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STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION
HAWAII STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL
600 KAPIOLANI BOULEVARD, RM 305, HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

February 5, 2014

Committee on Ways and Means
Hawaii State Senate:
Re: SB 2525

Chairman and committee members:

I am writing to express the strong support of Hawaii's State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) for SB 2525, which has been drafted and proposed with representation of SRC members, the Deaf & Blind Task Force, the University of Hawaii Center on Disability Studies, and other members of the disability community. Presently, we have some state programs and policies that are designed to support persons with disabilities in their desire to become employed. Unfortunately, other policies, like those in our Medicaid program, create disincentives for persons with disabilities to become employed, to maintain employment, or to further their employment goals.

The U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid funded a Medicaid Infrastructure Grant at the Center on Disability Studies to assist Hawaii to develop a Medicaid Buy-In program, and members of our SRC have participated in this grant for many years to participate in Hawaii having a buy-in.

Forty-five states have Medicaid Buy-Ins, but Hawaii has lagged behind our sister states across the country. It should be noted that most participants enrolling in a Medicaid Buy-In in Hawaii are already known to Hawaii's Medicaid program. A buy-in will allow them to pay taxes, draw less benefits overall, and contribute to the cost of their Medicaid benefit in an equitable way that will lead them toward employment.

We support the conclusion of the Medicaid Buy-in Task Force that we implement a Medicaid Buy-In for working people with disabilities. Please do not let Hawaii become the last state of the nation without a Medicaid Buy-In!

Thank you for understanding this great need and supporting this legislation:

Gretchen Lawson
Chairman, Hawaii State Rehabilitation Council



From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [WAM Testimony](#)
Cc: mihalkewm@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB2525 on Feb 5, 2014 10:30AM
Date: Wednesday, February 05, 2014 8:46:13 AM

SB2525

Submitted on: 2/5/2014

Testimony for WAM on Feb 5, 2014 10:30AM in Conference Room 211

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
William Mihalke	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments: Aloha Senators, I am writing in support of the Medicaid Buy-in provision. Nearly 1,000 persons have submitted testimony in support of this measure in previous sessions. The Medicaid Buy-in allows persons with disabilities to go back to work, and to keep their needed healthcare supports, so that they remain healthy. This is ultimately a cost savings to the state, at little cost to the Mediquest Division, as a vast majority of those on the Medicaid Buy-in are already receiving Medicaid, and the State is already paying for their QExA. Furthermore, the cost of working persons with disabilities is less because their health improves by working, particularly those with psychiatric disabilities. For example, other states have documented that the smoking rate for those on the buy-in is lower when people go to work. Hawaii is one of only five states remaining in the Union that have not yet formed a Medicaid Buy-in so persons with disabilities can work, get out of poverty and have a chance to get off benefits. Mahalo for your consideration, William Mihalke

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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