

DEPARTMENT OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY
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THE HONORABLE ROSALYN H. BAKER, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE,
CONSUMER PROTECTION, AND HEALTH
Twenty-Eighth State Legislature
Regular Session of 2016
State of Hawai'i

February 4, 2016

RE: S.B. 2471, RELATING TO A STATE HOSPITAL.

Chair Baker, Vice-Chair Kidani and members of the House Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protect, and Health, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney of the City and County of Honolulu ("Department") submits the following testimony in support of S.B. 2471, with additional comments.

The purpose of S.B. 2471 is to authorize issuance of GO bonds for the design and construction of a new state mental health hospital. The Department greatly appreciates the Legislature's recognition that Hawai'i is in urgent need of a new mental health facility(s), and also appreciates the Legislature's willingness to provide the necessary support and resources.

While the Department appreciates that the proposed facility will provide greatly-improved treatment, safety, and other benefits that the existing facility has struggled with, we strongly believe that a corresponding increase in community-based programs is also needed, and encourage the Legislature to devote increased efforts and resources to those outpatient programs. As the Legislature is well-aware, many individuals with significant mental health issues are not housed in the State Hospital, yet are in great need of outpatient services to ensure their ongoing safety and the safety of others around them. If more services were provided throughout the community, on a consistent and ongoing basis, this would greatly assist our Department in guarding the safety and welfare of the general public and of future generations.

For all of the foregoing reasons, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney of the City and County of Honolulu supports the passage of S.B. 2471. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.