

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



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In reply, please refer to:
File:

House Committee on Health

March 9, 2012

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

SB2818, Relating to Disposition of Dead Human Bodies

1 **Department's Position:** Strong support.

2 **Fiscal Implications:** None

3 **Purpose and Justification:**

4 The Department of Health strongly supports Senate Bill 2818, Relating to Disposition of Dead Human
5 Bodies. This proposal is part of Governor Abercrombie's Administrative Bills package and supports the
6 New Day Agenda's goal of transforming government.

7

8 SB2818 has two main goals:

- 9 1. Remove from statute the authority to donate or receive unclaimed dead human bodies for
10 medical education and research purposes, and
- 11 2. Clarify roles and responsibilities in the handling of human bodies eligible for burial or cremation
12 at public expense.

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1 Unclaimed corpses are exceptionally rare, perhaps one or two every few years. Current Hawaii Revised
2 Statutes permit the donation of unclaimed corpses to institutions for medical education and research
3 purposes. Despite the practical value to education and research, this practice does not enhance or protect
4 the dignity of either the institution or the decedent (who has no choice in the matter), nor does it reflect
5 contemporary community standards of practice. The University of Hawaii has confirmed their policy
6 that only willfully expressed and documented anatomical gifts are accepted so access to medical
7 cadavers will not be affected.

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9 In the event a corpse is unclaimed by relatives, friends, or any other legally responsible party it becomes
10 eligible for burial or cremation at public expense. SB2818 consolidates the process in the Department of
11 Human Services, with whom DOH collaborated to develop this bill, where previously it spanned both
12 departments. Improvements in efficiency, record keeping, and customer services are expected.

13
14 The Department of Health respectfully urges this committee to pass Senate Bill 2818.

15
16 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

P. O. Box 339
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March 9, 2012

TO: Honorable Ryan I. Yamane, Chair
House Committee on Health

FROM: Patricia McManaman, Director

SUBJECT: **S.B. 2818 - RELATING TO DISPOSITION OF DEAD HUMAN BODIES**

Hearing: Friday, March 9, 2012; 10:45 a.m.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

PURPOSE: The purpose of this bill is to repeal the authority of the Department of Health to deliver or distribute an unclaimed dead human body to a university, hospital, or institution for medical educational and research purposes, and clarifies the responsibilities of the person who has possession, charge, or control of an unclaimed dead human body with respect to gathering and providing information to state agencies.

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) strongly supports this Administration bill.

In concert with S.B.2818, the DHS also recommends that the Legislature also consider passing S.B. 2796 which is Administration bill amending section 346-15, Hawaii Revised Statutes. The Department of Health and the Department of Human Services worked together on S.B. 2818 and S.B. 2796 to make the responsibilities for the disposition of dead human bodies consistent and clear between the DOH and DHS. The

changes proposed in S.B. 2818 and S.B. 2796 will result in improvements in efficiency, record keeping, and customer services.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.