According to the Substance Abuse and
4 Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), it costs the nation nearly \$60 billion a year to cover
5 FASD care. The care for one FASD child over his/her lifetime can rise to as much as \$2 million. These
6 costs of care are only in dollar amounts and do not consider other personal and emotional challenges
7 parents face when raising a child with FASD.

8 FASD is preventable. Prevention starts with awareness that links drinking alcohol during
9 pregnancy with the high risks of having a child with life-long disabilities.

10 Thank you for this opportunity to testify on this resolution.

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DATE: April 9, 2012

TO: Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce
Rep. Robert N. Herkes, Chair; Rep. Ryan I Yamane, Vice Chair and Members of the
Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

FROM: Jackie Berry, Executive Director

Hearing: Wednesday, April 11, 2012, 2:00pm., Room 325

RE: HCR 165 Urging Alcohol Retailers and Licensed Premises to Post A Sign Warning
Women Not to Drink Alcoholic Beverages During Pregnancy

Testimony in Strong Support

Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies (HMHB) is a statewide coalition of public and private agencies, And individuals committed to the improvement of maternal and infant health status in Hawaii through education, coordination and advocacy. **HMHB is testifying today in strong support of HCR 165.**

Consumption of alcohol, particularly during pregnancy can result in serious health issues for babies. For example, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome is the leading cause of mental retardation in this country and is completely preventable if women do not drink while pregnant. Many women do not understand the impact of drinking during pregnancy. Hawaii PRAMS data (2004-2008) estimates that 47.5% of all women with a live birth report drinking in the 3 months prior to pregnancy and 19.7% report binge drinking (defined as 5 or more on at least one occasion) in the 3 months prior to pregnancy . Alcohol exposure during any portion of pregnancy can have negative effects on healthy fetal and infant development.

It is critical to increase awareness among all women who may potentially become pregnant to decrease the number of infants exposed to alcohol and prevent fetal alcohol related problems among children, their families, and society. We believe this is a step in that direction and urge support of HCR 165.

Mahalo for your consideration of this bill and our testimony.

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April 9, 2012

March of Dimes Foundation

To: Honorable Robert Herkes
Honorable Ryan Yamane

Hawaii Chapter
1451 S. King Street, Suite 504
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814
Telephone (808) 973-2155
Fax (808) 973-2160

From: Lin Joseph
Director of Program Services
March of Dimes Hawaii Chapter

marchofdimes.com/Hawaii

Re: In strong support of
HCR 165
Hearing: Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce
Wednesday, April 11, 2012 2:00 pm
Conference Room 325, State Capitol

Chair Herkes, Vice Chair Yamane, Members of the Committee:

I am writing to express support for HCR 165, *which would urge alcohol retailers and licensed premises to post signs warning women not to drink alcoholic beverages and urge the Department of Health to continue efforts to provide training on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders prevention, identification, and interventions.*

For over 70 years, the March of Dimes has been a leader in maternal and child health. Our mission is to *improve the health of women of childbearing age, infants, and children, by preventing birth defects, premature birth, and infant mortality.* March of Dimes has long been involved with the issue of alcohol related birth defects and March of Dimes researchers were the first to describe the link between prenatal alcohol consumption and birth defects.

Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs) refer to a group of conditions resulting from exposure to alcohol in utero. These conditions include physical and intellectual disabilities, as well as problems with behavior and learning. FASDs are a leading cause of intellectual disability and birth defects. Each year, thousands of babies are born with health problems related to alcohol use during pregnancy. The most serious of these defects is known as fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS). FAS is characterized by stunted growth (before and after birth), facial abnormalities, and central nervous system defects that result in intellectual and behavioral problems. FAS affects an estimated one out of every 750 newborns. Alcohol use also increases the risk of miscarriage and stillbirth. No completely safe level of alcohol use during pregnancy has been established.

Since 1989, federal law has required warning labels on all wine, beer, and liquor containers. To prevent alcohol-related birth defects, the warnings read: "Government Warning: According to the Surgeon General, women should not drink alcoholic beverages during pregnancy because of the risk of birth defects." More than 20 states now require point of sale warning signs – posted in liquor stores, restaurants, and bars – warning of the dangers of alcohol use during pregnancy.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders are 100% preventable. Warning signs will help everyone be aware of the risks of drinking alcohol during pregnancy.

