



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
P.O. Box 3378
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96801-3378

In reply, please refer to:
File:

House Committee on Health

H.B. 404, RELATING WARNING SIGNS

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

February 6, 2013

1 **Department's Position:** The Department of Health supports this measure requiring premises licensed
2 under Chapter 281-44, Hawaii Revised Statutes to post a sign in or about the premises warning all
3 customers of the risks of birth defects from women drinking alcoholic beverages during pregnancy.

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

5 **Purpose and Justification:** Several studies have shown that alcohol warning signs raise awareness
6 about the risk of drinking during pregnancy and therefore, may reduce alcohol consumption among light
7 to moderate drinkers (Reducing Alcohol-Exposed Pregnancies, CDC March 2009). According to the
8 March of Dimes Hawaii Chapter, 19 states and the District of Columbia have enacted laws requiring
9 warning signs at the point of sale including retail stores, bars and restaurants.

10 Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder ("FASD") is the umbrella term used to describe a range of
11 disorders caused by prenatal alcohol exposure. These disorders include fetal alcohol syndrome, alcohol-
12 related neuron-developmental disorder, and fetal alcohol effects or alcohol-related birth defects disorder.
13 Alcohol exposure during pregnancy produces, by far, the most serious neurobehavioral effects in the
14 fetus (Institute of Medicine Report to Congress, 1995). There is no known safe amount of alcohol or
15 safe time to drink 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 an FASD.

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

10 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR



Dean H. Seki
Comptroller

Maria E. Zielinski
Deputy Comptroller

STATE OF HAWAII
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WRITTEN COMMENTS
OF
DEAN H. SEKI, COMPTROLLER
DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES
TO THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE
ON
HEALTH
ON
February 6, 2013

H.B. 404

RELATING TO WARNING SIGNS

Chair Belatti and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written comments on H.B. 404.

The Department of Accounting and General Services (DAGS) supports the intent of H.B. 404 and offers the following amendment.

This measure amends section 281-44(a), Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), which relates to advertisements and signs upon licensed liquor establishments. As such, the substantive amendments proposed in this bill fall outside of the Comptroller's jurisdiction. DAGS respectively requests that all references to the "comptroller" in H.B. 404 be replaced with the term "liquor commission" to preserve the existing authority of the various county liquor

commissions over advertisements and signs in or about licensed premises as provided in section 281-44(b), HRS.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written comments on this matter.



HILOPA'A

Family to Family Health Information Center

Date: February 2, 2013

To: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
Representative Della Au Bellatti, Chair
Representative Dee Morikawa, Vice Chair

Fr: Leolinda Parlin, State Coordinator for Family Voices of Hawai'i

Re: **SUPPORT** – HB 404 – RELATING TO WARNING SIGNS

On behalf of Family Voices of Hawai'i, I offer testimony in support of HB 404, which seeks to post signage to warn customers of the risk of birth defects and fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD) for women drinking alcohol during pregnancy. As an organization, Family Voices is national grass roots organization of family of friends of child with special health care needs. In Hawai'i, we operate the federally funded Hilopa'a Family to Family Health Information Center.

FASD is the number one preventable developmental disability and any effort to address the prevention of its occurrence should be supported. There is no other way to acquire FASD than through alcohol consumption by a pregnant mother. While it may appear that "not drinking while pregnant" is common sense, the Center for Disease Control reports that more than 50% of all pregnancies are unplanned. The proposed signage would serve as a prompt for women to consider the consequence of the combination of sexual activity and alcohol use if they are planning to get pregnant or may not use effective methods of birth control.

Thank you for your time and consideration in passing HB 404.

February 5, 2013

March of Dimes Foundation

To: Honorable Della Au Belatti
Honorable Dee Morikawa

Hawaii Chapter
1580 Makaloa Street, Suite 1200
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
HB404
Hearing: Committee on Health
February 6, 2013 10:30am
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Morikawa, Members of the Committee

I am writing to express support for HB404, *which would require licensed premises to post signs warning women that drinking alcohol during pregnancy can cause birth defects and fetal alcohol spectrum disorders.*

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 known 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 19 states and the District of Columbia 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.

