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No. \_\_\_\_\_

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 2144, HOUSE DRAFT 1  
RELATING TO MEDICAID

by

Nolan P. Espinda, Director  
Department of Public Safety

House Committee on Finance  
Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair  
Representative Ty J. Cullen, Vice Chair

Thursday, February 22, 2018; 11:00 a.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 308

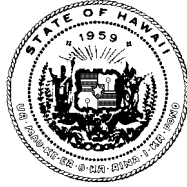
Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Public Safety (PSD) **supports the intent** of House Bill (HB) 2144, House Draft (HD) 1, which would require PSD to inform inmates of the availability of assistance to secure or verify applicable Medicaid eligibility prior to an inmate's release.

The Department notes that with the support of the 2017 Legislature in passing Act 56, the \$25,000 provided to PSD to establish processes for inmates to obtain civil identification cards, essential for successful reentry to the community, has assisted the Department in reinvigorating its Reentry Coordination Office (RCO), which is working intensively in providing guidance and assistance to each facility's staff to overcome obstacles to developing work opportunities, access to social services, assistance in securing housing, and access to health coverage, giving priority to inmates who will be the earliest to reenter society.

In short, PSD's Reentry Coordination Office is not just informing inmates of available assistance, its staff has built and is continually working to improve processes to secure the above elements, including MedQuest/Medicaid access, into the overall Reentry Program, providing inmates in custody with access to the services necessary for a successful reentry to the community.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
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February 21, 2018

TO: The Honorable Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair  
House Committee on Finance

FROM: Pankaj Bhanot, Director

SUBJECT: **HB2144 HD1 - RELATED TO MEDICAID**

Hearing: Thursday, February 22, 2018; 11:00 a.m.  
Conference Room 308, State Capitol

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of this measure and offers comments.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the bill is to require the Department of Public Safety (PSD) to inform inmates of the availability of assistance to secure or verify applicable Medicaid eligibility prior to an inmate's release.

Continuity of access to healthcare is important for all, including those who are incarcerated in public institutions. That being said, federal regulations prohibit Medicaid payment for services provided to inmates of public institutions, including correctional institutions, except for services provided as *"a patient in a medical institution that is not located on the grounds of the public institution."* Due to this regulation, Medicaid does not allow an inmate to remain enrolled for Medicaid benefits during their time of incarceration as this bill proposes. DHS appreciates the amendment of the House Committees on Health & Human Services and Public Safety regarding this issue.

However, PSD and DHS Med-QUEST (MQD) have executed a data-share agreement that allows for file transfers of incarceration and release dates for individuals. We are working on developing the data exchange and other processes to facilitate re-entry, so that the

Medicaid eligibility determination process may begin just prior to release of the inmate. The goal is to have eligibility determined for Medicaid just prior to release and the application will remain pending until the inmate is released.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.



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COMMITTEE ON FINANCE  
THURSDAY, FEB. 22, 11:00 AM, Room 308  
HB2144 HD1 RELATING TO MEDICAID

**TESTIMONY**

Beppie Shapiro, Legislative Committee, League of Women Voters of Hawaii

Chair LUKE, Vice-Chair CULLEN, and Committee Members:

**The League of Women Voters of Hawaii supports HB2144 HD1 that requires the Department of Public Safety to inform incarcerated individuals that the Department, with other relevant public agencies (presumably the Department of Human Services), will assist inmates whose incarceration will end within one year to secure or verify Medicaid eligibility. The League however considers HB2144 HD1 defective - comments below.**

When someone is released after incarceration the Medicaid eligibility determination process can take months. In the meantime the newly released person needs normal health care, and may have health problems which need to be addressed.

HB2144 **HD1** will help released individuals determine their eligibility for Medicaid.

**COMMENT:** The phrase in HB2144 HD1 at line 8-9 “secure or verify applicable Medicaid eligibility” is unclear and may undermine the intention of the bill. We suggest re-writing this as “verify and secure applicable Medicaid eligibility”. Getting Medicaid by the date of release would allow these individuals to receive needed medical care while they attend to employment, housing, etc.

**COMMENT:** The League also regrets the defective date of implementation as “3000”. We ask this committee to return to the language of the original bill i.e. “upon approval” to ensure current eligible inmates get Medicaid upon release.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

eliminating racism  
empowering women

**ywca**

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To: Hawaii State House Committee on Finance  
Hearing Date/Time: Thursday, February 22, 2018 11AM  
Hawaii State Capitol, Rm. 308

### **Position Statement Supporting House Bill 2144 HD1**

Thank you, Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, and Committee members, for the opportunity to testify in **support of House Bill 2144 HD1**, relating to Medicaid.

YWCA O'ahu operates the state's only community-based, work furlough program for women. We understand the struggle of reentering society. We support House Bill 2144 because it will allow those leaving incarceration to access necessary health services.

As noted in the 2017 report *Touchpoints of Homelessness: Institutional Discharge as a Window of Opportunity for Hawaii's Homeless*, people preparing for release are not receiving assistance in securing benefits. For those needing to continue mental health treatment, obtaining medical benefits as quickly as possible is imperative. If Medicaid benefits were suspended rather than terminated, it would simplify one piece of the reentry process.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 2144.

Kathleen Algire  
Director, Public Policy and Advocacy  
YWCA O'ahu

**YWCA IS ON A MISSION**



**LATE**

**HB2144 HD1**  
**RELATED TO MEDICAID**  
House Committee on Finance

February 22, 2018

11:00 a.m.

Room 308

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** HB2144 HD1, which would require the Department of Public Safety (PSD) to inform inmates of the availability of services to assist in securing Medicaid eligibility prior to their release.

Adequate healthcare and other support services are imperative to successful reentry of ex-pa'ahao back into the community. OHA understands that PSD and the Department of Human Services have already executed a data-sharing agreement to best prepare pa'ahao for reentry, by beginning inmate eligibility determinations for Medicaid/Med-QUEST prior to their release. OHA hopes that informing inmates – a disproportionate number of whom are Native Hawaiian-- of social and healthcare services and assisting them in securing these services will help ease their reintegration into the community, and reduce the likelihood of recidivism.

Therefore, OHA respectfully urges the Committee to **PASS** HB2144 HD1. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.