

LATE



The Judiciary, State of Hawaii

Testimony to the House Committee on Judiciary

Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair

Representative Joy A. San Buenaventura, Vice Chair

Tuesday, March 24, 2015, 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 325

by

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Supreme Court Staff Attorney

Bill No. and Title: Senate Bill No. 1010, S.D. 1, Relating to the Unauthorized Practice of Law.

Purpose: Allows a person who is not licensed or authorized to practice law in the State to provide legal services on a temporary basis in this State if the attorney provides services in association with or assists a Hawai'i licensed attorney or as in-house counsel to an organization in another jurisdiction or to an affiliated entity or employee of that organization in the State. Requires the clerk of the supreme court to maintain a registry of all attorneys who are not licensed or authorized to practice law in the State, but provide services for a matter that is not being litigated in any court of the State. Makes conforming amendments to attorney licensure requirements. Effective 01/07/2059.

Judiciary's Position:

The Judiciary respectfully opposes this proposal and offers the following comments for consideration.

Pursuant to Article VI, section 7 of the Hawai'i Constitution, the Supreme Court of Hawai'i has the power to promulgate rules and regulations for all courts relating to court process, practice and procedures, which shall have the force and effect of law. In accordance with this constitutional authority and HRS section 605-1 and HRS section 605-6, the Supreme Court regulates the examination, licensing, and disciplining of attorneys seeking to practice law in this State and has adopted rules establishing the Board of Examiners to review applications and administer examinations for admission to the Hawai'i bar. See Rule 1 of the Rules of the



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Supreme Court of Hawai'i (RSCH). In addition, the Supreme Court adopted the Hawai'i Rules of Professional Conduct and established the Disciplinary Board and the Office of Disciplinary Counsel to oversee the conduct of attorneys in Hawai'i. See RSCH Rule 2.

Although these rules are in place to regulate the practice of law in Hawai'i, the Judiciary recognizes that issues have occasionally arisen concerning the oversight of attorneys who conduct legal services in Hawai'i, but are not licensed in this jurisdiction. The Judiciary, however, believes Senate Bill No. 1010, S.D. 1 may encroach upon the Supreme Court's constitutional and inherent authority to regulate the practice of law in Hawai'i.

Section 2 of S.D. 1 sets forth the amendments to HRS section 605-14, which governs the unauthorized practice of law, and deletes firms, association, and corporations from the statute's jurisdiction. Many attorneys become incorporated for various reasons, and the Supreme Court has adopted several rules governing the establishment, governance, and regulation of legal associations, corporations, and partnerships. By deleting firms, associations and corporations from the purview of HRS section 605-14, the proposed S.D. 1 will have the opposite effect of its intent for this deletion will allow all incorporated attorneys from other jurisdictions to practice law in the State without any licensing requirements or regulation.

With regards to the proposed amendment adding subsection (c)(1)(A) on page 3, lines 3-7, which mentions pro hac vice admission, the supreme court already has a specific court rule regulating pro hac vice admission of attorneys in court proceedings. See RSCH Rule 1.9. Admission pro hac vice under RSCH Rule 1.9 is discretionary with the presiding judge in each specific case, but the proposed subsection appears to make admission mandatory in cases where an out-of-state attorney meets certain criteria. Moreover, to address issues related to pro hac vice admission, the Supreme Court established a working group to review the present RSCH Rule 1.9. The working group's proposal was released for public comments last year, and the Supreme Court is presently considering the written comments and proposed changes to the rule.

The Judiciary has concerns with subsection (c)(1)(B) on page 3, lines 8-12, which requires the attorneys falling within this subsection to register with the Clerk of the Supreme Court. Such a registry may incur expenditure of funds to develop forms and processes for the purpose of conducting reviews and investigations to determine the attorneys' status (i.e., disbarments, suspensions, good standing). The lack of funding in this bill for the creation and maintenance of a registry is problematic. The Judiciary also has concerns about the information required to be included in the registry because the proposal contains no method for regulation or other means to insure compliance with the requirements.

Finally, the Judiciary also has concerns about subsection (c)(2) on page 3, lines 13-15, which appears to exempt in-house counsel from the State of Hawaii's attorney licensing



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requirement. If this is the intent of subsection (c)(2), the subsection conflicts with licensing requirements already in place. As mentioned above, pursuant to HRS sections 605-1 and 605-6, the supreme court adopted rules regarding the licensing of attorneys. These rules do not exempt in-house counsel from attorney licensing requirements in the State. Requiring in-house counsel to comply with Hawai'i licensing rules ensures that the Office of Disciplinary Counsel in Hawai'i retains authority to investigate any complaints against such attorneys. To address the possible ambiguity in subsection (c)(2), the Committee could either delete subsection (c)(2) from the proposed bill or add language that acknowledges in-house counsel working in Hawai'i are governed by the Supreme Court rules.

In closing, the Judiciary agrees that the State should strive to ensure protection of consumers in this State. Nevertheless, it seems this proposed legislation may not allow this goal to be met and may raise potentially significant constitutional concerns.

Thank you for allowing the Judiciary to submit testimony on this bill.



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

Testimony on SB 1010, SD1 Relating to the Unauthorized Practice of Law

TO: Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Representative Joy San Buenaventura, Vice Chair
Members, Committee on Judiciary

FROM: Trisha Kajimura, Social Policy Director

HEARING: **Tuesday, March 24, 2015 at 2:00 p.m. in Conf. Rm. 325**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide **testimony offering comments on SB 1010, SD1**, which addresses the issue of unauthorized practice of law. Catholic Charities Hawaii has no issue with the intent of the bill and wants to ensure that if it is adopted, it does not impede the ability of Catholic Charities Hawaii to continue to provide assistance to immigrants with their immigration cases.

Catholic Charities Hawaii (CCH) is a tax exempt, non-profit agency that has been providing social services in Hawaii for over 60 years. CCH has programs serving individuals, elders, children, developmentally disabled, homeless and immigrants. Our mission is to provide services and advocacy for the most vulnerable in Hawaii.

CCH is a Board of Immigration Appeals recognized organization and authorized by the Department of Justice Executive Office for Immigration Review to assist with immigration cases before the Department of Homeland Security.

The Department of Justice's Executive Office for Immigration Review established the Recognition & Accreditation Program to regulate non-licensed attorneys assisting with immigration cases before the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and federal immigration courts. The process is regulated under the Federal Register, 8 CFR 1292:

§ 1292.1

*(a) A person entitled to representation may be represented by any of the following: (4) **Accredited representatives.** A person representing an organization described in § 1292.2 of this chapter who has been accredited by the Board.*

§ 1292.2

*(a) **Qualifications of organizations.** A non-profit religious, charitable, social service, or similar organization established in the United States and recognized as such by the Board may designate a representative or representatives to practice before the Service alone or the Service and the Board (including practice before the Immigration Court). Such organization must establish to the satisfaction of the Board that: (1) It makes only nominal charges and assesses no excessive membership dues for persons given assistance; and (2) It has at its disposal adequate knowledge, information and experience.*

(d) Accreditation of representatives [relevant section components listed in outline format]





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+ *A Board recognized organization may apply for accreditation of persons of good moral character as its representatives*

+ *An organization may apply to have a representative accredited to practice before the Service alone or the Service and the Board (including practice before immigration judges).*

+ *An application for accreditation shall fully set forth the nature and extent of the proposed representative's experience and knowledge of immigration and naturalization law and procedure and the category of accreditation sought. - "There are two kinds of accreditation: "partial" and "full." **A partially accredited representative may represent aliens before DHS only.** A fully accredited representative may represent aliens before both the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Executive Office for Review (EOIR) (the immigration courts and the BIA)." ¹*

+ *The Board may approve or disapprove an application in whole or in part and shall inform the organization and the district director of the action taken with regard to an application.*

+ *Accreditation terminates when the Board's recognition of the organization ceases for any reason or when the representative's employment or other connection with the organization ceases. The organization shall promptly notify the Board of such changes.*

*(e) **Roster.** The Board shall maintain an alphabetical roster of recognized organizations and their accredited representatives. A copy of the roster shall be furnished to the Commissioner and he shall be advised from time to time of changes therein.*

Catholic Charities Hawai'i's Immigration Services program is a BIA recognized agency and can be found on the roster of recognized organizations and accredited representatives. **We have three partially-accredited staff**, two on Oahu and one on Hawai'i Island, who assist low-income immigrants with their immigration cases. The people that we assist would not be able to afford the services of immigration attorneys. Our Immigration Services Program is a core to mission service at CCH and not supported through fundraising.

The current senate draft (SD1) provides better protection for our services in this bill than the original bill did but we ask that you strengthen that protection by adding language that would explicitly carve out an exception for the type of work that we do.

Please contact me at (808)527-4810 or trisha.kajimura@catholiccharitieshawaii.org if you have any questions.

¹ EOIR's Recognition and Accreditation FAQ web page, which is available: <http://www.justice.gov/eoir/ra/rafaqs-help.htm>