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February 13, 2022

TO: The Honorable Representative Ryan I. Yamane, Chair  
House Committee on Health, Human Services, & Homelessness

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 2155 – RELATING TO FEES.**

Hearing: Tuesday, February 15, 2022, 9:00 a.m.  
Via Videoconference, State Capitol

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this administrative measure, offers comments, and defers to the Department of Health (DOH).

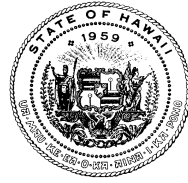
**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the bill is to amend the marriage license statute to support the Hawaii Birth Defects Program, modernization of the vital statistics system, operating costs of marriage license agents, and spouse and child abuse programs of the department of human services and of the Judiciary.

Vital records such as marriage licenses and birth certificates are critical to obtaining government-issued identification compliant with the REAL ID Act. Hawaii residents and others will benefit from a modern vital statistics systems that will facilitate processing the increased number of requests for records.

The increased fees will also provide additional funds to the Spouse & Child Abuse Special Fund (SCASF) administered by DHS. DHS uses the SCASF to support spouse or child abuse intervention or prevention services as provided by section 346-7.5, Hawaii Revised States, including the implementation of Hawaii's Family First Prevention Service Act Plan, Family First Hawaii.

Similarly, increased fees will also go to the Spouse and Child Abuse Special Account administered by the Judiciary as provided by section 601-3.6, HRS, to support spouse and child abuse programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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**Testimony in SUPPORT of H.B. 2155**  
**RELATING TO FEES**

REPRESENTATIVE RYAN I. YAMANE, CHAIR  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES, & HOMELESSNESS  
Hearing Date: 2/15/2022 Room Number: CR 329 Via  
Videoconference

1 **Fiscal Implications:** Increase in the marriage license fee will allow modernization of the Vital  
2 Statistics data system and continue support of the Hawaii Birth Defects Program.

3 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health (DOH) **strongly supports** H.B. 2155,  
4 which is part of the Governor's Administrative Package, to increase the marriage license fee to  
5 support the Hawaii Birth Defects Program (HBDP), modernization of the vital statistics system,  
6 operating costs of marriage license agents, and spouse and child abuse programs of the  
7 Department of Human Services and Judiciary.

8 Increasing the marriage license fee will support the DOH system that collects the marriage  
9 license fees and the vital statistics system that issues the marriage certificates. In 2021, there  
10 were 18,977 marriage licenses issued, of which 60% were issued to non-residents. No portion of  
11 the current \$60.00 marriage license fee is retained by the DOH to maintain the statewide  
12 marriage license registration system. The current vital statistics computer system that includes  
13 the marriage license issuance and registration system is over 20 years old and needs to be  
14 modernized. Post 9/11 laws like the REAL ID Act create an increased demand for marriage  
15 records to prove legal name changes for state-issued driver's license and identification cards.  
16 Operations will be curtailed without additional long-term financial resources. Hard costs like  
17 postage and paper cannot be avoided in order to serve the public.

1 As specified in HRS §321.422, the purpose of HBDP is to collect surveillance information on  
2 birth defects and other adverse reproductive outcomes; report the incidence, trends, and causes of  
3 birth defects and other adverse reproductive outcomes; report information for the development of  
4 prevention strategies to reduce the incidence of birth defects and other adverse reproductive  
5 outcomes; and develop strategies to improve the access of children with birth defects to health  
6 and early intervention services.

7 The Birth Defects Special Fund was established by the state legislature in 2002 to support the  
8 HBDP using marriage license fees and creating a special fund. Since 2002, \$10 from each  
9 marriage license fee collected by the DOH has been used to support program staff to collect,  
10 analyze, and report on birth defects affecting babies statewide. The information from the  
11 program has been essential to policymakers and public health programs as the only source  
12 of accurate information to support or disprove concerns or theories about increased number of  
13 babies born with defects or possible causes of birth defects (such as genetic—including inherited  
14 disorders from parents, environmental, or other causes).

15 There are 43 states that have birth defects programs. HBDP is needed for the collection, analysis,  
16 and reporting of birth defects data. As an active surveillance system, birth defects data are  
17 directly abstracted from medical and other records at hospitals and other medical facilities  
18 statewide. The number of possible cases reviewed increased from approximately 1,000 to over  
19 2,000 cases in the past few years. Annually, approximately 400 babies are found to have birth  
20 defects and the entire medical record is reviewed. HBDP staff salaries and fringe expenses  
21 doubled from 2002 to 2021.

22 The increased marriage license fee will also support two spouse and child abuse special funds  
23 and marriage license agents, which have not had a fee increase since 1998.

24 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.