

STAND. COM. REP. NO. **2636**

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 18 2022

RE: S.B. No. 2031
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-First State Legislature
Regular Session of 2022
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Health, to which was referred S.B. No. 2031 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO THE OFFICE OF HEALTH EQUITY,"
begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to establish the Office of Health Equity within the Department of Health.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Health; Hawai'i Coalition for Immigrant Rights; Hawai'i Public Health Institute; AlohaCare; American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network; American Heart Association; Hawaii Medical Service Association; Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander Hawai'i COVID-19 Response, Recovery, and Resilience Team (NHPI 3R); and two individuals. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of Budget and Finance and Healthcare Association of Hawaii.

Your Committee finds that the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic unequally impacted groups already experiencing health disparities. Many people who are employed as frontline workers in essential services industries and, as a result, faced greater risks of exposure to COVID-19 are demographically native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, Filipino, women, and immigrants. One of the stated goals of the Department of Health is to pursue and achieve health equity. Therefore, in support of that goal, this



measure establishes the Office of Health Equity within the Department of Health.

Your Committee acknowledge the testimony of NHPI 3R, which recommended recomposing the membership of the policy advisory group created by this measure in order to include membership who would provide the Office with specific and direct objectives.

Therefore, your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Replacing the proposed policy advisory groups with leaders from organizations advancing health equity for disadvantaged racial or ethnic groups; gender and sexual minorities; those with physical, developmental, and other disabilities; and rural and remote communities;
- (2) Inserting an effective date of January 1, 2050, to encourage further discussion; and
- (3) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Health that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 2031, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 2031, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Health,



JERRETT KEOHOKALOLE, Chair



