



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
OFFICE OF YOUTH SERVICES
1010 Richards Street, Suite 314
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

January 23, 2018

TO: The Honorable John Mizuno, Chair
House Committee on Human Services

FROM: Merton Chinen, Executive Director

SUBJECT: HB 1703, Relating to Health

Hearing: Wednesday, January 24, 2018, 10:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 329

OFFICE'S POSITION: OYS supports the measure. Suicide is a serious community and public health problem. Prevention of suicide requires ongoing awareness, education, and training to provide multiple-tools for Hawaii's people to prevent suicide. Youth at-risk are vulnerable to suicide and require a caring network of responsive adults and peers to act in a timely manner to connect appropriate services to assist and intervene.

As a member of the Prevent Suicide Hawai'i Taskforce, we were guided by four core values guide our efforts related to suicide prevention—Aloha, Ola, Connectivity, and Culture. *Aloha*, is essential for all relationships and imperative to suicide prevention. *Ola* refers to life, health, hope, healing, contentment, and peace after a struggle, creating both a personal and spiritual sense of connectedness to others and place. Connectivity in times of need is frequently expressed by those who have attempted suicide, as well as by those dedicated to preventing suicide in our communities. Culture refers to the values, traditions, and practices, of any group and is an important consideration in suicide prevention, particularly with our diverse communities. The Hawai'i Suicide Prevention Strategy recognizes that suicide prevention should be woven into all aspects of our lives.

The Honorable John Mizuno

January 23, 2018

Page 2 of 2

PURPOSE: The purpose of the measure is to designate the month of September of each year as Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month. Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.

LATE TESTIMONY

January 23, 2018.

Hearing: House Committee on Health and Human Services

LATE TESTIMONY

Bill No: **HB 1703**, designating the month of September of each year as Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month.

Date: Wednesday January 24, 2018 at 10 AM, Conference Room 329

To: Representative John Mizuno, Chair
Representative Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair

From: Lion Leilani Malia Eteuati
Hawaii DOE Teacher, Kapolei City Lions Club LEO Advisor, Wounded Warrior Project Alumni Support
Hawaii DOE Leeward District, District 50 Lions Club, WWP

RE: HB 1703: Designates the month of September of each year as Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

From: Leilani Malia Eteuati
Support for Survivors
School Liaison for Out of Darkness Walk
Active Participant in Hawaii Wounded Warrior Project Activities

Aloha - Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Kobayashi, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Leilani Malia Eteuati, I am the wife of a 100% disabled Army Veteran, mother of two school children and a Hawaii public school teacher. Through my work as a trusted and highly effective secondary level teacher, I have provided support for students who are entering crisis by directing them through our school's protocol and providing a designated safe space classroom. I advise two service oriented clubs on campus, the English Club and the LEO Club, who volunteer and participate in the annual Out of Darkness Walk to raise awareness, prevent and fight suicide. I have had the honor and bittersweet privilege of walking with survivor families from my school. I work with my administration, counseling department, colleagues, students and their families to encourage and uplift students in order to achieve academic success regardless of personal turmoil. As an English Language Arts teacher, students share their pain and hopes with me on a daily basis. I do my best to help them process their experiences through writing, art and digital products.

The importance of a Suicide Prevention Month in our state will help to raise awareness of this important issue. Every time a student dies by suicide, an entire community is deeply impacted. Suicide is preventable and constructive awareness is vitally important to the youth of today. Current media and literature as well as a rising trend of digital opinion and visibility make your efforts well-timed and absolutely necessary.

Thank you for your time,
Leilani Malia Eteuati
Leilani Malia Eteuati

January 23, 2018

Hearing: House Committee on Health and Human Services

Bill No: **HB 1703**, designating the month of September of each year as Suicide Prevention Awareness Month.

Date: Wednesday January 24, 2018 at 10 AM, Conference Room 329

To: Representative John Mizuno, Chair
Representative Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair

From: Pua Kaninau-Santos
Chair & Support
O`ahu and Waianae Prevent Suicide Hawai`i Taskforce



RE: HB 1703: Designates the month of September of each year as Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

From: Pua Kaninau-Santos
Survivor
Chair, O`ahu Prevent Suicide Hawai`i Taskforce
Steering Committee Member Statewide Prevent Suicide Hawai`i Taskforce

Aloha - Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Kobayashi, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Pua Kaninau Santos, I am mother and survivor in the aftermath of my son, Kaniela Kaninau's Suicide, April 5, 2003. I am also a family member who has provided support during the crisis and outreach for a grandchild who attempted suicide. Going to the emergency room, group meet with the psychiatrist, Dr., family debrief, and completion of a safe plan. I am also the Chair for the O`ahu Prevent Suicide Hawai`i Taskforce, and an essential support to our Wai`ana`e PSH Taskforce community group.

The importance of a Suicide Prevention Month in our state will help to raise awareness of this important issue. Every other day in our state an individual dies by suicide, and suicide is preventable. Shining the light on suicide prevention month, provides the kind of outreach on a scale that is needed to reach the most unlikely area, groups, and individuals. Individuals and groups that have the opportunity to take an action step towards being proactive focused on the issue of suicide, hopeful in saving lives. Giving permission to now acknowledge and talk about the issue, and do something about it.

I am deeply moved and grateful (beyond words) to, "Pass Life Forward" in support of suicide prevention month. Together 25% x 2025, Hiki NO!!!

Mahalo for the opportunity,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Pua Kaninau Santos".

Pua Kaninau-Santos
Mother of Kaniela Kaninau
Kalani HS, Class of 2003

LATE

HB-1703

Submitted on: 1/23/2018 5:20:35 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/24/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dara Carlin, M.A.	Domestic Violence Survivor Advocate	Support	No

Comments:



AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR Suicide Prevention

Hawai`i Chapter

January 22, 2018

Hearing: House Committee on Health and Human Services
Bill No: **HB 1703**, designating the month of September of each year as Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month.
Date: Wednesday January 24, 2018 at 10 AM, Conference Room 329

To: Representative John Mizuno, Chair
Representative Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair

From: Eric Tash, Chair
Hawai`i Chapter, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

RE: HB 1703: Designates the month of September of each year as Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Kobayashi, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawai`i Chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention **strongly supports HB 1703**, which designates the month of September of each year as Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month. This bill will help to shine a light on the critical health problem of suicide in Hawai`i and will help keep suicide prevention in the public eye.

Many people in our community have been touched by suicide. In Hawai`i, suicide is the single leading cause of injury death. One person dies by suicide every two days, and one person is hospitalized every day after attempting to take his or her own life. The impact suicide has on the lives of family members, friends, co-workers and the community is devastating. Fortunately, there is hope. We can all stop suicide—before it happens—by working together.

We urge you to support the passage of HB 1703. Passage of this bill is an important and public step in highlighting the need to address this critical health issue, and a step on the road to reduce suicide in Hawai`i 25% by 2025.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention is the leading national non-profit organization exclusively dedicated to understanding and preventing suicide through research, education and advocacy, and to supporting those affected by suicide. Established in July 2014, the Hawai`i Chapter's mission is to focus its efforts on the concerns and needs of our community in support of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.



ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE STATE OF HAWAII
DIOCESE OF HONOLULU
Witness to Jesus



Online Submittal

DATE: January 22, 2018

[COMMITTEE ON HEALTH](#)

Rep. John Mizuno, Chair

Rep. Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair

FROM: Walter Yoshimitsu, Executive Director – Hawaii Catholic Conference

POSITION: Strong Support for HB 1703 Relating to Health

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. I am Walter Yoshimitsu, the executive director of the Hawaii Catholic Conference which is the public policy voice of the Roman Catholic Church in the State of Hawaii. Many people at risk for suicide do not seek help so it is essential that people from across the spectrum of services, both secular and faith-based, come together to find a solution to prevent suicides in Hawaii. This includes either suicides by one's own hand or those made by request to a physician.

As a conference, we believe that each and every human life is sacred. Because of that, we advocate for public policy that will save lives, not end them. On this point we have never wavered.

Suicide affects people from every age, faith, or ethnicity. In fact, right here in Hawaii, according to the State Department of Health, "suicide was the leading cause of fatal injuries and the 10th leading cause of death among Hawaii residents of all ages."ⁱ Many organizations are already doing great work to prevent the loss of innocent lives; however, more can and should be done.

Sadly, when an individual takes their own life, it does not end the suffering. In fact, it is quite the contrary. The truth remains that the pain of suicide will continue thereby negatively affecting the family and even the wider community. Fortunately, there is strong evidence that a comprehensive public health approach is effective in reducing suicide rates. As our state puts aside differences and makes a plan to come together and focus on our collective roles in suicide prevention, we will make a difference in our community.

We support the designation of the month of September as "Suicide Prevention Awareness Month" to increase the public's awareness of suicide prevention education, resources, and support available to individuals, families, and communities in Hawaii.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support.

ⁱ State Department of Health testimony on March 18, 2016.

HAWAII CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

(The public policy voice for the Roman Catholic Church in the State of Hawaii)



ONLINE SUBMITTAL

Hearing on: Wednesday, January 24, 2018 @ 10:00 a.m.

Conference Room #329

DATE: January 22, 2018

TO: [COMMITTEE ON HEALTH](#)
Rep. John Mizuno, Chair
Rep. Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair

FROM: Eva Andrade, President

RE: **Strong Support for HB 1703 Relating to Health**

Hawaii Family Forum is a non-profit, pro-family education organization committed to preserving and strengthening life, family and religious freedom in Hawaii. This year we celebrate 20 years of serving the faith-based community!

We are committed to defending the sanctity of human life from conception until natural death, and everything that comes between. Many people in our community are concerned about suicide, because it affects the vulnerable people in our community, especially our youth and elderly. Just in the past few months, pastors have had to deal with the loss of someone in their community because of suicide.

In 2014, 9.4 million adults aged 18 or older thought seriously about trying to take their own lives. According to the CDC, in the past 12 months, there were 2.7 million who made suicide plans and 1.1 million who made a nonfatal suicide attempt. These studies show that young adults aged 18 to 25 were more likely than adults in other age groups to have serious thoughts of suicide, to have made suicide plans, or to have attempted suicide.¹ This is heartbreaking and something we absolutely need to change!

We know, however, that it is not just the young people who are victims of suicide and depression. Many elderly people and people who are terminal, are also at risk for depression and suicide. The CDC reports that every day in the United States, 17 adults over the age of 65 commit suicide². Even if that number is not as high as youth, it is still alarming and it is not what we want for our kupuna who feel depressed or alone.

Experts rightly point out that suicidal behaviors, for people of any age, are usually rooted in many different factors, with mental health issues playing an important role in the overall mix. It is a "perfect storm" of emotional issues and the only way to begin making a difference, is by identifying and treating each person. And the good news, is that it is fixable by awareness and treatment.

Designating the month of September of each year as Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month is a step in the right direction because it sends a message that suicide is never a solution. This bill makes a strong statement on something with which the community can agree. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support and a special mahalo to the legislators who put their names on this important bill!

¹ <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/NSDUH-FRR2-2014/NSDUH-DR-FRR2-2014.htm> (accessed 02/24/17)

² <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/suicide-datasheet-a.pdf> (accessed 02/24/17)

HB-1703

Submitted on: 1/22/2018 2:34:38 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/24/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mark White	Convention of States	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Committee Chair, Vice Chair, and Members,

I provide this testimony in support of HB1703 as a citizen of Hawaii on behalf of myself, not on behalf of Convention of States Hawaii for which I now serve as State Director.

Last spring I was made aware of the sudden suicide death of a member of the board of a 50-year old non-profit artist group from which I had just stepped down as its president the previous three years. The person that killed himself had served on our board for that entire time and participated in several key sculptural exhibits and fund raisers. Imagine my shock to learn that my friend and professional colleague had suffered in silence for years from bi-polar disorder so severe it caused him to take his own life.

Any legislation that serves to make the public more aware of the lurking risks and dangers of suicide and related psychoclogical conditions should be adopted by our state. I strongly support HB 1703 and ask for you to support it as well.

Mark White
94-217 Olua Place
Waipahu HI 96797
(808) 753-5323

HB-1703

Submitted on: 1/22/2018 2:30:36 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/24/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kevin J. Cole		Support	No

Comments:

On July 28th 2016 my son took his life. He was 2 months shy of his 24th Birthday. Eight years ago, a family friend, age 22 took his life.

When people take that drastic measure, they have no idea of the level of impact they have on others. Regardless of age or circumstance, when someone ends their own life, they take a piece of others' lives with them.

We must make it clear to those around us that no matter what the circumstance, never seek a permanent solution to a temporary issue.

Anything that can be done at schools, civic groups, hospitals, and the community at large should be done. We owe this to our Ohana.

January 22, 2018

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Rep. John Mizuno, Chair

Rep. Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair

Committee Members:

Rep. Della Au Belatti

Rep. Lei R. Learnmont

Rep. Andria Tupola

Regarding: HB1703 Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month; September

I strongly support the passage of this bill.

I can't imagine the despair someone must be going through in that moment, feeling that there is nothing more to live for, that their lives are meaningless. Imagine the pain this brings to those that love them.

We must let them know their lives are precious and that there is hope in the resources, support and programs available to them.

Thank you for your time and again I strongly support the passage of this bill.

Rita Kama-Kimura

Mililani, HI

HB-1703

Submitted on: 1/22/2018 7:58:58 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/24/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Brett Kulbis		Support	No

Comments:

I fully support this legislation.

Brett Kulbis

Chairman

Honolulu County Republican Party

January 22, 2018

State Capitol of Hawaii
House of Representatives
House Committee on Health and Human Services
Honolulu, HI

Subject: Support HB 1703, designating the month of September of each year as Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month

Hearing: Wednesday January 24, 2018 at 10 AM, Conference Room 329

Aloha Chair Mizuno and members of the committee:

As a resident along the Wai`anae coast, I have been struck by the huge numbers of suicides within the past few years. As a result, we have formed a community group to work on suicide prevention. We work with the area schools, churches, health organizations and residents to find ways to mitigate and prevent suicide especially amongst our youth.

In Hawai`i, suicide is the single leading cause of injury death. One person dies by suicide every two days, and one person is hospitalized every day after attempting to take his or her own life. This statistic is way too much yet no one really hears about it because the subject of suicide is taboo. The impact suicide has on the lives of family members, friends, co-workers and the community is devastating. Fortunately, there is hope. We can all stop suicide—before it happens—by working together.

Please support the passage of HB 1703. By having September designated as the Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month, this is an important and public step in highlighting the need to address this critical health issue, and a step on the road to reduce suicide in Hawai`i 25% by 2025.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Malama pono,



Georgette Stevens
87-216 Helelua St. Unit 1
Wai`anae, HI 96792
808-321-4684

HB-1703

Submitted on: 1/23/2018 2:30:20 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/24/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
DeborahGoebert	Injury Prevention Advisory Committee	Support	No

Comments:

Suicide prevention is a priority for communities across the state. Each year we join together with communities around the globe to raise awareness in September. This helps to reduce stigma and provide pathways for promoting healing and inspiring hope.



LATE

DATE: January 23, 2018

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
Rep. John Mizuno, Chair
Rep. Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair

FROM: Janet Grace, Executive Director – Hawaii Life Alliance

POSITION: Strong Support for HB 1703 Relating to Health

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Janet Grace, the executive director for Hawaii Life Alliance which is comprised of organizations that believe life is of immeasurable worth from conception to natural death. There are numerous people in our beautiful state of aloha at risk for suicide and do not seek help. It is vital that people from all sectors of services, both non-religious and faith-based, unite to find a solution to prevent suicide in Hawaii. We also believe that suicide includes taking one's own life, and/or those made by the help of a physician.

As an alliance, we believe that every human life is sacred and deserves protection. To this end we advocate for public policy that will save and value lives, not promote ending them.

Sadly, suicide affects all of us from every age, ethnicity or place of faith. It's hard to believe that in Hawaii, the place people the world over dream of visiting, "suicide was the leading cause of fatal injuries and the 10th leading cause of death among Hawaii's treasured families - of all ages."i We applaud the numerous agencies working tirelessly to prevent the loss of innocent lives; however, statistics prove, we have much more work to do.

We are encouraged by the strong evidence that a comprehensive public health approach can minimize suicide rates. Our hope is that as a State we can put those areas aside that divide us and collaboratively come together to share our collective roles in suicide prevention. By doing so we can also bring hope and help those coping with a loved one who has been lost to suicide.

We support HB1703 that would designate the month of September as "Suicide Prevention Awareness Month" to expand community awareness of suicide prevention education, resources and support those individuals and families in Hawaii.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify.

i State Department of Health testimony on March 18, 2016

LATE

HB-1703

Submitted on: 1/24/2018 3:12:53 AM

Testimony for HHS on 1/24/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Corrina Luna		Support	No

Comments:

Testimony

January 22, 2018

Hearing: House Committee on Health and Human Services

Bill No: HB 1703, designating the month of September of each year as Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month.

Date: Wednesday January 24, 2018 at 10 AM, Conference Room 329

To: Representative John Mizuno, Chair

Representative Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair

From: Corrina Luna

Assistant Principal, Nanakuli High and Intermediate School

RE: HB 1703: Designates the month of September of each year as Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Kobayashi, and Members of the Committee,

I strongly support HB 1703, which designates the month of September of each year as Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month. This bill will help to shine a light on the critical health problem of suicide in Hawai'i and will help keep suicide prevention in the public eye.

Many families in our community have been touched by suicide. This tragedy devastates the lives of family members, friends, co-workers and the community. Fortunately, there is hope, by working together we can all stop suicide—before it happens.

We urge you to support the passage of HB 1703. Passage of this bill is an important and public step in supporting the families in our community and highlighting the need to address this critical health issue, and a step on the road to reduce suicide in Hawai`i 25% by 2025.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my testimony.