

STAND. COM. REP. NO. **2511**

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 18 2022

RE: S.B. No. 2458
S.D. 1

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

Sir:

Your Committees on Human Services and Judiciary, to which was referred S.B. No. 2458 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO LEGAL SERVICES FOR LOW-INCOME IMMIGRANTS,"

beg leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to appropriate funds to the Judiciary to contract with non-profit organizations to provide legal counsel and assistance to low-income immigrants.

Your Committees received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Human Services, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations Office of Community Services, Office of the Public Defender, Hawai'i Friends of Civil Rights, Hawai'i Coalition for Immigrant Rights, The Legal Clinic, InterAgency Council for Immigrants and Refugees, Americans for Democratic Action Hawai'i, Pacific Gateway Center, and seven individuals. Your Committees received testimony in opposition to this measure from one individual. Your Committees received comments on this measure from the Department of Budget and Finance.

Your Committees find that immigration law is complex and not easily navigable without legal expertise. Additionally, Hawaii is experiencing a critical shortage of low-income legal service providers, which compounds many immigrants' barriers to obtaining assistance with immigration matters and their civil legal needs.



A number of recent working groups have recommended increasing funding for civil legal services for Hawaii's low-income residents. Despite the significant contributions made by immigrants to the State's gross domestic product, immigration legal services remain prohibitively expensive for low- to moderate-income immigrants, which can further impact their abilities to gain employment, permanent and safe housing, and a number of other services that may include immigration matters. Statistics further indicate having legal counsel in immigration proceedings often makes a difference between whether an individual is allowed to remain safely in the United States or be deported to harmful circumstances or permanently separated from their family. Accordingly, this measure will help fill a critical gap in services for the low-income immigrant members of communities in the State.

Your Committees have amended this measure by:

- (1) Inserting a \$250,000 appropriation amount;
- (2) Inserting a definition of "low income" to mean a person whose family income does not exceed the federal poverty level for a family of applicable size, for purposes of qualifying for assistance;
- (3) Inserting an effective date of December 31, 2050, to encourage further discussion; and
- (4) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

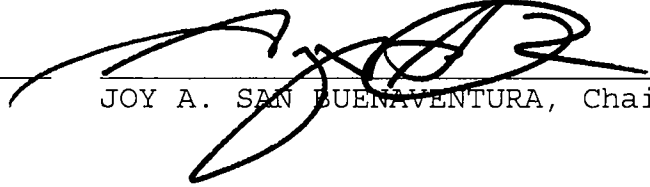
As affirmed by the records of votes of the members of your Committees on Human Services and Judiciary that are attached to this report, your Committees are in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 2458, as amended herein, and recommend that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 2458, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.



Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committees on Human Services
and Judiciary,



KARL RHOADS, Chair




JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA, Chair



The Senate
 Thirty-First Legislature
 State of Hawai'i

Record of Votes
Committee on Human Services
HMS

Bill / Resolution No.:* SB2458	Committee Referral: HMS/JDC, WAM	Date: 2/15/22		
<input type="checkbox"/> The Committee is reconsidering its previous decision on this measure. If so, then the previous decision was to: _____				
The Recommendation is: <input type="checkbox"/> Pass, unamended 2312 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pass, with amendments 2311 <input type="checkbox"/> Hold 2310 <input type="checkbox"/> Recommit 2313				
Members	Aye	Aye (WR)	Nay	Excused
SAN BUENAVENTURA, Joy A. (C)	✓			
IHARA, Jr., Les (VC)	✓			
ACASIO, Laura	✓			
MISALUCHA, Bennette E.	✓			
FEVELLA, Kurt	✓			
TOTAL	5	0	0	0
Recommendation: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Not Adopted				
Chair's or Designee's Signature: 				
Distribution: Original Yellow Pink Goldenrod File with Committee Report Clerk's Office Drafting Agency Committee File Copy				

*Only one measure per Record of Votes

