

**LATE**



Date: March 27, 2017

To: The Honorable Donna Mercado Kim, Chair  
The Honorable Russell Ruderman, Vice Chair  
Members of the Senate Committee on Government Operations

The Honorable Rosalyn Baker, Chair  
The Honorable Clarence Nishihara, Vice Chair  
Members of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health

From: Trish La Chica, Policy and Advocacy Director, Hawai'i Public Health Institute

Re: **Strong Support of SCR 116**

Hrg: March 28, 2017 at 10:30am at Conference Room 229

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Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **strong support** for SCR116, encouraging state departments and agencies to implement worksite wellness programs.

Created by the legislature in 2012, the Obesity Prevention Task Force is comprised of over 20 statewide organizations, and works to make recommendations to reshape Hawai'i's school, work, community, and health care environments, making healthier lifestyles obtainable for all Hawai'i residents. The Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI) convenes the Task Force and supports and promotes policy efforts to create a healthy Hawai'i.

Hawaii workers spend majority of their waking hours at their place of work. Unfortunately, these long hours frequently contribute to poor health: desk jobs lead to physical inactivity, workplace stress can lead to poor sleep, poor dietary choices, and maintaining unhealthy behaviors such as smoking. Wellness programs in the workplace present a valuable opportunity for health promotion: scientific studies show that when done right, workplace health promotion and disease prevention programs can improve the health of employees, reduce healthcare costs, increase productivity, and produce a positive return-on- investment (ROI), resulting in a win-win for employees and employers.

Effective wellness initiatives needs support, leadership, as well as commitment from the employer and employees so it can be integrated into an agency's culture. Executive management do not know where to start or often lack the time to focus on initiatives to promote a healthy workforce. SCR116 helps by identifying a wellness leader that could spearhead the design, implementation, and evaluation of workplace health promotion programs.

Approved in October 2014, the Department of Human Resources and Development's Policy No. 801.001 authorizes and encourages state agencies to create and worksite wellness initiatives in the workplace. SCR116 would extend this initiative across all state agencies and departments to create a culture of health for all state employees.

We ask the legislature to pass SCR116 to benefit all state agencies and departments. Effective wellness programs help to improve productivity, enhance employee morale and organizational commitment, reduce turnover, and reduce absenteeism. Further, promoting wellness programs helps to curb health care costs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. We strongly support SCR116 and respectfully ask you to pass this out of committee.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Trish".

Trish La Chica  
Policy and Advocacy Director