



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**  
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**Testimony COMMENTING on H.B. 2278**  
**RELATING TO HEALTH**

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN MIZUNO, CHAIR  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
Hearing Date: Thursday, February 8, 2018, 9:00am Room Number: 329

- 1 **Fiscal Implications:** None.
- 2 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health (DOH) supports the intent of this measure  
3 recognizing the importance of suicide prevention and establishes a suicide prevention taskforce  
4 to reduce suicides 25% by 2025. Suicide is a serious public health problem in Hawaii. From  
5 2012 to 2016, suicide was the leading cause of fatal injuries and the 10th leading cause of death  
6 among Hawaii residents of all ages. During this period there were 930 deaths by suicide, 2,875  
7 emergency department visits, and 1,750 hospital admissions for suicide. The rate of suicide  
8 deaths in Hawaii is 12 per 100,000 population. This equates to death by suicide every two days.  
9 Since its establishment in 2006, DOH has supported the Prevent Suicide Hawaii Taskforce by  
10 coordinating and staffing the Taskforce. Placing the Taskforce in statute would improve  
11 visibility and sustain our statewide effort to reduce suicides in keeping with the intent of HCR66.  
12 HCR66 was passed by the 2016 Legislature and required the Prevent Suicide Hawaii Taskforce  
13 (PSHTF) to develop a strategic plan to reduce suicides by 25% by 2025 by December, 2017.  
14 DOH will continue to support the Taskforce through staffing and coordination of statewide  
15 efforts.
- 16 **Offered Amendments:** The DOH respectfully recommends broadening Taskforce  
17 representation by including one at-large member from each county, one representative from each  
18 branch of the military, and 5 at-large members selected by the DOH. Taskforce responsibilities  
19 include: 1) Implementation and monitoring of Hawaii's suicide prevention strategic plan and 2)

- 1 Preparation of an annual report to the legislature. Finally DOH recommends elimination of the
- 2 sunset date of January 1, 2019 for Taskforce member service.
- 3 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



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



Online Submittal

**DATE:** February 6, 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 2169, Youth Suicide Prevention  
Strong Support for HB 2278, 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. 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.

To that end, we are in strong support of **both HB 2169** that will appropriate \$25,000 for youth suicide early intervention, prevention, and education initiatives in Maui county and **HB 2278** which establishes a suicide prevention task force to develop a strategic plan to reduce suicide in Hawaii by 25% by 2025.

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.”<sup>i</sup> 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.

Both of these measures will send a message that people suffering from depression deserve a chance to live. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support.

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<sup>i</sup> 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: Thursday, February 8, 2018 @ 9:00 a.m..

Conference Room #329

**DATE:** February 6, 2018

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

**FROM:** Eva Andrade, President

**RE:** **Strong Support for HB 2278 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 support this bill that will establish a suicide prevention task force to develop a strategic plan to reduce suicide in Hawaii by 25% by 2025.

In Hawaii, suicide was the most common cause of fatal injuries among Hawaii residents between 2010 and 2014, accounting for one-quarter of all fatal injuries and experts point out that one person dies by suicide in Hawaii every two days. This is heartbreaking and something we absolutely need to change! Several of our pastors have dealt with this very issue over the past few months.

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.

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.

When its work has been completed, the suicide prevention task force will have examined, evaluated, and determined methods to improve education, awareness, support services, and outreach to best prevent suicides in Hawaii. And that outcome is one upon which everyone in the community will agree. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support.

**LATE**

**HB-2278**

Submitted on: 2/7/2018 2:34:15 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/8/2018 9:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b>       | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Jeanelle Sugimoto-Matsuda |                     | Support                   | Yes                       |

Comments:

Please see attachment. Thank you.

**HB-2278**

Submitted on: 2/7/2018 8:01:05 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/8/2018 9:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b>        | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Melodie Aduja       | OCC Legislative Priorities | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

**PRESENTATION OF THE  
OAHU COUNTY COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES  
DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAII  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HUMAN  
SERVICES THE HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES  
TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE  
REGULAR SESSION OF 2018  
Thursday, February 8, 2018  
9:00 a.m.  
Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 329**

**RE: Testimony in Support** of HB2278, RELATING TO HEALTH

To the Honorable John M. Mizuno, Chair; the Honorable Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Committee on Health & Human Services:

Good morning. My name is Melodie Aduja. I serve as Chair of the Oahu County Committee ("OCC") Legislative Priorities Committee of the Democratic Party of Hawaii. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on House Bill No. 2278 relating to Suicide Prevention Task Force.

The OCC Legislative Priorities Committee is in support of House Bill No. 2278 and is in favor of its passage.

House Bill No.2278 is in accord with the Platform of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i ("DPH"), 2016, as it Establishes a suicide prevention task force to develop a strategic plan to reduce suicide in Hawaii by 25% by 2025.

Specifically, the DPH Platform provides that "[w]e support establishment of adequate mental health and statewide drug rehabilitation programs set up in conjunction with policing policies aimed at enabling all that seek assistance to obtain whatever support assistance is needed to allow them to remain free of drug dependence." (Platform of the DPH, P. 7, Lines 382-384 (2016)).

Given that House Bill No. 2278 establishes a Suicide Prevention Task Force, it is the position of the OCC Legislative Priorities Committee to support this measure.

Thank you very much for your kind consideration.

Sincerely yours,

**/s/ Melodie Aduja**

Melodie Aduja, Chair, OCC Legislative Priorities Committee

Email: [legislativepriorities@gmail.com](mailto:legislativepriorities@gmail.com), Tel.: (808) 258-8889

**HB-2278**

Submitted on: 2/6/2018 10:30:07 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/8/2018 9:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Rita Kama-Kimura    |                     | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

Good bill let's move it forward ...



## Helping Hawai'i Live Well

To: Representative John Mizuno, Chair, Representative Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair, Members, House Committee on Health and Human Services

From: Trisha Kajimura, Executive Director

**Re: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2278 RELATING TO HEALTH with amendments**

**Hearing: February 8, 2018, 9:00 am, CR 329**

Thank you for hearing **HB 2278, which establishes a suicide prevention task force to develop a strategic plan to reduce suicide in Hawaii by 25% by 2025.** Mental Health America of Hawaii supports HB 2278. This measure will help to increase community education and awareness to the important and tragic issue of suicide as well as the help and hope available through suicide prevention.

Mental Health America of Hawaii is a 501(c)3 organization founded in Hawai'i 76 years ago, that serves the community by promoting mental health through advocacy, education and service. One of our signature services is a training for middle and high school age youth on Youth Suicide and Bullying Prevention that we developed here in Hawaii called "Ho'olohe Pono." We are also members of the Prevent Suicide Hawaii Taskforce, an ongoing community group with statewide representation that works on the issue of preventing suicide by sharing information and resources that are disseminated to the community at large.

In Hawai'i, we unfortunately have very high rates of suicide, suicide attempts, and suicidal ideation amongst various age groups. Shockingly, our state's most recent Youth Risk Behavioral Survey (part of a national survey) results show that one in four middle age youth in Hawaii self-report suicidal ideation, one in six has made a suicide plan, and one in eight have made a suicide attempt.<sup>1</sup>

*We support the amendments submitted by Jeannelle Sugimoto-Matsuda, chair of Prevent Suicide Hawaii Task Force which recently developed a statewide strategic plan that can also be incorporated into this measure. We look forward to continued work with our partners and the community to reduce suicide in Hawaii.*

Thank you for considering my **testimony in support of HB 2278.** Please contact me at [trisha.kajimura@mentalhealthhawaii.org](mailto:trisha.kajimura@mentalhealthhawaii.org) or (808)521-1846 if you have any questions.

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<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Youth Risk Behavioral Surveillance System, Hawaii, 2015

**HB-2278**

Submitted on: 2/6/2018 11:03:57 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/8/2018 9:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b>                 | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Brett Kulbis        | Honolulu County<br>Republican Party | Comments                  | No                        |

## Comments:

It is already common knowledge that suicide is a serious problem not only in Hawaii but Nationally. Creating a "Task Force" to figure out a strategic plan to address the issue is a waste of time and effort. There are more than enough studies that can be reviewed for best practices that can be implemented here in Hawaii. The DHHS should already have a plan to incorporate early intervention, prevention, and education initiatives.

**HB-2278**

Submitted on: 2/6/2018 11:31:03 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/8/2018 9:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b>                 | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Dara Carlin, M.A.   | Domestic Violence Survivor Advocate | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

**HB-2278**

Submitted on: 2/7/2018 9:55:52 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/8/2018 9:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Present at Hearing</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Lois J Young        | Ms.                 | Support                   | No                        |

Comments:

Aloha,

I support this bill and urge you to pass it.

thank you, Lois Young