



**HB2694 HD1 SD1
RELATING TO FEES**

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

April 4, 2018

10:30 a.m.

Room 211

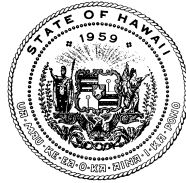
The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** HB2694 HD1 SD1, which would waive fees for the issuance of certified copies of birth certificates for individuals verified as homeless by a service provider.

For many individuals struggling with housing insecurity or re-entry after incarceration, the difficulty and expense of acquiring identification documents can be one of the biggest barriers to achieving security and economic self-sufficiency. For example, documents such as birth certificates are often necessary to obtain a driver's licenses, apply for a job, and establish eligibility for many public benefits and services. Notably, Native Hawaiians are at a heightened risk of being or becoming homeless,¹ and are disproportionately overrepresented in the criminal justice system;² accordingly, this measure will provide particular relief for Native Hawaiians, as well as other individuals facing housing or re-entry challenges.

Therefore, OHA respectfully urges the Committee to **PASS** HB2694 HD1 SD1. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

¹ Native Hawaiians account for almost one-third of those utilizing homeless services. See HOMELESS SERVICE UTILIZATION REPORT (2017) University of Hawai'i Center on the Family, *available at* http://uhfamily.hawaii.edu/publications/brochures/b761f_HomelessServiceUtilization2016.pdf 14.1% of Native Hawaiian households, compared to 4.2% of state households have a hidden homeless family member. 24.8% of Native Hawaiian households, compared to 9.6% of state households include more than two generations or unrelated individuals. See SMS, HAWAII HOUSING PLANNING STUDY, at 70 (2016), *available at* https://dbedt.hawaii.gov/hhfdc/files/2017/03/State_HHPS2016_Report_031317_final.pdf

² OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS, THE DISPARATE TREATMENT OF NATIVE HAWAIIANS IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM (2010), https://19of32x2yl33s8o4xza0gf14-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/ir_final_web_rev.pdf.



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**Testimony COMMENTING on HB2694 HD1 SD1
RELATING TO FEES.**

SENATOR DONOVAN M. DELA CRUZ, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

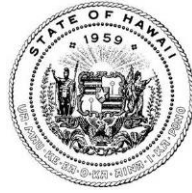
Hearing Date: April 4, 2018

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- 1 **Fiscal Implications:** Undetermined impact to Vital Statistics Improvement Special Fund.
- 2 **Department Testimony:** The support of the Department of Health for HB2694 HD1 SD1 is
- 3 contingent on the June 30, 2021 sunset date. A portion of fees collected from vital records
- 4 transactions are subsequently disbursed to other jurisdictions, including the Department of
- 5 Human Services and the Judiciary, to fund domestic violence prevention activities. Fees not
- 6 collected due to the proposed waiver will diminish those resources, therefore the department
- 7 supports a sunset date.
- 8 Although vital records such as a birth certificate are required to obtain other important
- 9 documents like identification cards or to establish residency for benefits programs, only 35% of
- 10 homeless individuals who sought their birth certificates were Hawaii-born or have provided
- 11 enough information for their records to be located. The majority, or 65%, would be ineligible for
- 12 the proposed waiver of fees.
- 13 State funds are already being used to assist Hawaii-born homeless individuals seeking vital
- 14 records through social service programs coordinated by the Hawaii Department of Human
- 15 Services (DHS), such as the Legal Aid Society of Hawaii (LASH). LASH, for example, may

1 request birth records on behalf of a client who information has been vetted (under penalty of
2 perjury) and for which the Legal Aid Society has paid the fee. Informally, these agencies have
3 reported adequate resources to handle requests for subsidies for their clients to access vital
4 records, as provided for in their contracts with the State.

5 **Proposed Amendments:** N/A.



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
HONOLULU

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

April 4, 2018

TO: The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Scott Morishige, MSW, Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness

SUBJECT: HB 2694 HD1 SD1 – RELATING TO FEES

Hearing: Wednesday, April 4, 2018, 10:30 a.m.
Conference Room 211, State Capitol

POSITION: The Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness appreciates the intent of this measure, and offers comments.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to require the Department of Health (DOH) to furnish, free of charge, certified copies of birth certificates for any individual who is homeless, provided the individual's homeless status is corroborated by a verification letter issued by a homeless service provider.

Homelessness remains one of the most pressing challenges facing Hawaii, and the State has adopted a comprehensive framework to address homelessness that focuses on three primary leverage points – affordable housing, health and human services, and public safety. In particular, the State has worked together with the Legislature to increase funding for homeless outreach and civil legal services to address the needs of unsheltered homeless individuals. More specifically, DHS contracts civil legal service providers to assist homeless individuals with obtaining government identification or vital records, such as a birth certificate or social security card. The Coordinator notes that the Governor's Supplemental Budget request includes \$1.75 million for homeless outreach and civil legal services, and respectfully requests the Legislature's support of this request. The recommendation for funding for civil legal services to assist with obtaining vital records is one of a number of recommendations made by a working group

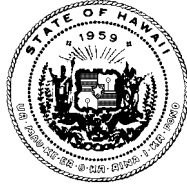
established through Act 243, Session Laws of Hawaii 2015, to research the issue of documentation for homeless individuals. A link to the full recommendations of the working group can be found online here: <http://humanservices.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Act-243-2015-Working-Group-Interim-Report.pdf>.

The Coordinator further notes that the DOH vital records office relies upon fee revenue to support the ongoing operations and administration of that office, including recent upgrades to online ordering and tracking. Many of the requests to assist with obtaining a birth certificate or other vital records are from homeless individuals that relocated to Hawaii from another jurisdiction. In addition, many individuals seeking assistance with obtaining documents are in need of a number of different documents – many of which require a separate fee to obtain – and not solely seeking assistance with obtaining a birth certificate.

If this measure moves forward, the Coordinator respectfully suggests a three-year sunset date be included to allow time for DOH to review the impact of the fee waiver for this population.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



PANKAJ BHANOT
DIRECTOR

CATHY BETTS
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

April 1, 2018

TO: The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Pankaj Bhanot, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 2694 HD1 SD1 – RELATING TO FEES**

Hearing: Wednesday, April 4, 2018, 11:30 a.m.
Conference Room 211, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of the measure and offers comments. However, DHS agrees with the amendment of the Senate Committee on Consumer Protection & Health to provide a sunset date.

PURPOSE: Requires the Department of Health to waive all fees for the issuance of certified copies of birth certificates for any individual who is homeless, provided the individual's homeless status is corroborated by a verification letter issued by a homeless service provider.

DHS appreciates the legislature's intent to address barriers for homeless individuals to obtain government identification and other services. Individuals may access public benefits without government issued identification, as long as they have other documentation that can be used to verify their identity and citizenship. Lack of government identification is primarily a barrier for those seeking housing and employment, and now lack of Real ID compliant identification will be a barrier to travel by federally regulated aircraft.

DHS currently contracts for outreach and civil legal services to assist homeless individuals obtain government issued identification; services include paying fees to obtain vital records. Recommendation to provide legal services as well as funds for vital records fees emerged from the work of the Act 243 (2015) working group.

In practical terms, a higher number of vital records for homeless individuals are requested from out of state agencies. In addition to establishing citizenship and date of birth with a birth certificate, a number of vital records may be required for an individual to verify their name, or "name traceability." Individuals may require marriage or divorce certificates to verify the name that will appear on the government issued identification, the name of which may be different from the name that appears on their birth certificate. DHS respectfully requests that the legislature continue to provide appropriations for document fees instead of creating another administrative process or additional legal service to obtain the fee waiver for a particular document. Providing funds for the fee is actually a simpler process for outreach and legal services providers.

Additionally, DHS informs the legislature that portions of the fees from vital records are dedicated to different special funds that are used for a variety of services, including services that provide training, outreach, and programs that address spouse abuse and child abuse, domestic violence and sexual assault. Reduction of fees to these funds will impact other vital services.

DHS has requested an appropriation of \$1,750,000 for outreach and statewide civil legal services, with \$600,000 budgeted for civil legal services; DHS asks the legislature to support this budget request.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

HB-2694-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2018 9:56:11 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2018 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
	Testifying for Domestic Violence Action Center	Support	No

Comments:

HB-2694-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2018 3:05:08 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2018 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Melodie Aduja	Testifying for Oahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i	Support	No

Comments: