

EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA

**House Committees on Labor and Government Operations**  
Thursday, February 1, 2024  
9:00 a.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 309 & Videoconference  
**In Support of**  
**H.B. No. 2757, Relating to Paid Family Leave**


Aloha Chair Matayoshi and Vice Chair Garrett and members of the Committee:

The Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR) in the Governor's Office **SUPPORTS** H.B. No. 2757, Relating to Paid Family Leave.

The Office of Wellness and Resilience is dedicated to addressing adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) for keiki to kupuna. Paid family leave is one of the most concrete economic supports that can be provided to families to avoid ACEs. Research shows that states with paid family leave policy was associated with a decrease in hospital admissions for abusive head trauma.<sup>i</sup>

Infancy is an extremely important time in contributing to physical health, mental health, learning and overall well-being in life. When families are provided with an environment where they can nurture their infant without fear of losing their income, they can attend to their children in a stress-free and attentive environment in this crucial time of their child's life.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.

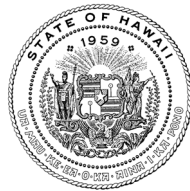
Mahalo  


Tia L R Hartsock, MSW, MSCJA  
Executive Director, Office of Wellness & Resilience  
Office of the Governor

<sup>i</sup> Klevens J, Luo F, Xu L, *et al* Paid family leave's effect on hospital admissions for pediatric abusive head trauma *Injury Prevention* 2016; 22:442-445.

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<sup>i</sup> Klevens J, Luo F, Xu L, *et al* Paid family leave's effect on hospital admissions for pediatric abusive head trauma *Injury Prevention* 2016; **22**:442-445.



JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM  
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND  
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

LUIS P. SALAVERIA  
DIRECTOR

SABRINA NASIR  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE  
*Ka 'Oihana Mālama Mo'ohelu a Kālā*  
P.O. BOX 150  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE  
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT DIVISION  
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION  
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT

**WRITTEN ONLY**  
TESTIMONY BY LUIS P. SALAVERIA  
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE  
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS  
ON  
HOUSE BILL NO. 2757

**February 1, 2024**  
**9:00 a.m.**  
**Room 309 and Videoconference**

RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

House Bill (H.B.) No. 2757, adds a new chapter in the HRS to create a new Hawai'i Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program. By January 1, 2026, the bill requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) to establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance the payment of benefits. The bill specifies eligibility requirements and employee protections under the program. By January 1, 2027, H.B. No. 2757 requires DLIR to start receiving claims and payment benefits under the program.

The bill also establishes the Family and Medical Leave Trust Fund, to be administered by DLIR, and all contributions pursuant to the new chapter shall be paid into the trust fund and all benefits payable shall be paid from the trust fund.

On January 1, 2025, the Director of Finance is authorized to transfer an unspecified amount of general funds to the trust fund as a loan, and no later than December 31, 2028, DLIR shall repay the general fund loan.

B&F defers to DLIR on the overall merits of this proposal; however, B&F strongly recommends first conducting a feasibility/actuarial study of the impact of this program. B&F also believes it would be prudent to conduct an operational study of the resources DLIR would need to implement it before going forward with program implementation.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.



STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS  
KA 'OIHANA PONO LIMAHANA

February 1, 2024

To: The Honorable Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair,  
The Honorable Andrew Takuya Garrett, Vice Chair, and  
Members of the House Committee on Labor & Government Operations

Date: Thursday, February 1, 2024  
Time: 9:00 a.m.  
Place: Conference Room 309, State Capitol

From: Jade T. Butay, Director  
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR)

**Re: H.B. 2757 RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE**

**I. OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION**

The DLIR supports the intent of providing paid family leave but is opposed to this measure as drafted. HB2757 requires the department to establish and administer a family and medical leave insurance program and begin receiving claims and paying benefits by January 1, 2027. The DLIR would begin by collecting payroll contributions as a percentage of wages from both employers and employees by January 1, 2026, and administer a trust fund for contributions and the payment of benefits by January 1, 2027. HB2757 also, among other provisions:

- Contains an unspecified general fund loan for the program that the department would be required to pay back by December 31, 2028.
- Repeals the Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) Law (Chapter 392, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) on January 1, 2027.
- Amends the Prepaid Health Care Act (Chapter 393, HRS).
- Requires the coordination of benefits under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act and the Hawaii Family Leave Law (Chapter 398, HRS).
- The definition of employer excludes the state and counties so state and county employees will not be entitled to the benefits of the measure.
- Does not contain an appropriation or additional staffing to implement the law.

## **II. CURRENT LAW**

Hawaii Family Leave Law, Chapter 398, HRS, currently provides four weeks of protected leave and if offered by employer, allows the use of up to ten days of paid sick leave.

Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) law, Chapter 392, HRS, requires employers to obtain insurance that pays a wage replacement to an eligible employee who is unable to work due to the employee's own disability.

Prepaid Health Care Law (PHC), Chapter 393, HRS, requires that employers provide employees adequate medical coverage for non-work related illness or injury.

## **III. COMMENTS ON THE HOUSE BILL**

The DLIR opposes the repeal of the TDI Law. Hawaii is one of five states with a TDI law for both private and public sector workers that was enacted in 1969 to partially replace wages lost when an employee is unable to work because of an off-the-job sickness or injury.

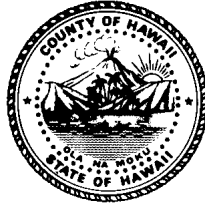
The department also opposes the conflict with Chapter 393, Prepaid Health Care Law, because -7(b) (pg. 13, lines 17 to pg. 14, line 5) requires PHC coverage to continue while the individual is on leave, working intermittently, or on a reduced schedule. Such a substantive change in the provision of Prepaid Health Care would risk the revocation of the exemption provided to Prepaid under the federal Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA). This could lead to the invalidation of the Prepaid Health Care Law and the loss of this groundbreaking healthcare law enacted in 1974 and a forerunner of the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

The proposal also conflicts with Chapter 398, Hawaii Family Leave Law. If a covered individual takes paid family leave under Chapter 398, HRS, by electing to substitute their accrued paid leave, and the reason for the leave is covered under both Chapter 398 and the proposed family leave insurance program, the covered individual could be paid both accrued paid leave and partial wage replacement benefits from the family leave insurance program.

The department also opposes the assignment of this responsibility without staffing resources. The DLIR estimates that approximately 120 staff would be required to implement and administer this program. Staffing is needed for employer account registration; contribution intake and processing; cashiering, delinquency, collection, and compliance; fund monitoring and compliance; claims intake and adjudication; payment processing and disbursement; complaint intake and processing; hearings and adjudication; information technology support; and administrative staff support.

There is also no provision for the procurement or development of an information technology system to implement and administer the program. Such a system would require substantial resources and time to develop and implement.

**Jennifer Kagiwada**  
Council Member District 2 South Hilo



Office: (808) 961-8272  
jennifer.kagiwada@hawaiicounty.gov

**HAWAI‘I COUNTY COUNCIL - DISTRICT 2**  
25 Aupuni Street • Hilo, Hawai‘i 96720

DATE: January 30, 2024  
TO: House Committee on Labor and Government Operations  
FROM: Jennifer Kagiwada, Council Member  
Council District 2  
SUBJECT: HB 2757

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Garrett, and Committee Members,

I write in support of HB 2757 which will establish a family and medical leave insurance program. In 2018, only 17 percent of workers in the United States had access to paid family leave through their employers. Women, who are often the primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents, are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family leave. No one should have to sacrifice their financial well-being to care for their keiki or kupuna. The majority of Hawai'i's workforce cannot afford to take unpaid leave to care for a new child or assist a family member with a serious health condition. Hawai'i law only provides a four-week extension of unpaid leave to employees of large employers with more than one hundred employees.

All workers deserve access to family leave, which is essential in allowing parents to care for newborn keiki and family members who are seriously ill. Hawai'i has one of the fastest growing populations over the age of 65 in the nation. From 2020 to 2030, the percentage of people aged 65 and over is expected to increase to 22.5 percent of the state's population. Nearly one-third of workers who do not have access to family leave will need time off to care for an ill spouse or elderly parent. Multiple studies have shown that family leave programs can be established in a manner that is affordable for small businesses and our state. When medical emergencies arise, no one should be forced to choose between caring for their loved ones or earning a paycheck.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

Mahalo,

Jenn Kagiwada





To: House Committee on Labor & Government Operations  
Hearing Date/Time: Thursday, February 1, 2024 9:00 a.m.  
Place: Hawaii State Capitol, Room 309  
Re: Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of H.B.2757

Dear Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Garrett, and the Members of Committee,

Members of AAUW of Hawai'i thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of H.B. 2757 which would require the department of labor and industrial relations to establish and administer a family and medical leave insurance program. We strongly support this measure.

The United States is the only developed country without national paid family leave. Twenty one states and the District of Columbia have passed paid family leave laws(\*). The states with paid family leave have seen significant health, social and economic benefits. Paid family leave is good for business—employees become more productive and loyal when they have it.

In fact, the owners of small businesses in Hawai'i we talked to are excited to have a family and medical leave insurance program available to them. They are already paying for temporary disability insurance (TDI) and they know the small additional payment they would need to pay to provide paid leave benefits for their employees will be worth it. It would provide time off their employees need and fund for the employers to hire temporary help. For the business owners who are already providing paid leave out of their own pocket, H.B. 2757 would provide a less expensive option.

During the 2023 legislative session, the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations was concerned about what would be required to establish and implement paid family leave in terms of staffing, information technology needs, and funding. Fortunately, twelve states and the District of Columbia have experience and information technology establishing and implementing paid family and medical leave insurance program (\*). We suggest DLIR considers outsourcing the establishment and implementation of this program.

Please pass this measure for our keiki, our kupuna, and our working families. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Public Policy Committee, AAUW of Hawaii  
publicpolicy-hi@aauw.net

*The American Association of University Women (AAUW) of Hawaii is an all volunteer, statewide chapter of a national organization and is made up of six branches: Hilo, Honolulu, Kaua'i, Kona, Maui, and Windward Oahu. AAUW's mission is to advance gender equity for equal opportunities in education, at workplace and for economic security, and in leadership.*

(\*) <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/explainer/state-paid-family-leave-laws-across-the-u-s/>



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#### Executive Officers

**Gary Okimoto**, Safeway Hawaii, *Chair*  
**Maile Miyashiro**, C&S Wholesale Grocer, *Vice Chair*  
**Kit Okimoto**, Okimoto Corp., *Secretary/Treas.*  
**Lauren Zirbel**, HFIA, *Executive Director*  
**Paul Kosasa**, ABC Stores, *Advisor*  
**Derek Kurisu**, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*  
**Toby Taniguchi**, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*  
**Joe Carter**, Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii, *Advisor*  
**Eddie Asato**, Pint Size Hawaii, *Immediate Past Chair*

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TO: Committee on Labor and Government Operations

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION  
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: February 1, 2024  
TIME: 9am  
PLACE: Room 309

RE: HB2575 Relating to Paid Family Leave

Position: Comments

The Hawaii Food Industry Association is comprised of two hundred member companies representing retailers, suppliers, producers, manufacturers, and distributors of food and beverage related products in the State of Hawaii.

Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Garrett, and Members of the Committee, HFIA has some concerns about how this mandate may impact labor costs for businesses in our state. Hawaii already has some of the highest labor costs in the country, and the highest cost of living in the country. We are concerned that creating additional labor costs for our local food businesses will have unintended consequences that could lead to business closures or price increases.

The measure does not specify the amount of contributions that employers and employees will make and the implementation timeline is extremely rapid. We are concerned that by the time the department is able to specify the contribution amounts it will be very close to the effective date and both employers and employees will not be able to plan in advance for how this will impact their finances.

We believe that more information from stakeholders, additional detailed data about the possible unintended consequences, and an extended time frame would be advisable prior to enacting a mandate of this scope.

We thank you for the opportunity to testify.



745 Fort St. Mall  
17<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Honolulu, HI 96815

808-521-9500  
NFIB.com

January 30, 2024

TO: Representative Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair  
Representative Andrew Takuya Garrett, Vice Chair  
Members of the Committee on Labor &  
Government Operations  
Thirty-Second Legislature, Regular Session 2024

FR: Michael Iosua, State Director  
NFIB, Hawaii Chapter

RE: **OPPOSITION TO HB 2757 – RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE**  
Hearing date – February 1, 2024, at 9:00 a.m.

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Garrett and members of the Committee,

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of NFIB's Hawaii Chapter in **OPPOSITION** to HB 2757 – RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE. NFIB is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, and member-driven organization exclusively dedicated to small and independent businesses. With members in all four counties, NFIB's Hawaii chapter advocates on issues that affect Hawaii's small and independent business owners.

I am writing to express my firm opposition to the proposed extension of the family leave period in Hawaii by an additional 8 weeks, along with the inclusion of a payroll tax for both employers and employees. While I acknowledge the importance of supporting families and fostering work-life balance, I am concerned that such an extension may have adverse effects on businesses and the broader economy.

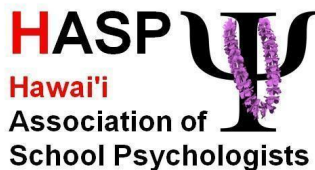
Small businesses are the foundation of our economy, offering employment opportunities and making substantial contributions to local communities. Mandating an extended family leave period could impose increased financial burdens on these businesses, potentially leading to job losses and impeding economic growth.

Furthermore, the proposed extension may pose challenges for employers in managing their workforce. Juggling the needs of the business with an extended family leave period might necessitate the hiring of temporary replacements or restructuring of teams, causing disruptions

in productivity and efficiency. This could be particularly problematic for small businesses, lacking the additional manpower and often facing tight deadlines or projects that demand consistent workloads.

Moreover, the financial impact of an extended family leave period is not restricted to employers alone. Employees themselves may encounter financial repercussions, as some employers may find it challenging to provide full compensation during extended leaves. This could result in economic hardships for families, potentially undermining the intended benefits of the extended leave period.

In conclusion, while I acknowledge the importance of family leave policies, the existing family leave provisions already strike a reasonable balance between supporting families and ensuring the sustainability of businesses. I strongly urge the committee to defer HB 2757.



## HB2757 Paid Family Leave

Aloha Legislators:

The Hawai'i Association of School Psychologists **supports** HB2757. This program represents a significant step forward in supporting working families, promoting economic stability, and ensuring that all individuals have access to the leave they need to care for themselves and their loved ones during times of illness or family crisis.

The establishment of a family and medical leave insurance program is crucial for addressing the pressing need for comprehensive and accessible leave policies in our state. Too many workers are forced to choose between their jobs and their health or the well-being of their family members due to a lack of paid leave benefits. This program will provide much-needed financial support to individuals facing serious health conditions, caring for a newborn or adopted child, or tending to the needs of a family member with a serious health condition, without jeopardizing their employment or financial security.

By requiring the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish the program and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance payment of benefits by 1/1/2026, and to start receiving claims and paying benefits under the program by 1/1/2027, the legislation ensures that workers can access these critical benefits in a timely manner. This phased approach allows for the necessary infrastructure to be put in place, including systems for collecting contributions, processing claims, and administering benefits, while also ensuring that workers do not have to wait unnecessarily long to access the leave they need.

Furthermore, the legislation specifies eligibility requirements and employee protections under the program, ensuring that benefits are available to all workers who meet the criteria and that their rights are protected throughout the leave process. These protections are essential for ensuring fairness, equity, and transparency in the administration of the program, and for safeguarding the rights and interests of workers across our state.

In conclusion, I urge you to support the establishment of a family and medical leave insurance program and the enactment of this important legislation. By providing workers with access to paid leave benefits when they need them most, we can promote economic security, support working families, and strengthen our communities. Thank you for your attention to this critical issue.

Respectfully Submitted:

Alec Marentic, Ed.S., NCSP

*HASP, Legislative Chair*



## CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

### TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2757: RE PAID FAMILY LEAVE

TO: House Committee on Labor and Government Operations

FROM: Rob Van Tassell, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawaii

**Hearing: Thursday, 2/1/24; 9:00 AM; via Videoconference or Room 309**

Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Garrett, and Members, Committee on Labor and Government Operations:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony **in Strong Support of HB 2757**, which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family and medical leave insurance program. I am Rob Van Tassell with Catholic Charities Hawaii. This bill provides one step to address the great burden that Hawaii's cost of living places on our workforce.

Catholic Charities Hawaii (CCH) is a tax exempt, non-profit agency that has been providing social services in Hawaii for over 75 years. CCH has programs serving elders, children, families, homeless and immigrants. Our mission is to provide services and advocacy to the most vulnerable of the people in Hawaii. This bill is one of our economic justice priorities.

Catholic Charities Hawaii strongly urges your support for paid family and medical leave that will help our residents live a life of peace and dignity. This is one step to help ensure a healthier and more productive local workforce. This bill would assist our working families to meet their basic needs in times of family crises.

Middle class, ALICE, and low-income families face severe burdens when they undergo situations when they cannot work but do not have paid family or sick leave. Paid sick leave is also a critical public health tool to combat disease and can result in significant savings in health care costs. In Hawaii, an estimated **42% of private sector workers lack paid sick leave**. Low-income workers also are less likely to have paid sick leave than other members of the workforce. Hawaii's cost of living is so high that sudden and sometimes long-term family crises may result in great stress and even risk of homelessness. Many of the vulnerable in Hawaii are the working poor, people who work hard, but due to our high cost of living struggle to make ends meet. We serve these workers in our programs. They are often barely able to avoid homelessness, working several jobs to juggle the basic expenses of their families and unable to spend time raising their children. These workers are parents who try very hard to provide care and support to their families but have little or no reserves when a crisis strikes.

**We urge your support for this bill to give hope to workers when a family crisis hits.** If you have any questions, please contact our Legislative Liaison, Betty Lou Larson at (808) 527-4813.



CLARENCE T. C. CHING CAMPUS • 1822 Ke'eumoku Street, Honolulu, HI 96822  
Phone (808) 527-4813 •



**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 11:29:52 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Michael Golojuch Jr	Stonewall Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai‘i	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Representatives,

The Stonewall Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai‘i; Hawai‘i’s oldest and largest policy and political LGBTQIA+ focused organization fully supports HB 2757.

We hope you all will support this important piece of legislation.

Mahalo nui loa,

Michael Golojuch, Jr. (he/him)  
Chair and SCC Representative  
Stonewall Caucus for the DPH



**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 11:34:34 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Pride at Work - Hawaii	Pride at Work - Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Representatives,

Pride at Work – Hawai'i is an official chapter of Pride At Work which is a national nonprofit organization that represents LGBTQIA+ union members and their allies. P@W-HI fully supports HB 2757.

We ask that you support this needed piece of legislation.

Mahalo,

Pride at Work – Hawai'i



January 30, 2024

To: COMMITTEE ON LABOR & GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS  
Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair  
Rep. Andrew Takuya Garrett, Vice Chair  
Members of the Committee

RE: Strong Support of HB 2757 – Relating to Paid Family Leave Bill

Hrg: Thursday, February 1, 2024 at 9:00AM Conference Room 309

The Hawai'i Public Health Association (HPHA) is a group of over 450 community members, public health professionals, and organizations statewide dedicated to improving public health. Our mission is to promote public health in Hawai'i through leadership, collaboration, education and advocacy. Additionally, HPHA aims to call attention to issues around social justice and equity in areas that extend beyond the traditional context of health (e.g., education, digital equity, cultural sensitivity), which can have profound impacts on health equity and well-being. Therefore, as stewards of public health, HPHA is also advocating for equity in all policies.

HPHA is in STRONG SUPPORT of HB 2757 which would allow workers to take time off and still receive part of their income when they need to care for their own serious health needs or those of a loved one, or to bond with a new child. We have been expecting our working families and their employers to cobble together family care. No one should have to choose between their loved ones and their paycheck.

### **The Need for Paid Family Leave in Hawaii**

The United States is the only developed country that doesn't have national paid family leave. The average amount of paid family leave in OECD nations is about one year. The second-worst nation after the United States (which has zero weeks of leave) is Mexico, which has 12 weeks of leave.

To fill that gap, 13 states and the District of Columbia have passed paid family leave laws. California was the first state to pass paid family leave, about 20 years ago. This program is not a new idea and works in other states. Hawai'i struggles to keep our working-age families from moving away. 34,898 residents of Hawai'i moved to states that passed paid leave laws in 2021. We are competing with states that have paid family and medical leave – including the entire West Coast – for the best workers. When young couples are deciding where to start a family, paid family and medical leave may be an important deciding factor for them.

I humbly ask for your SUPPORT of HB 2757 for state funding.

Respectfully submitted,

Holly Kessler  
Executive Director

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 12:48:11 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mike Golojuch, Sr.	Rainbow Family 808	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Rainbow Family 808 supports HB2757 for paid family leave. Please pass this bill.

Mike Golojuch, Board Member/Secretary



**2024 Network Members**

City and County of Honolulu  
County of Hawai'i  
Department of Agriculture  
Hawai'i Appleseed  
Hawai'i Children's Action Network  
Hawai'i Food Bank  
Hawai'i Good Food Alliance  
Hawai'i Public Health Institute  
Kōkua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Health Center  
Lanakila Pacific  
Mālama Kaua'i  
Maui Nui Food Alliance  
Parents and Children Together  
Supersistence  
The Food Basket Inc.,  
Hawai'i Island's Food Bank  
The Pantry, by Feeding Hawai'i Together  
UH Center for Indigenous Innovation/ Health Equity  
Wai'anae Coast Comprehensive Health Center

Hawaiihungeraction.org

## House Committee on Labor & Government Operations

Thursday, February 1, 2024

### **RE: Support for HB 2757 – Relating to Paid Family Leave**

Dear Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Garrett, and members of the committee,

The Hawai'i Hunger Action Network, a coalition of more than twenty local organizations with the mission to advocate for food security for Hawai'i households, appreciates the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT of HB 2757**. This bill would establish a family and medical leave program within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, financed by payroll deductions.

Our network members understand that Hawai'i's rising rates of food insecurity are fundamentally rooted in economic inequality. Workers earning low wages struggle to meet their basic needs, and for this reason cannot afford to take time off of work in order to take care of a new baby, elderly parent, or sick family member. Working mothers have more difficulty breastfeeding, and working parents often do not have time to grocery shop or prepare meals for their children. Alternatively, if they forego pay, they may be forced to cut their grocery budget, skip meals, or rely on cheaper, empty calories to survive.

The impact of passing this bill would be truly profound, especially in Hawai'i, where nearly a third of children live in a household with just one parent, and two-thirds live in households where both parents work. Paid family leave is a proven tool—used in every developed country in the world except for the U.S.—to ease the economic burden on working families and single mothers. In fact, thirteen states now have paid family leave programs in order to fill in this gap.

This bill contains many well-thought out provisions that have been thoroughly researched and discussed over the past several years that the legislature has debated this issue:

- By relying on small payroll deductions, it does not require employers to bear the burden, nor does it require a major investment on behalf of tax payers.
- It permits workers to take leave not just for the birth of a child, but also to care for other family members that may need additional care.
- And it prioritizes workers earning the lowest wages—ensuring that those who need it most would receive the highest pay.

Mahalo for your consideration of this bill. Paid family leave will be a significant boost for Hawai'i's working families, bringing us one step closer to a more equitable economic future for all who call these islands home.



African American Lawyers of  
Association of Hawai'i  
1188 Bishop Street, Suite 1908  
Honolulu, HI 96813

February 1, 2024

To: Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair  
Rep. Andrew Takuya Garrett, Vice Chair  
COMMITTEE ON LABOR & GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

From: Elizabeth Jubin Fujiwara, African American Lawyers Association of Hawai'i ("AALA")

Re: H.B. 2757, Relating to Paid Family Leave—STRONGLY SUPPORT

Hearing: Thursday, February 1, 2024, 9:00 a.m., Room 309

The African American Lawyers Association of Hawai'i ("AALA") submits testimony in strong support of H.B.2757, which, among other things, establishes Paid Family Leave in Hawai'i that will support both our economy and family well-being.

The mission of AALA is to promote the advancement of human rights and justice, and to increase the role of Black Americans in the legal community. AALA's core mission is to encourage Black lawyers in Hawai'i and to focus on the issues that affect the Black community. AALA does this work to promote the advancement of human rights and justice.

We strongly support Paid Family Leave for several reasons. Paid family leave allows workers to take time off and still receive part of their income when they need to care for their own serious health needs or those of a loved one, or to bond with a new child.

Paid leave includes:

- Bonding leave – for all types of parents to bond with a new child.
- Caring leave – to care for a seriously ill family member.
- Active duty leave – to manage arrangements for military service.
- Medical leave – to recover from one's own serious illness or injury.
- Safe leave – to deal with domestic violence.

The United States is the only developed country without national paid family leave. To fill that gap, 13 states plus DC have passed paid family leave laws.

Hawai'i should join them. Why? Only 1 in 4 private sector workers have access to paid family leave. The federal FMLA and the Hawai'i Family Leave Law provide only unpaid leave. Most workers either don't qualify for them and/or simply can't afford to take unpaid leave. As importantly only working mothers can get TDI to recover from childbirth.

Hawai'i has 154,000 unpaid caregivers, providing 144 million hours of unpaid care per year.

No one should have to choose between their loved ones and their paycheck. Paid family leave helps children by helping their parents. Families with paid family leave – especially working moms – are

- Healthier.
- More economically secure.
- More likely to stay in the workforce.
- Less likely to need public benefits.

Paid family leave not only helps families but helps businesses:

- Employees with paid family leave become--
- More productive, which helps increase profits.
- More loyal, which lowers turnover costs.



African American Lawyers of  
Association of Hawai'i  
1188 Bishop Street, Suite 1908  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Statewide paid family leave even helps the playing field for small businesses by helping them compete for the best workers.

The administration as well as this legislature have been genuinely concerned about Hawai'i residents no longer being able to afford "Paradise". One clear solution: Paid family leave would help prevent working families from leaving Hawai'i.

Paid Family Leave works this way:

1. A state-run benefit program, like Social Security or Medicare.
2. Small payroll deductions that go into a state fund to which workers apply.
3. Employers do not need to pay workers while they are on leave and then they can hire and pay temporary workers.

The Hawai'i Family Leave Insurance Grant Analysis Report of the Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women and the Hawai'i Children's Action Network (2017) found that paid family leave in Hawai'i is:

Feasible

Not expensive

Supported by 94% of Hawai'i workers.

For all these cogent reasons, we respectfully request that the Committee pass H.B. 2757. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this measure.

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 6:00:07 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Joseph Kohn MD	We Are One, Inc. - www.WeAreOne.cc - WAO	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**STRONGLY SUPPORT** [HB 2757](#), which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to create a family and medical leave insurance program.

People before profit.



## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2757

TO: Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Garrett, & Committee Members

FROM: Nikos Leverenz  
Grants & Advancement Manager

DATE: February 1, 2023 (9:00 AM)

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Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHRC) **strongly supports** HB 2757, which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family and medical leave (PFML) insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance payment of benefits.

Only one in four private sector workers has access to paid family leave. As noted by the Hawai'i Public Health Institute and other advocates, paid family and medical leave increases health equity and improves health for mothers and fathers. New mothers will have the opportunity to spend the first months of their child's life in close proximity, increasing the likelihood of breastfeeding and the benefits provided to newborns and infants. PMFL also affords families greater opportunity to care for aging parents.

HHRC's mission is to reduce harm, promote health, create wellness, and fight stigma in Hawai'i and the Pacific. We work with many individuals who are impacted by poverty, housing instability, and other social determinants of health. Many have behavioral health problems, including those relating to substance use and underlying mental health conditions, and have been deeply impacted by trauma from physical, sexual, and psychological abuse.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



Testimony to the House Committee on Labor & Government Operations  
Thursday, February 1, 2024  
9:00 a. m.  
State Capitol Conference Room 309 and via videoconference

Re: HB 2757 Relating to Paid Family Leave

Dear Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Garrett, and Honorable Members of the House Committee on Labor and Government Operations:

I am Gary Simon, a member of the board of the Hawai'i Family Caregiver Coalition, whose mission is to improve the quality of life of those who give and receive care by increasing community awareness of caregiver issues through continuing advocacy, education, and training. I am offering testimony on behalf of the Hawai'i Family Caregiver Coalition.

The Hawaii Family Caregiver Coalition strongly supports HB 2757, which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) to establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance payment of benefits by January 1, 2026, requires DLIR to start receiving claims and paying benefits under the program, and specifies eligibility requirements and employee protections under the program by January 1, 2027.

Up to 40 percent of people in the workforce are not eligible for leave under the Family Medical Leave Act — and many cannot afford to take unpaid leave. Lack of paid family leave can lead to financial strain and negative workplace impacts for caregivers. Paid leave programs result in better health outcomes and lower overall health care system costs.

We urge you to support the Paid Family Leave and HB 2757, and we urge you to recommend its passage.

Mahalo for seriously considering the bill.

Very sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Simon".

Gary Simon



Email [gsimon@aarp.org](mailto:gsimon@aarp.org)



February 1, 2024

Members of the House Committee on Labor & Government Operations:

Chair Scot Z. Matayoshi  
Vice Chair Andrew Takuya Garrett  
Rep. Jeanne Kapela  
Rep. Rose Martinez  
Rep. Jackson D. Sayama  
Rep. Adrian K. Tam  
Rep. David Alcos III

Re: HB2757 Relating to Paid Family Leave

Dear Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Garrett, and Members of the House Committee on Labor & Government Operations:

The Hawai'i State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (HSCADV) addresses the social, political, and economic impacts of domestic violence on individuals, families, and communities. We are a statewide partnership of domestic violence programs and shelters.

On behalf of HSCADV and our 27 member programs statewide, I respectfully submit testimony in **strong support of HB2757** which would implement paid family and medical leave in Hawai'i.

**This critical policy is not only beneficial for caregivers and families throughout our islands but also to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking (all forms of intimate partner violence, IPV) who need to take time off to receive victim services, make court appearances, seek medical services, or relocate themselves and family.** Currently, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Oregon, Colorado, Minnesota, and Maine include safe leave in their paid family leave laws.

As such, I respectfully request an amendment to § -2(a)(2)(D), page 8 at line 14 ("[F]amily leave insurance benefits shall be payable to an individual who...

(D) Because the covered individual or a family member is ~~[is]~~ a victim of domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking who needs leave for the covered individual's or family member's medical attention; the covered individual's or family member's mental health care or



other counseling; **to seek** victim services, including legal services, **for the covered individual or the family member; the covered individual's or family member's** court appearances; or relocation for themselves or a family member;

This change would ensure that safe leave is available to workers who themselves are survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking or to care for a family member who is a survivor.

Survivors of domestic violence face many challenges when making decisions about their safety. One of the most crucial factors is their finances. The ability to provide for themselves and their families is a key economic consideration for survivors when deciding to leave an abusive partner. It's also important to recognize the impact that financial abuse can have on survivors making it almost impossible to take unpaid time off to address their medical, emotional, and/ or legal needs without extensive time off. We must support them in every way possible.

According to the CDC, approximately 75% of female intimate partner violence survivors and 48% of male domestic violence survivors experience some form of injury related to intimate partner violence. Negative health outcomes that are associated with intimate partner violence include conditions affecting the heart, muscles and bones, and digestive, reproductive, and nervous systems, many of which are chronic. Survivors can experience mental health problems such as depression and PTSD symptoms.<sup>1</sup>

The lifetime per-victim cost is \$103,767 for women and \$23,414 for men. This economic cost estimate includes almost 32 million women and 12 million men who are victims of intimate partner violence during their lives in the US. The lifetime economic cost to the U.S. population is \$3.6 trillion for medical services for IPV-related injuries, lost productivity from paid work, criminal justice, and other costs.<sup>2</sup>

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.

Sincerely,  
Angelina Mercado, Executive Director

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<sup>1</sup> Intimate partner violence: Consequences. *U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*. (2018). Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/fastfact.html>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

To: House Committee on Labor  
Re: **HB 2757 – Relating to Paid Family Leave**  
Hawai'i State Capitol & Via Videoconference  
February 1, 2024, 9:00 AM

Dear Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Garrett, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in **SUPPORT of HB 2757**. This bill requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) to establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance payment of benefits by 1/1/2026. It also requires DLIR to start receiving claims and paying benefits under the program by 1/1/2027, and specifies eligibility requirements and employee protections under the program.

Paid family leave allows workers to take time off and still receive part of their income when they need to care for their own serious health needs or those of a loved one, or to bond with a new child.

**The United States is the only developed country without national paid family leave.**<sup>1</sup> The average amount of paid family leave in OECD nations is about one year. The second-worst nation after the United States (which has zero weeks of leave) is Mexico, which has 12 weeks of leave.

**To fill that gap, thirteen states plus the District of Columbia have passed paid family leave laws.**<sup>2</sup> California was the first state to pass paid family leave, about 20 years ago. This program is not a new idea and works in other states. Hawai'i should join them.

Paid family leave includes:

- Parental leave – for parents, including fathers and adoptive and foster parents, to bond with a new child
- Medical leave – for a worker to recover from their own serious illness or injury
- Caregiving leave – for a worker to care for a family member with a serious health condition.

In some states, paid family leave also includes:

- Deployment leave – to handle arrangements for military service
- Safe leave<sup>3</sup> – to deal with domestic violence, such as seeking a restraining order or relocating to safety.

**Paid leave helps children by helping their parents.** Research has found that states with paid family leave have seen significant **health, social and economic benefits.**<sup>4</sup> Families who have access to paid leave – especially working women – are healthier, more economically secure, more likely to stay in the workforce, and **less likely to need public benefits.**

<sup>1</sup> <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/explainer/paid-family-leave-across-oecd-countries/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/explainer/state-paid-family-leave-laws-across-the-u-s/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/the-state-of-paid-family-and-medical-leave-in-the-u-s-in-2023/>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.abetterbalance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/PFML\\_Health-Case\\_Fact-Sheet\\_11.30.21.pdf](https://www.abetterbalance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/PFML_Health-Case_Fact-Sheet_11.30.21.pdf)

**Paid family leave is good for business.** According to research that looks at how paid family leave works in other states,<sup>5</sup> employees with paid family leave are more productive, which can help increase profits, and loyal, which lowers turnover costs.

A statewide paid family leave program would be financed by small payroll deductions that go into a state fund, which workers would apply to when they need leave. **Since employees would be paid from the state fund while taking leave, employers would not need to pay them while they are on leave.**

In addition, statewide **paid family leave helps even the playing field for small businesses.** Currently, most small businesses cannot afford to offer adequate paid family leave to their employees, which puts them at a disadvantage when it comes to attracting and retaining the best workers.

**Enabling small businesses to provide paid family leave through a state program helps them compete for the best workers.** Not surprisingly, recent surveys show that two-thirds of small business owners support paid family leave.<sup>6</sup>

Similarly, as Hawaii struggles to keep our working-age families from moving away, we are competing with states that have paid family leave – including the entire West Coast – for the best workers. **In 2021, 34,898 residents of Hawai'i moved to states that passed paid leave laws.**<sup>7</sup> When young couples are deciding where to start a family, paid family leave may be an important deciding factor for them.

This bill would provide up to **12 weeks** of parental, caregiving, deployment or safe leave per year. It would also provide up to **26 weeks** of medical leave, which is the same amount of leave that Hawaii workers currently are eligible for under Hawaii's Temporary Disability Insurance law.<sup>8</sup>

This bill directs the Department of Labor to determine the standard percent of payroll that would be deducted to finance this program. Most employers and employees would split the payroll deductions 50/50, which is how Social Security and Medicare are financed, but employers could choose to cover more if they wish. **Employers with fewer than five employees would pay only half of the standard percent of payroll,** and they could decide how to split the cost between themselves and their employees. Self-employed workers could opt into the program, and they would pay only half of the standard level as well.

**Employers also would no longer need to purchase and administer private Temporary Disability Insurance** for their employees (since employees' own illness or injury would be covered by the medical leave in the program), saving them time, administrative burdens, and money.

The wage replacement rates in this bill are as high as 85 percent of a worker's pay if they earn 30 percent or less of the state average weekly wage (SAWW), 70 percent of pay if they earn between 30 and 65 percent of the SAWW, and 50 percent of a worker's pay if they earn more than 65 percent of the SAWW. The maximum amount that any worker could receive would be equal to the SAWW.

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<sup>5</sup> [https://www.abetterbalance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/PFML\\_Business-Case\\_Fact-Sheet\\_5.10.22.pdf](https://www.abetterbalance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/PFML_Business-Case_Fact-Sheet_5.10.22.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <https://smallbusinessmajority.org/our-research/small-businesses-support-bold-investments-child-care>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/geographic-mobility/state-to-state-migration.html>

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/hrscurrent/Vol07\\_Ch0346-0398/HRS0392/HRS\\_0392-0023.htm](https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/hrscurrent/Vol07_Ch0346-0398/HRS0392/HRS_0392-0023.htm)

Other states with paid family leave have learned that workers cannot afford to take it when the wage replacement rates are too low. Therefore, **we respectfully request that the wage replacement rates to be increased** to 90 percent of pay for workers earning less than 50 percent of the state average weekly wage (SAWW), 75 percent of pay for those earning between 50 and 100 percent of the SAWW, and 50 percent of pay for those earning at least 100 percent of the SAWW.

**Alternately, we suggest adopting a sliding scale wage replacement model**, providing low-wage workers with 90 percent of their typical wages and a blended rate for middle- and higher-wage earners, as they are doing in most of the newer paid family leave states.<sup>9</sup> The advantage of this design is preventing “cliffs” where earning a few more dollars can lead to an actual decrease in benefits.

**We also respectfully request the following amendments to this bill:**

- **Add hanai family** to the definition of family member;
- **Add “organ donations” and “termination of pregnancy” to the types of serious illnesses covered**, as they are currently included in Hawaii’s Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) law;<sup>10</sup>
- Add language to **permit the use of safe leave if their family member (not just the worker) is the domestic violence survivor**;
- **Change the waiting period to qualify for paid family leave to what’s currently in TDI**, which is 14 weeks of employment during the past year.<sup>11</sup> The current bill language requiring 180 days working for an employer to qualify for leave would exclude a lot of workers who need paid family leave the most, especially part-time, low-wage, temporary, and seasonal workers.
- **Reduce the maximum penalty** for erroneous payments and misrepresentation from 150 percent of benefits paid to 100 percent;
- **Deleting the following language** at § -7(a), “provided that job duties and hours in the new position need not be identical to the previously-held position, but the employer shall make a reasonable effort to make them similar, at the employee's request.” **This language would effectively allow employers to punish workers for taking leave** by shifting them to less desirable hours or duties. Requiring employees to request that their employers make reasonable efforts to restore them to positions with similar job duties and hours places a **burden on workers that exists in no other state paid family leave program**, and the most marginalized workers are the least likely to make such requests when returning from leave.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide this testimony. Please pass this bill with our suggested amendments.

Thank you,

Nicole Woo, Director of Research and Economic Policy

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.newamerica.org/better-life-lab/briefs/explainer-paid-leave-benefits-and-funding-in-the-united-states/>

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/hrscurrent/Vol07\\_Ch0346-0398/HRS0392/HRS\\_0392-0003.htm](https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/hrscurrent/Vol07_Ch0346-0398/HRS0392/HRS_0392-0003.htm)

<sup>11</sup> [https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/hrscurrent/Vol07\\_Ch0346-0398/HRS0392/HRS\\_0392-0025.htm](https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/hrscurrent/Vol07_Ch0346-0398/HRS0392/HRS_0392-0025.htm)



## **HOUSE BILL 2757, RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE**

FEBRUARY 1, 2024 · LGO HEARING

**POSITION:** Support.

**RATIONALE:** The Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus **supports and suggests amendments for** HB 2757, relating to paid family leave, which, by 1/1/2026, requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance payment of benefits; by 1/1/2027, requires the Department to start receiving claims and paying benefits under the program; and specifies eligibility requirements and employee protections under the program.

It is time to *finally* establish a family leave insurance program for Hawai'i's workers that provides paid time off to address family emergencies, including care for newborn keiki and kupuna care. Once effectuated, family leave insurance should also provide progressive wage replacement, allowing low-income workers to receive a higher percentage of their weekly wages (ideally, up to 90 percent) to make the benefit accessible to everyone. Establishing the working group proposed by this resolution would bring us closer to realizing the vision of family leave for our islands that many other countries already enjoy.

**Hawai'i's workers need this benefit.** In a 2017 public poll, 62 percent of Hawaii respondents reported that they had wanted to take leave in the past in order to care for a new child or family member. Currently, though, only one in four private sector workers has access to paid family and



medical leave. Lower-income workers in Hawai'i, who are more likely to be Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, are the least likely to have paid family and medical leave, while they need that financial support the most.

The federal Family Medical Leave Act (which leaves out 40 percent of the state's workforce) provides for only *unpaid* leave with up to 12 weeks for employers with 50 or more employees. The Hawai'i Family Leave Law (HFLL) only applies to employers with 100 or more employees and allows up to four weeks. It also only provides *unpaid* leave to workers.

Hawai'i has the fastest growing aging population in the nation. Our senior (age 65+) population is expected to grow 81 percent by 2030. Our state currently has 154,000 unpaid caregivers providing care to kūpuna or seriously ill adult relatives, which can lead to financial and emotional strain Hawai'i caregivers provide 144 million hours of unpaid care a year, worth \$2.6 billion annually. Notably, 34,898 residents of Hawai'i moved to states that passed paid leave laws in 2021, further showing our population's desire for family leave support.

**This program would help Hawaii's businesses.** Family leave insurance increases worker retention and loyalty. Workers who have access to family leave benefits are more likely to return to work after their leave is over. In a 10-year study of the California family leave insurance program, businesses reported that family leave had either a positive or a neutral effect on their business. Small businesses were less likely than large businesses to report any negative effects.

Statewide paid family and medical leave also helps even the playing field for small businesses. Most small businesses cannot afford to offer adequate paid family and medical leave to their employees, which puts them at a disadvantage when it comes to attracting and retaining the best workers. Under a statewide paid family and medical leave program, however, small payroll deductions would go into a state fund, which workers would apply to when they need to take leave.

Since employees would be paid from the state fund while taking family or medical leave, employers would not need to pay them while they are on leave. Enabling small businesses to provide paid family and medical leave through a state-managed program would help them

compete for workers and deliver adequate care for their employees. A survey conducted by the small business advocacy organization Small Business Majority revealed that two-thirds of small business owners support paid family and medical leave.

**Providing paid time off for family caregiving strongly promotes gender equity.** Women are often disproportionately impacted by the lack of paid leave, as they are the primary caregivers of infants, children, and aging parents. The lack of paid family leave exacerbates the gender wage gap for women and adversely impacts the economic stability of both male and female caregivers. Most working mothers who give birth can get partial pay through Hawai'i Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) to recover from childbirth, but TDI cannot be used by non-birth parents or to care for other family members.

**We know this can work in Hawai'i.** Top experts on family leave have studied the usage, cost, and feasibility of implementing a family leave insurance program for the islands. Multiple studies have been performed about the establishment of family leave for Hawai'i, all of which have found that paid family leave is a cost-effective way for workers to take adequate time off to care for their families without facing financial ruin or jeopardizing their careers, and that a statewide program can be implemented without significant cost to the state.

That said, we urge your committee to amend this bill in the following ways:

- Add hanai family to the definition of family member;
- Add organ donations and termination of pregnancy to the types of serious illnesses covered, as they are currently included in Hawaii's Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) law;
- Add language to permit the use of safe leave if a family member (not just the worker) is a domestic violence survivor;
- Change the waiting period to qualify for paid family leave to what's currently in TDI, which is 14 weeks of employment during the past year;

- Increase wage replacement to 90 percent of pay for workers earning less than 50 percent of the state average weekly wage (SAWW), 75 percent for those earning between 50 percent and 100 percent of the SAWW, and 50 percent for those earning at least 100 percent of the SAWW; and
- Reduce the maximum penalty for erroneous payments and misrepresentation from 150 percent of benefits paid to 100 percent.

It's a stark reality when employees face the dire choice of caring for newborn or sick children, spouses, or parents or working to sustain their family's income. We must offer a smart, affordable solution that empowers workers to care for their families, while preserving their incomes.

**Kris Coffield · Chairperson, DPH Education Caucus · (808) 679-7454 · [kriscoffield@gmail.com](mailto:kriscoffield@gmail.com)**



**TESTIMONY FROM THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAII  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS**

**FEBRUARY 1, 2024**

**HB 2757, RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE**

**POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS**

The Democratic Party of Hawaii **supports and suggests amendments** for HB 2757, relating to family leave. In 2018, delegates to the Democratic Party of Hawaii's State Convention adopted resolution HHS: 2018-02, which "urges the Hawaii State Legislature to enact a paid family leave plan."

It is time to *finally* establish a family leave insurance program for Hawaii's workers that provides paid time off to address family emergencies, including care for newborn keiki and kupuna care. Once effectuated, family leave insurance should also provide progressive wage replacement, allowing low-income workers to receive a higher percentage of their weekly wages (ideally, up to 90 percent) to make the benefit accessible to everyone. Establishing the working group proposed by this resolution would bring us closer to realizing the vision of family leave for our islands that many other countries already enjoy.

**Hawaii's workers need this benefit.** In a 2017 public poll, 62 percent of Hawaii respondents reported that they had wanted to take leave in the past in order to care for a new child or family member. Currently, though, only one in four private sector workers has access to paid family and medical leave. Lower-income workers in Hawaii, who are more likely to be Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, are the least likely to have paid family and medical leave, while they need that financial support the most.

The federal Family Medical Leave Act (which leaves out 40 percent of the state's workforce) provides for only *unpaid* leave with up to 12 weeks for employers with 50 or more employees. The Hawai'i Family Leave Law (HFLL) only applies to employers with 100 or more employees and allows up to four weeks. It also only provides *unpaid* leave to workers.

Hawai'i has the fastest growing aging population in the nation. Our senior (age 65+) population is expected to grow 81 percent by 2030. Our state currently has 154,000 unpaid caregivers providing care to kūpuna or seriously ill adult relatives, which can lead to financial and emotional strain Hawai'i caregivers provide 144 million hours of unpaid care a year, worth \$2.6 billion annually. Notably, 34,898 residents of Hawai'i moved to states that passed paid leave laws in 2021, further showing our population's desire for family leave support.

**This program would help Hawaii's businesses.** Family leave insurance increases worker retention and loyalty. Workers who have access to family leave benefits are more likely to return to work after their leave is over. In a 10-year study of the California family leave insurance program, businesses reported that family leave had either a positive or a neutral effect on their business. Small businesses were less likely than large businesses to report any negative effects.

Statewide paid family and medical leave also helps even the playing field for small businesses. Most small businesses cannot afford to offer adequate paid family and medical leave to their employees, which puts them at a disadvantage when it comes to attracting and retaining the best workers. Under a statewide paid family and medical leave program, however, small payroll deductions would go into a state fund, which workers would apply to when they need to take leave.

Since employees would be paid from the state fund while taking family or medical leave, employers would not need to pay them while they are on leave. Enabling small businesses to provide paid family and medical leave through a state-managed program would help them compete for workers and deliver adequate care for their employees. A survey conducted by the small business advocacy organization Small Business Majority revealed that two-thirds of small business owners support paid family and medical leave.

**Providing paid time off for family caregiving strongly promotes gender equity.** Women are often disproportionately impacted by the lack of paid leave, as they are the primary caregivers of infants, children, and aging parents. The lack of paid family leave exacerbates the gender wage gap for women and adversely impacts the economic stability of both male and female caregivers. Most working mothers who give birth can get partial pay through Hawai'i Temporary Disability

Insurance (TDI) to recover from childbirth, but TDI cannot be used by non-birth parents or to care for other family members.

**We know this can work in Hawai'i.** Top experts on family leave have studied the usage, cost, and feasibility of implementing a family leave insurance program for the islands. Multiple studies have been performed about the establishment of family leave for Hawai'i, all of which have found that paid family leave is a cost-effective way for workers to take adequate time off to care for their families without facing financial ruin or jeopardizing their careers, and that a statewide program can be implemented without significant cost to the state.

That said, we urge your committee to amend this bill in the following ways:

- Add hanai family to the definition of family member;
- Add organ donations and termination of pregnancy to the types of serious illnesses covered, as they are currently included in Hawaii's Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) law;
- Add language to permit the use of safe leave if a family member (not just the worker) is a domestic violence survivor;
- Change the waiting period to qualify for paid family leave to what's currently in TDI, which is 14 weeks of employment during the past year;
- Increase wage replacement to 90 percent of pay for workers earning less than 50 percent of the state average weekly wage (SAWW), 75 percent for those earning between 50 percent and 100 percent of the SAWW, and 50 percent for those earning at least 100 percent of the SAWW; and
- Reduce the maximum penalty for erroneous payments and misrepresentation from 150 percent of benefits paid to 100 percent.

It's a stark reality when employees face the dire choice of caring for newborn or sick children, spouses, or parents or working to sustain their family's income. We must offer a smart, affordable solution that empowers workers to care for their families, while preserving their incomes.

Mahalo nui loa,

**Kris Coffield**  
*Co-Chair, Legislative Committee*  
(808) 679-7454  
kriscoffield@gmail.com

**Abby Simmons**  
*Co-Chair, Legislative Committee*  
(808) 352-6818  
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## HB 2757, RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE

FEBRUARY 1, 2024 · LGO HEARING

**POSITION:** Support.

**RATIONALE:** Imua Alliance supports and suggests amendments for HB 2757, relating to paid family leave, which, by 1/1/2026, requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance payment of benefits; by 1/1/2027, requires the Department to start receiving claims and paying benefits under the program; and specifies eligibility requirements and employee protections under the program.

It is time to *finally* establish a family leave insurance program for Hawai'i's workers that provides paid time off to address family emergencies, including care for newborn keiki and kupuna care. Once effectuated, family leave insurance should also provide progressive wage replacement, allowing low-income workers to receive a higher percentage of their weekly wages (ideally, up to 90 percent) to make the benefit accessible to everyone. Establishing the working group proposed by this resolution would bring us closer to realizing the vision of family leave for our islands that many other countries already enjoy.

**Hawai'i's workers need this benefit.** In a 2017 public poll, 62 percent of Hawaii respondents reported that they had wanted to take leave in the past in order to care for a new child or family member. Currently, though, only one in four private sector workers has access to paid family and medical leave. Lower-income workers in Hawai'i, who are more likely to be Native Hawaiian or

Pacific Islander, are the least likely to have paid family and medical leave, while they need that financial support the most.

The federal Family Medical Leave Act (which leaves out 40 percent of the state's workforce) provides for only *unpaid* leave with up to 12 weeks for employers with 50 or more employees. The Hawai'i Family Leave Law (HFLL) only applies to employers with 100 or more employees and allows up to four weeks. It also only provides *unpaid* leave to workers.

Hawai'i has the fastest growing aging population in the nation. Our senior (age 65+) population is expected to grow 81 percent by 2030. Our state currently has 154,000 unpaid caregivers providing care to kūpuna or seriously ill adult relatives, which can lead to financial and emotional strain. Hawai'i caregivers provide 144 million hours of unpaid care a year, worth \$2.6 billion annually. Notably, 34,898 residents of Hawai'i moved to states that passed paid leave laws in 2021, further showing our population's desire for family leave support.

**This program would help Hawaii's businesses.** Family leave insurance increases worker retention and loyalty. Workers who have access to family leave benefits are more likely to return to work after their leave is over. In a 10-year study of the California family leave insurance program, businesses reported that family leave had either a positive or a neutral effect on their business. Small businesses were less likely than large businesses to report any negative effects.

Statewide paid family and medical leave also helps even the playing field for small businesses. Most small businesses cannot afford to offer adequate paid family and medical leave to their employees, which puts them at a disadvantage when it comes to attracting and retaining the best workers. Under a statewide paid family and medical leave program, however, small payroll deductions would go into a state fund, which workers would apply to when they need to take leave.

Since employees would be paid from the state fund while taking family or medical leave, employers would not need to pay them while they are on leave. Enabling small businesses to provide paid family and medical leave through a state-managed program would help them compete for workers and deliver adequate care for their employees. [A survey conducted by the](#)



small business advocacy organization Small Business Majority revealed that two-thirds of small business owners support paid family and medical leave.

**Providing paid time off for family caregiving strongly promotes gender equity.** Women are often disproportionately impacted by the lack of paid leave, as they are the primary caregivers of infants, children, and aging parents. The lack of paid family leave exacerbates the gender wage gap for women and adversely impacts the economic stability of both male and female caregivers. Most working mothers who give birth can get partial pay through Hawai'i Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) to recover from childbirth, but TDI cannot be used by non-birth parents or to care for other family members.

**We know this can work in Hawai'i.** Top experts on family leave have studied the usage, cost, and feasibility of implementing a family leave insurance program for the islands. Multiple studies have been performed about the establishment of family leave for Hawai'i, all of which have found that paid family leave is a cost-effective way for workers to take adequate time off to care for their families without facing financial ruin or jeopardizing their careers, and that a statewide program can be implemented without significant cost to the state.

That said, we urge your committee to amend this bill in the following ways:

- Add hanai family to the definition of family member;
- Add organ donations and termination of pregnancy to the types of serious illnesses covered, as they are currently included in Hawaii's Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) law;
- Add language to permit the use of safe leave if a family member (not just the worker) is a domestic violence survivor;
- Change the waiting period to qualify for paid family leave to what's currently in TDI, which is 14 weeks of employment during the past year;

- Increase wage replacement to 90 percent of pay for workers earning less than 50 percent of the state average weekly wage (SAWW), 75 percent for those earning between 50 percent and 100 percent of the SAWW, and 50 percent for those earning at least 100 percent of the SAWW; and
- Reduce the maximum penalty for erroneous payments and misrepresentation from 150 percent of benefits paid to 100 percent.

It's a stark reality when employees face the dire choice of caring for newborn or sick children, spouses, or parents or working to sustain their family's income. We must offer a smart, affordable solution that empowers workers to care for their families, while preserving their incomes.

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**Testimony Regarding the H.B. 2757 Relating to Paid Family Leave  
Submitted to the Record of the House Committee on Labor & Government Operations  
February 1, 2024**

Submitted by: Cassandra Gomez, Senior Staff Attorney, A Better Balance

I am submitting this testimony on behalf of A Better Balance, a national nonprofit legal advocacy organization, which uses the power of the law to advance justice for workers, so they can care for themselves and their loved ones without jeopardizing their economic security. Through legislative advocacy, direct legal services and strategic litigation, and public education, A Better Balance combats discrimination against pregnant workers and caregivers and advances supportive policies like paid sick time, paid family and medical leave, fair scheduling, and accessible, quality childcare and eldercare. To that end, we have been helping to draft paid family and medical leave laws and helping with implementation in states throughout the country, for over a decade.

We are delighted that Hawaii is considering this important issue and thank you for considering this comment. House Bill 2757 includes several key components of a strong paid family and medical leave program, and in this testimony, we include a number of suggestions that we strongly recommend to ensure that the Aloha State enacts a paid family and medical leave program that will work well for all Hawaiians. Section I addresses the current status of state paid family and medical leave programs throughout the country; section II addresses the need for a comprehensive paid family and medical leave program in Hawaii; and section III addresses amendments to strengthen H.B. 2757.

**I. Paid family and medical leave laws are now well-established and working well in other states.**

Thirteen states and Washington D.C. have enacted paid family and medical leave insurance programs that are similar in structure to H.B. 2757. Many of these programs have a long history and foundation. Beginning in the 1940s, four states (California, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and New York) provided a legal right to temporary disability insurance (TDI), which provides partial wage replacement to those unable to work due to their own off-the-job illness or injury—these are similar to Hawaii’s current TDI program, which was enacted in 1969. Every other state with a TDI program has expanded beyond TDI to also provide paid family leave benefits to workers who are bonding with a new child or caring for a seriously ill loved one, with California first enacting this important expansion more than 20 years ago, in 2002.<sup>1</sup> In recent years, Washington State, Washington, D.C., Connecticut, Massachusetts, Oregon, and Colorado have created new insurance systems—all of which are now fully in effect—to provide similar paid family and medical leave benefits. In addition, Maryland, Delaware, Minnesota, and Maine have passed

laws to create new insurance systems to provide benefits in these same situations, which these four states are currently working to implement. Though their exact program parameters vary, all existing comprehensive paid family and medical leave programs provide benefits through a social insurance model that is similar to H.B. 2757.

In each state with a paid family and medical leave law, almost all private sector (non-government) employees have an automatic legal right to coverage, including hourly and part-time employees.<sup>2</sup> Thirteen of these laws cover employees regardless of the size of their employer, meaning that even those who work for an employer with just one employee have the right to coverage. The vast majority of programs also allow self-employed workers to opt in to coverage if they choose.

These laws provide benefits in several types of situations. Workers can receive medical leave benefits (called TDI or temporary disability insurance in the four states that like Hawaii originally enacted TDI programs decades ago) when they are unable to work due to a serious off-the-job illness or injury. In all programs, family leave benefits are available to those taking leave from work to bond with a new child (including children newly placed for foster care or adoption) or to care for a family member with a serious health condition. Ten states (NY, WA, MA, CA, CT, CO, MD, DE, MN, and ME) also provide (or will provide) paid family leave benefits to workers dealing with certain needs in connection with a family member's military deployment. New Jersey, Oregon, Connecticut, Colorado, Minnesota, and Maine also provide (or will provide) "safe leave," which covers certain needs arising from domestic or sexual violence. H.B. 2757 includes all of these purposes that have been established by other state paid family and medical leave programs.

Programs vary in the number of weeks of benefits workers can receive. For their own medical needs, workers can receive benefits for fifty-two weeks in California; thirty weeks in Rhode Island; twenty-six weeks in New York and New Jersey (and under Hawaii's TDI program); twenty weeks in Massachusetts; and twelve weeks in Washington State, Washington, D.C., Connecticut, Oregon, and Colorado. Washington, D.C., Washington, Connecticut, and Oregon provide up to 2 additional weeks and Colorado will provide up to 4 additional weeks for certain pregnancy-related (and in Oregon and Colorado, childbirth-related) health conditions. Workers will be able to receive benefits for their own medical needs for twelve weeks in Maryland, Minnesota, and Maine, and for six weeks in Delaware.<sup>3</sup> For paid family leave, New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts,<sup>4</sup> Washington State, Washington, D.C., Connecticut, Oregon, and Colorado offer twelve weeks; California offers eight weeks; and Rhode Island offers six weeks. Maryland, Minnesota, and Maine will each offer twelve weeks of paid family leave benefits. Delaware will offer up to twelve weeks of paid family leave benefits for bonding leave, and up to six weeks for family caregiving leave.<sup>5</sup> Programs vary in the extent to which workers can combine family and medical leave benefits sequentially.

Benefits are calculated as a percentage of workers' income. Most programs use what are called progressive wage replacement rates, where lower income workers receive a higher percentage of their income. California uses a progressive wage replacement rate ranging from 60% to 70% for most workers, with lower-income workers receiving a higher percentage of their income—beginning in 2025, workers in California will receive between 70% and 90% of their income.

Washington, D.C., Washington State, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Oregon, Colorado, Maryland, Minnesota, and Maine use (or will use) progressive rates structured in a similar way. In these states, workers will receive a higher percentage of their income up to a threshold (ranging from 80% to 100%) and then a lower percentage of income (ranging from 50% to 66%) above that threshold. In effect, this will create a sliding scale of benefits. The exact thresholds vary from state to state, but are typically tied to a percentage of the state's average weekly wage or to the state's minimum wage.<sup>6</sup>

In some programs, workers' benefits are calculated as a flat percentage of workers' own income. Workers receive a flat percentage of their average weekly wage in Rhode Island (approximately 60%) and New Jersey (85%). New York also uses a flat wage replacement rate, currently 50% for medical leave and 67% for family leave. Delaware will also provide a flat wage replacement rate of 80 percent.

In every program, benefits are subject to a cap (a maximum weekly benefit). In many states, this cap is set as a percentage of the state's average weekly wage, so that it adjusts each year in response to growth in wages. Other programs use other mechanisms to ensure the benefit keeps pace with growth; for example, D.C.'s program adjusts benefits each year in response to regional inflation.

The fourteen comprehensive paid family and medical leave insurance laws around the country are structured as social insurance programs, a model that H.B. 2757 would follow as well. Though the exact mechanics may vary slightly by state, in all states the programs work by combining small contributions from employers, employees, or both into an insurance system. Paid family and medical leave insurance programs—like the model proposed in H.B. 2757—are also self-sufficient once implemented, since the state paid family and medical leave fund covers both administrative costs and benefit costs. By creating a statewide pool, the payroll contributions that fund the program are modest and affordable. When workers need family or medical leave, the insurance system pays their benefits. This means that employers do not have to pay workers' wages out of pocket when they are out on leave, making the provision of paid leave significantly more affordable than paying workers their wages out of pocket during a family or medical leave need. The social insurance model is especially important for small employers, who often cannot afford to pay for paid leave out of pocket and therefore are at a competitive disadvantage in hiring and retaining the best employees as compared to larger employers who can afford to do so. Paid family and medical leave will level the playing field for businesses in Hawaii and allow small employers to afford providing this critical benefit to their workers.

## **II. The need for Hawaii to pass a paid family and medical leave law is overwhelmingly clear.**

Shockingly, the United States remains one of only two countries in the world, along with Papua New Guinea, with no national paid parental leave benefit of any kind.<sup>7</sup> Only 27% of private sector workers receive paid family leave through their employers to bond with a new child or care for a seriously ill or injured family member; among low-income workers, the number is even lower.<sup>8</sup>

This lack of access has predictable and devastating consequences for American families. Women without paid leave are more likely to be pushed into lower-paying jobs or to drop out of the work force entirely.<sup>9</sup> In contrast, women who take paid leave after a child's birth are more likely to be employed nine to twelve months after the child's birth than working women who take no leave and new mothers who take paid leave are also more likely to report wage increases in the year following the child's birth.<sup>10</sup> For working fathers, taking longer paid family leave means increased satisfaction in their contact with their children<sup>11</sup> and greater engagement in their children's lives.<sup>12</sup>

Lack of paid leave also hurts children. When parents cannot take the leave they need, babies are less likely to get checkups and important vaccinations, less likely to breastfeed, and more likely to develop behavioral problems.<sup>13</sup> For foster children, the first few months are a critical adjustment period in the transition to a new placement,<sup>14</sup> during which children need time to bond with their foster parents. Seriously ill children also benefit when their parents can afford time off to care for them. Research shows that ill children have better vital signs, faster recoveries, and reduced hospital stays when cared for by parents.<sup>15</sup>

Nor is the need for family leave limited to parents: today, nearly one in three U.S. households provide care for an adult loved one with a serious illness or disability.<sup>16</sup> With an aging population, these numbers will only increase in the future. Family caregivers can help these individuals recover more quickly and spend less time in hospitals.<sup>17</sup> As a result, policies that support family caregiving create savings that benefit all Hawaii taxpayers. Unpaid family caregivers not only help to ease the burden on our crowded hospitals and long-term care facilities, but also create enormous financial savings. For example, recipients of family caregiving are less likely to have nursing home care or home health care paid for by Medicare.<sup>18</sup> Because most caregivers providing care for adults are employed,<sup>19</sup> the demands of providing care are in constant tension with earning a much-needed income.

Workers also need time off to address their own serious health needs. Nationwide, about 3 in 5 private sector workers lack access to short-term disability insurance through their employers, leaving them vulnerable when they need time off from work to address their serious health needs.<sup>20</sup> Among low-income workers, these numbers are even more stark. Nearly 80% of those in the bottom quarter of earners and nearly 90% of those in the bottom ten percent of earners lack access to short-term disability insurance through their employers.<sup>21</sup> When workers do not have the leave they need, they may defer or forego necessary medical treatment.<sup>22</sup> For example, paid medical leave helps cancer patients and survivors determine a course of treatment, follow through with and avoid that treatment, and manage side effects.<sup>23</sup>

There is also a pressing need in Hawaii for paid family and medical leave that includes "safe leave" related to domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking. Workers experiencing domestic or sexual violence often need time away from their jobs to care for their health after these incidents or to find solutions, such as a restraining order or new housing, to avoid or escape physical or sexual abuse. Each year, missed days of work due to domestic violence costs more than \$700 million due to victims' lost productivity in employment.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, many survivors report job loss, due at least in part to the domestic or sexual violence, which creates additional turnover costs for employers.<sup>25</sup>

Finally, military families lack the protections they need when their loved ones are called to active duty service of our country. In one national survey, the amount of time service members spend away from family was ranked as the top issue of concern for service members and military spouses.<sup>26</sup> Families that make these sacrifices deserve the paid time off they need to address the effects of deployment on their families and their lives. Moreover, due to the impacts of the military lifestyle, a shocking 30% of military spouses are unemployed, despite actively seeking employment, and many more are underemployed.<sup>27</sup> Fifty-two percent of military spouses reported that unemployment and underemployment are the main obstacles to financial security.<sup>28</sup> Ensuring that military families can take the time away they need and then return ready to work can help them maintain employment and better support their loved ones serving abroad and those who remain at home.

### **The Business Case for Paid Leave**

Nine states—Rhode Island, California, New Jersey, New York, Washington State, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Oregon, and Colorado—and Washington D.C. have already implemented paid family and medical leave programs, with programs in the works under laws passed in Maryland, Delaware, Minnesota, and Maine.<sup>29</sup> The experiences of these states have shown that paid family and medical leave laws can provide critically needed benefits at an affordable cost and without burdening businesses.

Contrary to opponents' claims, paid leave does not hurt businesses and can even help their bottom line. In California, 92.8% of employers reported that paid family leave had a positive or neutral effect on employee turnover,<sup>30</sup> saving employers the costly step of replacing an existing employee.<sup>31</sup> A majority of California employers also reported positive or neutral effects on productivity (88.5%), profitability/performance (91.0%), and employee morale (98.6%).<sup>32</sup> Polling has also shown that prospective employees are more likely to relocate to states with paid family and medical leave programs, underscoring that paid family and medical leave can attract workers to Hawaii and strengthen the state's workforce.<sup>33</sup>

Paid family and medical leave has particular benefits for small businesses. Without a state program, small businesses that cannot afford to offer the same generous leave benefits as larger companies are at a competitive disadvantage in hiring.<sup>34</sup> Providing paid leave through a social insurance program levels the playing field for small businesses. That is why, for example, one year after Rhode Island's paid family leave law went into effect, a majority of small employers reported they were in favor of the program.<sup>35</sup> Further, under H.B. 2757, small businesses that employ fewer than five employees will not be required to pay the employer contribution to the program; this means that small businesses will still be able to offer the benefit of paid leave to their employees at no additional cost. This creates a win-win situation for both businesses and employees.

### **The Health Case for Paid Leave**

A robust and growing body of research demonstrates the substantial health benefits of paid family and medical leave for working families. For example, paid leave is associated with better physical and mental health for mothers, including a lower risk of postpartum depression.<sup>36</sup> Moms

who return to work within 12 weeks of giving birth are less likely to breastfeed and, when they do, breastfeed for less time than those who stay home longer.<sup>37</sup> In this context, it is unsurprising that access to paid leave has substantial positive effects on breastfeeding. For example, one leading study of California's paid family leave program found that use of paid family leave more than doubled the average number of weeks of breastfeeding and, among workers with low-quality jobs, notably increased the percentage of women who initiated breastfeeding at all.<sup>38</sup>

Paid leave is also tied to reduction in infant and child mortality. In one study of 141 countries, controlling for other factors, an increase of 10 full-time-equivalent weeks of paid maternal leave reduced neonatal and infant mortality rates by 10% and the mortality rate of children younger than five by 9%.<sup>39</sup> Expanding paid leave may also help redress existing maternal health disparities. For example, one study found that the positive effects of increasing the length of paid maternity leave are especially pronounced for low-resource families.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, there are significant racial disparities in maternal health, especially for Black women who are significantly more likely to die in childbirth or experience serious complications than white women.<sup>41</sup> Greater access to paid leave can help bridge these gaps.

Paid leave to care for seriously ill family also provides significant health benefits to both caregivers and care recipients. Ill children have better vital signs, faster recoveries, and reduced hospital stays when cared for by parents.<sup>42</sup> Paid leave is a crucial part of this equation, because parents with paid leave are more than five times more likely to care for their sick children than those without.<sup>43</sup> In one study, parents of children with special needs who received paid leave were more likely to report positive effects on their children's physical and mental health than those who took leave without pay.<sup>44</sup> Paid family care leave also has important health benefits for caregivers, who face many negative health repercussions from caregiving. Research shows that access to paid leave improves caregivers' mental and emotional health.<sup>45</sup>

Paid medical leave provides workers extended time off to deal with their own serious health need, including acute conditions like cancer, chronic conditions like diabetes or asthma, or recovery from an accident or serious injury. Paid leave allows workers to get the treatment they need, when they need it. For example, paid medical leave helps cancer patients and survivors determine a course of treatment, follow through with that treatment, afford treatment, and manage side effects.<sup>46</sup> Paid leave also helps keep workers safe on the job, increasing productivity and decreasing employer costs. Workers with paid leave are significantly less likely to suffer dangerous injuries on the job<sup>47</sup> or deaths on the job (for example, from heart conditions).<sup>48</sup> When workers must return to work before a chronic condition is stabilized or before they have healed from an injury, they are more likely to relapse or re-injure themselves while working.<sup>49</sup> Nationally, one in three U.S. adults under 65 has at least one chronic health condition.<sup>50</sup> For workers who receive health insurance through their employers, taking needed leave can mean risking their coverage when they need it the most. Paid family and medical leave laws, like the program proposed in H.B. 2757, protect workers' right to keep their employer-provided health insurance, ensuring that workers do not lose the coverage they need at these critical junctures.

While critics may charge that employees will abuse the program, the evidence does not support that claim. Studies in California<sup>51</sup> and New Jersey<sup>52</sup> show little to no abuse of the programs.



### **III. While H.B. 2757 includes a number of key policy components, we strongly recommend bill amendments to strengthen the program.**

There are a number of key policy elements in a strong paid family and medical leave program.<sup>53</sup> New programs, like H.B. 2757, should be crafted based on lessons learned from the successful programs in the states that have enacted paid family and medical leave. While H.B. 2757 is a model bill with respect to many of these key policy elements (including the maximum number of weeks of leave, universal coverage of all workers in Hawaii, covered purposes, etc.), we strongly encourage the Committee to amend the bill as suggested herein to ensure that the program effectively meets the needs of Hawaiians who need access to paid family and medical leave most.

#### **A. We urge the Committee to strengthen the job protection language at section -7(a) to ensure that workers have a right to be restored to their job upon returning from leave.**

Job protection—or the right to be reinstated following a period of paid family and medical leave—is an essential element of any paid family and medical leave program; without job protection, H.B. 2757 would not create a true right to leave. Job-protected leave is especially important for low-income workers in Hawaii, who are less likely to currently have access to paid family and medical leave because they change jobs more often than other workers<sup>54</sup> and are more likely to be working part time<sup>55</sup> (including many part-time workers who would prefer to be working full time).<sup>56</sup>

While H.B. 2757 does include language regarding job protection, as currently drafted, the last sentence in paragraph (a) of section -7 would allow employers to place employees in a position with different job duties and hours than they had before taking paid family and medical leave. This language would leave the door open for unknowing workers to be faced with precarious circumstances as a result of utilizing the program. For example, it would allow employers to switch a worker from the day shift to the night shift because they took paid family and medical leave, or to change the duties of an employee such that the worker is effectively in an entirely new position upon returning from leave. A program that allows employers to interfere with a worker's hours and job duties is not a program with job protection. To fix this issue and ensure that H.B. 2757 includes the robust job protections otherwise envisioned by the bill, we urge the Committee to delete the caveat at the end of paragraph (a) of section -7 (. . . “provided that job duties and hours in the new position need not be identical to the previously-held position, but the employer shall make a reasonable effort to make them similar, at the employee's request.”).

By deleting this disastrous caveat from the end of paragraph (a) of section -7, the job protection provided by H.B. 2757 would be more in line with the robust protections offered by other paid family and medical leave programs and the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). While exact policies vary, most paid family and medical leave programs provide job-protected leave. Typically, employees must be restored to the position they had prior to taking leave, or to an equivalent position with the same status, pay, employment benefits, and other terms and conditions of employment.<sup>57</sup> No other state program undermines the job restoration requirement with a caveat along the lines of what is currently proposed at the end of paragraph (a) of section -7. Similarly, the FMLA creates strong job protection rights, which ensure that employees must

be restored to their position held prior to leave or “an equivalent position with equivalent employment benefits, pay, and other terms and conditions of employment.”<sup>58</sup>

The need for paid family and medical leave occurs at some of the most stressful times in a person’s life: the arrival of a new child, a health crisis in the family, an experience with violence, or a looming deployment. At these times, workers shouldn’t have to worry whether they will have a job to return to after their leave. ***Without job protection, many workers will also be contributing towards the cost of a program they can’t realistically use.*** Without a legal right to get their job back, many workers will be unable to take the leave they need—the risk to their long-term economic security will be too great. In one California study, fear of being fired was a commonly cited reason workers who were eligible for paid family leave under that state’s program did not take it.<sup>59</sup> In Rhode Island, 45% of workers who took leave under their state’s paid family leave law (which provides job protection) said that without the law they would not have taken leave for fear of losing their job.<sup>60</sup>

Job protection also keeps workers attached to the workforce. When workers are unable to take short-term leave and then return to their job, they are often pushed out of the workforce altogether. One study estimated that men who leave the labor force early due to caring for an aging parent lose almost \$90,000 in wages, while women who do so lose over \$140,000 in wages.<sup>61</sup> Women who take paid leave after having a baby are more likely to be working 9 to 12 months after the birth than women who take no leave.<sup>62</sup> And keeping workers on the job saves taxpayers money. Both men and women who return to work after taking paid leave are much less likely to be receiving public assistance or food stamps in the year following their child’s birth than those who return to work without taking family leave.<sup>63</sup>

For H.B. 2757 to create an effective paid family and medical leave program in Hawaii, paragraph (a) of section -7 must be amended as suggested herein.

**B. We strongly recommend revising the wage replacement rate pursuant to section -4 to ensure that it is sufficient for all workers to be able to use paid family and medical leave.**

The wage replacement rate (the percentage of their own income workers receive while on leave) is an extremely important element of a paid family and medical leave law: if the rate is too low, workers will not be able to afford to take the leave they need. This problem can be especially acute for low-income workers living paycheck to paycheck, who need every dollar of their income to pay their bills. Moreover, for programs that are partially worker-funded, it is particularly essential to ensure that workers will not be required to pay for a program they cannot afford to use.

We support H.B. 2757’s use of a progressive wage replacement rate to ensure that all workers can afford to take the leave they need. With a progressive wage replacement rate, lower-income workers, who need to use all of their income to meet their basic needs, receive a higher proportion of their income while they are on leave. However, we strongly recommend revising the wage replacement rate to increase the amount of benefits that workers will receive while on leave. As currently drafted, H.B. 2757 would provide 85% of a worker’s average weekly wage up to 30% of the state average weekly wage, and 65% of a worker’s average weekly wage above

that amount. Using the current state average weekly wage of \$1,136.18,<sup>64</sup> this would mean that workers would receive 85% of their wages up to just \$340.85—wages above \$340.85 would only be replaced at a rate of 65 percent. We strongly recommend revising the wage replacement rate such that workers would receive 90% of their average weekly wage up to 50% of the state average weekly wage (currently \$568.09), 75% of their wages between 50% of the state average weekly wage and 100% of the state average weekly wage, and 50% of their wages above that amount (up to the cap on weekly benefits specified in H.B. 2757).

With the revised wage replacement rate as suggested above, H.B. 2757 would better meet the needs of Hawaiians, and would be more in line with other state paid family and medical leave programs. For example, the paid family and medical leave programs in Washington State and Colorado provide 90% of workers' wages up to a certain amount and 50% of workers' wages above that amount. Minnesota's program will provide 90% of a worker's average weekly wage up to an amount equal to 50% of the state average weekly wage, 66% of a worker's average weekly wage above an amount equal to 50% of the state average weekly wage and up to 100% of the state average weekly wage, and 55% of a worker's average weekly wage above that amount. Progressive wage replacement rates strike a reasonable balance between meeting the needs of low-wage workers and offering a reasonable maximum benefit to help protect the solvency of the fund.

Though low-income workers are the most vulnerable, workers of any income level can find themselves unable to afford to take leave if the wage replacement rate is too low. In a major California study, workers across income levels reported that the 55% wage replacement level made it difficult to afford to use the program, potentially contributing to low rates of use.<sup>65</sup> For this reason, California amended their statute to raise the wage replacement rate, especially for low-wage workers. Hawaii can learn from the experience of existing programs and create a graduated benefit level that works for workers.

**C. To ensure that the most vulnerable Hawaiians can utilize the program, we strongly recommend revising the eligibility requirements established in H.B. 2757.**

Prior to accessing paid family and medical leave benefits, workers must meet the program's eligibility requirements. Generally, state programs institute a small financial eligibility requirement, such that to be eligible for benefits, workers must have earned a certain amount of wages over a specified period of time. Alternatively, some state program's measure a worker's eligibility for benefits against the length of time the worker has worked in the state (across employers) over a specified period of time.

Under H.B. 2757, to become eligible for benefits, workers would need to have worked for a single employer for at least 180 days (6 months). With this lengthy tenure requirement in place, many Hawaiians may not be able to utilize benefits under the program, which they pay for in part. Additionally, this requirement would undermine the current TDI rights that many Hawaiians already have, as pursuant to the TDI law, workers are eligible for TDI benefits if they have been employed for at least fourteen weeks.<sup>66</sup> We strongly recommend revising the bill's eligibility requirements to decrease the tenure requirement to fourteen weeks, and to allow workers to fulfill the tenure requirement across employers in Hawaii (rather than through

employment with just one singular employer). These revisions would effectively utilize the eligibility requirements under the current TDI law.

Utilizing the revised eligibility criteria suggested above would place H.B. 2757 more in line with the other state paid family and medical leave programs that measure eligibility against the amount of time an employee has worked in the state. For example, to be eligible for benefits in Washington, D.C., workers must have been employed by a covered employer during at least some of the 52 weeks preceding the event that precipitated their need for leave. To be eligible for benefits in Maryland, workers must have worked for at least 680 hours in qualifying employment in the 12-month period immediately preceding their leave. To be eligible for benefits in Washington State, workers must have worked at least 820 hours during the first 4 of the 5 most recently completed quarters or the 4 most recently completed quarters.

#### **D. All close family members should be covered under H.B. 2757.**

It is important for paid family and medical leave programs to include close family members for whom many workers will feel responsible and will therefore need leave to provide care should there be a serious illness. While H.B. 2757 covers many important family relationships, it does not include chosen family members, or a worker's closest loved ones to whom they are not legally or biologically related. We strongly recommend revising the bill to ensure that workers can access paid family and medical leave to care for all of their closest loved ones, including those with whom they may not be biologically or legally related.

Seven of the existing state paid family and medical leave programs cover all of a worker's loved ones, regardless of legal or biological relationship. In New Jersey, Connecticut, Oregon, Colorado, Washington State, Minnesota, and Maine, workers can take leave to care for certain loved ones—whether biologically related or not—with whom the worker has a close association, personal bond, and/or caregiving relationship, though their exact family definitions have some differences. Further, our country's largest employer—the federal government—has been using a family definition that is inclusive of chosen family for paid leave for decades without any problems.

Over 117,000 households in Hawaii, or 25% of households in the state, consist of an individual who lives alone.<sup>67</sup> In an emergency or during an illness, many individuals rely on care from chosen family—like close friends or unmarried significant others—or extended family. Over 68,000 Hawaii residents live with nonrelatives—such as roommates, friends, or significant others.<sup>68</sup> When an individual is sick or has a medical emergency, they often rely on individuals they live with—even absent a blood or legal relationship—for help and caregiving. In a 2023 national survey conducted by the Center for American Progress, 52% of people in the United States reported that they were relied upon to provide care for a chosen family member. Higher rates were reported by LGBTQ participants, 58% of whom reported being relied upon to care for a close friend or chosen family member.<sup>69</sup> While many people rely on chosen families for care, LGBTQ people, particular LGBTQ older adults, are especially likely to rely on these close loved ones.<sup>70</sup>

**E. Covered purposes should be amended to ensure that all purposes for which leave can be taken under the TDI law are included in H.B. 2757.**

As explained above, H.B. 2757 would allow workers to take leave during their most trying life moments (for the worker's own serious health condition, caring for a family member with a serious health condition, and welcoming a new child), as well as for safe leave and leave in relation to a family member's military service. However, because H.B. 2757 would repeal the existing TDI law, we recommend revising the bill to ensure that all of the purposes for which workers could receive benefits under the TDI law are also covered by the paid family and medical leave program. Specifically, we recommend specifying that workers may also take leave in connection with organ donation and the termination of a pregnancy, both of which are explicitly covered under the current TDI law.<sup>71</sup> This revision would ensure that workers would not lose access to paid leave for purposes for which they may currently have the right to benefits under existing law.

**F. Other more technical amendments would strengthen H.B. 2757.**

In addition to the above recommendations, which would greatly strengthen the paid family and medical leave program that would be created pursuant to H.B. 2757, we also recommend two additional amendments.

First, the safe leave provisions of H.B. 2757 should be revised to clarify that safe leave is also available when the worker's family member is a survivor of domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking. Currently, the bill is clear that workers have access to safe leave when they themselves are the survivor of domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking, and the bill would be even stronger if workers could also use safe leave to support their family members in their process of recovering from domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking.

Additionally, pursuant to the current draft of H.B. 2757, in instances where benefits have been paid erroneously, workers may be subject to a penalty of up to 150% of the amount of benefits erroneously paid. While erroneous benefit payments have not been an issue for workers under other paid family and medical leave programs, we recommend reducing the penalty that may be utilized in instances of erroneous payments to a more reasonable amount equal to 100% of benefits.

**IV. Conclusion**

Hawaii has taken an important step forward today by examining paid family and medical leave. We strongly support H.B. 2757 with the amendments we suggested herein. We thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony. If you have any follow-up questions, do not hesitate to contact us at [cgomez@abetterbalance.org](mailto:cgomez@abetterbalance.org).

Sincerely,

Cassandra Gomez, Senior Staff Attorney  
A Better Balance

- <sup>1</sup> Hawaii's law continues to provide for TDI benefits, but has not been expanded to provide paid family leave benefits. Under the law, workers can receive TDI benefits for up to twenty-six weeks. Workers receive 58% of their own income through TDI, up to a cap.
- <sup>2</sup> Some state paid family and medical leave laws also cover state or local government employees, while others generally allow public sector employer to opt in to coverage or allow unionized public sector workers to negotiate for coverage through the bargaining process.
- <sup>3</sup> Note that while every other state paid family and medical leave program measures the maximum number of weeks of leave available against a 12-month or 1-year period, Delaware measures the maximum number of weeks available for medical leave over a 24-month period. See A Better Balance, *Comparative Chart of Paid Family and Medical Leave Laws in the United States* (Jan. 2, 2024), <https://www.abetterbalance.org/resources/paid-family-leave-laws-chart/>.
- <sup>4</sup> Massachusetts also provides up to twenty-six weeks of family leave benefits for military caregivers.
- <sup>5</sup> While Delaware measures the maximum number of weeks for bonding leave against a 12-month period, it measures the maximum number of weeks for family caregiving leave against a 24-month period.
- <sup>6</sup> For exact details by state, please see A Better Balance, *Comparative Chart of Paid Family and Medical Leave Laws in the United States* (Jan. 2, 2024), <https://www.abetterbalance.org/resources/paid-family-leave-laws-chart/>.
- <sup>7</sup> INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION, MATERNITY AND PATERNITY AT WORK: LAW AND PRACTICE ACROSS THE WORLD 16 (2014), available at [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_242615.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_242615.pdf).
- <sup>8</sup> National Compensation Survey: Employee Benefits in the United States, Mar. 2023, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Table 5 (Sept. 2023), accessible at <https://bls.gov/ebs/publications/employee-benefits-in-the-united-states-march-2023.htm>.
- <sup>9</sup> Sara Cohen, *Have Your Cake and Eat It Too: How Paid Maternity Leave in the United States Could End the Choice Between Career & Motherhood*, 36 WOMEN'S RTS. L. REP. 1, 9 (2014).
- <sup>10</sup> Linda Houser & Thomas Vartanian, *Pay Matters: The Positive Economic Impacts of Paid Family Leave for Families, Businesses and the Public*, CENTER FOR WOMEN AND WORK (2012), p. 6-7.
- <sup>11</sup> Linda Haas & C. Phillip Hwang, "The Impact of Taking Parental Leave on Fathers' Participation in Childcare and Relationships with Children: Lessons from Sweden," *Community, Work & Family*, 11:1, 85-104.
- <sup>12</sup> Maria del Carmen Huerta et al., *Fathers' Leave, Fathers' Involvement and Child Development Are They Related? Evidence from Four OECD Countries* (2013).
- <sup>13</sup> Lawrence M. Berger, Jennifer Lynn Hill, & Jane Waldfogel, *Maternity Leave, Early Maternal Employment and Child Health and Development in the US*, 115 THE ECON. J.L. no. 501, F29, F45 (2005).
- <sup>14</sup> Annette Semanchin Jones & Susan J. Wells, *PATH/Wisconsin-Bremer Project: Preventing Disruptions in Foster Care* (2008).
- <sup>15</sup> See S. J. Heymann, A. Earle & B. Egleston, *Parental Availability for the Care of Sick Children*, Pediatrics, Vol. 98 No. 2 (Aug. 1996), p. 226-30; S.J. Heymann, THE WIDENING GAP: WHY AMERICA'S WORKING FAMILIES ARE IN JEOPARDY AND WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT IT (2000), p. 57.
- <sup>16</sup> Catherine Albiston & Lindsey Trimble O'Connor, *Just Leave*, 39 HARV. J. L. & GENDER 1, 16 (2016).
- <sup>17</sup> See, e.g., A. Houser & M.J. Gibson, *Valuing the Invaluable: The Economic Value of Family Caregiving, 2008 Update*, AARP Public Policy Institute (Nov. 2008), pp. 1-2, 6; *Valuing the Invaluable: A New Look at the Economic Value of Family Caregiving*, AARP (June 2007), p. 6.
- <sup>18</sup> Houser & Gibson, *supra* note 15, at 6.
- <sup>19</sup> *Caregiving in the U.S.*, AARP & National Alliance for Caregiving (June 2015), p. 56, available at <http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/ppi/2015/caregiving-in-the-united-states-2015-report-revised.pdf>.
- <sup>20</sup> National Compensation Survey: Employee Benefits in the United States, Mar. 2023, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Table 4 (Sept. 2023), accessible at <https://bls.gov/ebs/publications/employee-benefits-in-the-united-states-march-2023.htm>.
- <sup>21</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>22</sup> See Abt Associates Inc., *Family and Medical Leave in 2012: Technical Report* 131 (Sep. 2012), <https://www.dol.gov/asp/evaluation/fmla/FMLA-2012-Technical-Report.pdf>.
- <sup>23</sup> Elizabeth Harrington & Bill McInturff, *Key Findings -- National Surveys of Cancer Patients, Survivors, and Caregivers*, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (2017), <https://www.acscan.org/sites/default/files/ACS%20CAN%20Paid%20Leave%20Surveys%20Key%20Findings%20Press%20Memo%20FINAL.pdf>. The results of this survey strongly suggest that other workers with chronic or serious illnesses will have better access to treatment and care when they are able to take paid time off from work.
- <sup>24</sup> "Intimate Partner Violence: Consequences," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (December 2013), <http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/intimatepartnerviolence/consequences.html> (last visited September 21, 2015); R.F. Hanson, et al., "The Impact of Crime Victimization on Quality of Life," *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 23(2) (April 2010), pp. 189-197, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20419728>.
- <sup>25</sup> Susan Lloyd and Nina Taluc, "The Effects of Male Violence on Female Employment," *Violence Against Women*, 5(4) (April 1, 1999), pp. 370-92, <http://vaw.sagepub.com/content/5/4/370.short?rss=1&ssource=mlfc>.
- <sup>26</sup> *Military Family Lifestyle Survey: Comprehensive Report*, BLUE STAR FAMILIES, p. 20 (2018), available at <https://bluestarfam.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/2018MFLS-ComprehensiveReport-DIGITAL-FINAL.pdf>.
- <sup>27</sup> *Id.* at 10
- <sup>28</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>29</sup> Paid family and medical leave benefits will begin in Maryland, Delaware, Minnesota, and Maine in 2026.
- <sup>30</sup> Eileen Appelbaum & Ruth Milkman, *Leaves That Pay: Employer and Worker Experience with Paid Family Leave in California* (2011), CENTER FOR ECONOMIC AND POLICY RESEARCH, p. 8, available at <https://cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>.
- <sup>31</sup> Replacing an employee costs 50-75% of an hourly employee's annual pay and up to 150% of a salaried employee's annual pay. Jodie Levin-Epstein, *Getting Punched: The Job and Family Clock* (2006), CENTER FOR LAW AND SOCIAL POLICY, p. 9, available at <http://www.clasp.org/resources-and-publications/files/0303.pdf>.
- <sup>32</sup> Appelbaum & Milkman, *supra* note 33, at 8.
- <sup>33</sup> Center for Business & Social Justice, *Talent Trends & State Social Policies: 2023 Impact on Businesses in the U.S.* (Feb. 2023), <https://www.bsr.org/files/BSR-Talent-Social-Policies.pdf>.
- <sup>34</sup> Eileen Appelbaum & Ruth Milkman, *Achieving a Workable Balance*, CENTER FOR WOMEN AND WORK (2006), p. 23, available at <https://smrl.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/Documents/Centers/CWW/Publications/achieving%20a%20workable%20balance%202006%20Appelbaum.pdf>.
- <sup>35</sup> 56% of employers with 10-19 employees and 59% of employers with 20-49 employees were in favor of the program. Ann Bartel, Maya Rossin-Slate, Christopher Ruhm, & Jane Waldfogel, *Assessing Rhode Island's Temporary Caregiver Insurance Act: Insights from a Survey of Employers* (2016), p. 7, available at [https://www.dol.gov/asp/evaluation/completed-studies/AssessingRhodeIslandTemporaryCaregiverInsuranceAct\\_InsightsFromSurveyOfEmployers.pdf](https://www.dol.gov/asp/evaluation/completed-studies/AssessingRhodeIslandTemporaryCaregiverInsuranceAct_InsightsFromSurveyOfEmployers.pdf).

- <sup>36</sup> Zoe Aitken et al., *The Maternal Health Outcomes of Paid Maternity Leave: A Systematic Review*, SOCIAL SCIENCE & MEDICINE 130 (2015) 32-41; Belinda Hewitt et al., *The Benefits of Paid Maternity Leave for Mothers' Post-Partum Health and Wellbeing: Evidence from an Australian Evaluation*, SOCIAL SCIENCE & MEDICINE 182 (2017) 97-105; Pinka Chatterji & Sara Markowitz, *Family Leave After Childbirth and the Mental Health of New Mothers*, THE JOURNAL OF MENTAL HEALTH POLICY AND ECONOMICS 15 (2012).
- <sup>37</sup> Berger, Hill, & Waldfogel, *supra* note 11, at F29, F39-F40.
- <sup>38</sup> Appelbaum & Milkman, *supra* note 33, at 25-26.
- <sup>39</sup> Jody Heymann, Amy Raub, & Alison Earle, *Creating and Using New Data Sources to Analyze the Relationship Between Social Policy and Global Health: The Case of Maternal Leave*, PUBLIC HEALTH REP. 126 (Suppl 3): 127-134 (2011), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3150137/>.
- <sup>40</sup> Louise Voldby Beuchert et al., *The Length of Maternity Leave and Family Health*, 43 LABOUR ECONOMICS 55, 67 (2016).
- <sup>41</sup> National Partnership for Women & Families, *Black Women's Maternal Health: A Multifaceted Approach to Addressing Persistent and Dire Health Disparities*, <https://nationalpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Black-Womens-Maternal-Health-A-Multifaceted-Approach-to-Addressing-Persistent-and-Dire-Health-Disparities.pdf> (April 2018).
- <sup>42</sup> See Heymann, Earle & Egleston, *supra* note 13, at 226-30; Heymann, *supra* note 13.
- <sup>43</sup> Jody Heymann, Sarah Toomey, & Frank Furstenberg, *Working Parents: What Factors Are Involved in Their Ability to Take Time Off from Work When Their Children Are Sick?* ARCHIVES OF PEDIATRICS & ADOLESCENT MEDICINE, vol. 163, no. 8, fn 4-2 (Aug 1999).
- <sup>44</sup> Mark A Schuster, et al., *Perceived Effects of Leave from Work and the Role of Paid Leave Among Parents of Children with Special Health Care Needs*. AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PUBLIC HEALTH, 99(4):698-705 (April 2009), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2661484/>.
- <sup>45</sup> Alison Earle & Jody Heymann, *Protecting the Health of Employees Caring for Family Members with Special Health Care Needs*, SOCIAL SCIENCE & MEDICINE, 73:68-78 (July 2011) <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0277953611002917?via%3Dihub>; Schuster, et al., *supra* note 46.
- <sup>46</sup> Harrington & McInturff, *supra* note 21. The results of this survey strongly suggest that other workers with chronic or serious illnesses will have better access to treatment and care when they are able to take paid time off from work.
- <sup>47</sup> Asfaw et al., *supra* note 26.
- <sup>48</sup> Daniel Kim, *Paid Sick Leave and Risks of All-Cause and Cause-Specific Mortality Among Adult Workers in the USA*. 14.10 INT. J. OF ENV. RESEARCH AND PUB. HEALTH 1247 (2017), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5664748/pdf/ijerph-14-01247.pdf>.
- <sup>49</sup> Hollo, *supra* note 28.
- <sup>50</sup> *Workers Affected By Chronic Conditions: How Can Workplace Policies And Programs Help?*, GEORGETOWN UNIV. HEALTH POLICY INST., Issue Brief Number 7 (June 2004), <https://hpi.georgetown.edu/workplace/>.
- <sup>51</sup> California Employment Development Department's Annual Report on Fraud, Deterrence and Detection Activities, A Report to the California Legislature. June 2018; [https://www.edd.ca.gov/About\\_EDD/pdf/Fraud\\_Deterrence\\_and\\_Detection\\_Activities\\_2018.pdf](https://www.edd.ca.gov/About_EDD/pdf/Fraud_Deterrence_and_Detection_Activities_2018.pdf).
- <sup>52</sup> Sharon Lerner & Eileen Appelbaum, *Business As Usual: New Jersey Employers' Experiences with Family Leave Insurance*, Center for Economic and Policy Research (June 2014), [www.cepr.net/documents/nj-fli-2014-06.pdf](http://www.cepr.net/documents/nj-fli-2014-06.pdf).
- <sup>53</sup> For a full list of key policy elements, see A Better Balance, *Key Components: The Essential Elements of a Strong Paid Family and Medical Leave Law* (Oct. 2, 2023), <https://www.abetterbalance.org/resources/key-components-the-essential-elements-of-strong-paid-family-and-medical-leave-law/>.
- <sup>54</sup> Jacquelyn Anderson, Linda Yuriko Kato, & James A. Riccio, *A New Approach to Low-Wage Workers and Employers*, MDRC 5 (Mar. 2006), <https://www.mdrc.org/publication/new-approach-low-wage-workers-and-employers>.
- <sup>55</sup> *Who Are Low-Wage Workers?* Office of the Assistant Sec'y for Planning & Eval., U.S. Dep't of Health & Human Servs. (Feb. 2009), <https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/180021/rb.pdf>.
- <sup>56</sup> Lonnie Golden, *Still Falling Short on Hours and Pay: Part-time Work Becoming New Normal*, Econ. Policy Inst. (Dec. 5, 2016), <http://www.epi.org/publication/still-falling-short-on-hours-and-pay-part-time-work-becoming-new-normal/>.
- <sup>57</sup> For examples, see Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 175M, § 2(e); Del. Code Ann. tit. 19, § 3707(a).
- <sup>58</sup> 29 U.S.C. § 2614(a)(1).
- <sup>59</sup> Appelbaum & Milkman, *supra* note 33.
- <sup>60</sup> Barb Silver, Helen Mederer, & Emilija Djurdjevic, *Rhode Island's Temporary Caregiver Insurance Program: Findings from the First Year* (2015).
- <sup>61</sup> MetLife Mature Market Institute, *The MetLife Study of Caregiving Costs to Working Caregivers* (2011).
- <sup>62</sup> Houser & Vartanian, *supra* note 8.
- <sup>63</sup> California State Office of Research, "California's Paid Family Leave Program," July 1, 2014, p.6, [http://sor.senate.ca.gov/sites/sor.senate.ca.gov/files/Paid\\_Family\\_Leave\\_FINAL\\_A1b.pdf](http://sor.senate.ca.gov/sites/sor.senate.ca.gov/files/Paid_Family_Leave_FINAL_A1b.pdf); Employment Development Department, "Paid Family Leave Market Research," July 13, 2015, p. 86, [https://www.edd.ca.gov/Disability/pdf/Paid\\_Family\\_Leave\\_Market\\_Research\\_Report\\_2015.pdf](https://www.edd.ca.gov/Disability/pdf/Paid_Family_Leave_Market_Research_Report_2015.pdf).
- <sup>64</sup> Dept. of Labor & Industrial Relations: Disability Compensation Division, *2024 Maximum Weekly Wage Base and Maximum Weekly Benefit Amount* (Dec. 1, 2023), <https://labor.hawaii.gov/dcd/files/2019/11/newWBA.pdf>.
- <sup>65</sup> *Paid Family Leave Market Research* (Dec. 2015), p. 70, CALIFORNIA EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT, available at [http://www.edd.ca.gov/Disability/pdf/Paid\\_Family\\_Leave\\_Market\\_Research\\_Report\\_2015.pdf](http://www.edd.ca.gov/Disability/pdf/Paid_Family_Leave_Market_Research_Report_2015.pdf).
- <sup>66</sup> In addition to the 14-week tenure requirement, the TDI law in Hawaii also requires that workers earn at least \$400 in the 52 weeks before their first day of disability. Haw. Rev. Stat. § 392-25.
- <sup>67</sup> See *Selected Social Characteristics in the United States: Hawaii*, U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 1 Year Estimates, Table DP02, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP1Y2019.DP02?q=ACSDP1Y2019.DP02&g=040XX00US15>.
- <sup>68</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>69</sup> Caroline Medina & Molly Weston Williamson., *Paid Leave Policies Must Include Chosen Family*, Center for American Progress (Mar. 1, 2023), <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/paid-leave-policies-must-include-chosen-family/>.
- <sup>70</sup> *Still Out, Still Aging: The MetLife Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Baby Boomers*, MetLife Mature Market Institute and American Society of Aging (March 2010), p. 15-17, <https://www.asaging.org/sites/default/files/files/mmi-still-out-still-aging.pdf>.
- <sup>71</sup> Haw. Rev. Stat. § 392-3.

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR &  
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

RE: HB 2757- RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2024

JASON BRADSHAW, CHAIR  
DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAII LABOR CAUCUS

Chair Matayoshi and Members of the Committee:

The Democratic Party of Hawaii Labor Caucus supports HB2757, relating to family leave.

**In just the past 7 years, two analyses of the potential establishment of a paid family leave program in Hawai'i have been conducted and presented to the legislature. The 371 pages of these two reports include an economic analysis, Hawai'i-based eligibility modeling and cost breakdowns, a feasibility study, opinion polling and focus groups, and options for compliance and enforcement of a paid family leave program.**

Now that these studies have been completed, it is time to pass a Paid Family Leave bill. Working families need relief now. Not sometime down the road. **The United States is the only developed country without national paid family leave. Thirteen states and the District of Columbia have passed paid family leave laws, and the states with paid family leave have seen significant health, social and economic benefits. Paid family leave is good for business—employees become more productive and loyal when they have it.**

**It is time for Hawai'i to join the other states that have paid family leave programs and move to establish this important policy here.**

This program would help Hawaii's businesses. **Family leave insurance increases worker retention and loyalty. Workers who have access to family leave benefits are more likely to return to work after their leave is over. In a 10-year study of the California family leave insurance program, businesses reported that family leave had either a positive or a neutral effect on their business. Small businesses were less likely than large businesses to report any negative effects.** Providing paid time off for family caregiving strongly promotes gender equity. Women are often disproportionately impacted by the lack of paid leave, as they are the primary caregivers of infants, children, and aging parents. The lack of paid family leave exacerbates the gender wage gap for women and adversely impacts the economic stability of both male and female caregivers.

Studies have been conducted and top experts in the area of family leave have studied the usage, cost, and feasibility of implementing a family leave insurance program for the islands. **These studies collectively found that family leave insurance is a**



**necessary and cost-effective way for workers to take adequate time off of work to care for their families without facing financial ruin or jeopardizing their careers.** We need a program that is affordable and designed to be revenue-neutral. **The Institute for Women’s Policy Research, which houses some of the nation’s top experts on family leave, conducted an actuarial analysis using a simulation model to study the use and cost of family leave insurance for our state, which found that the annual cost to cover sixteen weeks of leave for a worker making \$48,000 would be roughly \$58—a little over one dollar per week to pay for invaluable financial security. That is a small price to pay for the financial security guaranteed by 16 weeks of paid family leave.**

In 2018, only 17 percent of workers in the United States had access to paid family leave through their employers. Women, who are often primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents, are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family leave. No one should have to sacrifice their financial well-being to care for their keiki or kupuna.

The majority of our workforce in Hawai'i cannot afford to take unpaid leave to care for a new child or assist a family member with a serious health condition. Hawai'i law only provides a four-week extension of unpaid leave to employees of large employers with more than one hundred employees. All workers deserve access to family leave, which is essential in allowing parents to care for newborn keiki and family members who are seriously ill.

Hawai'i has one of the fastest growing populations over the age of 65 in the nation. From 2020 to 2030, the percentage of people aged 65 and over is expected to increase to 22.5 percent of the state's population. Nearly one-third of workers who do not have access to family leave will need time off to care for an ill spouse or elderly parent.

Hawai'i must offer a smart, affordable solution that enables workers to take a small number of weeks out of the workforce and not have to choose between caring for their families or saving their jobs.

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i asks you to please pass this Paid Family Leave bill.

Feb. 1, 2024, 9 a.m.  
Hawaii State Capitol  
Conference Room 309 and Videoconference

**To: House Committee on Labor and Government Relations**  
**Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair**  
**Rep. Andrew Takuya Garrett, Vice-Chair**

**From: Ted Kefalas, Director of Strategic Campaigns**  
**Grassroot Institute of Hawaii**

RE: COMMENTS ON HB2757 — RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii would like to offer its comments on [HB2757](#), which would establish a family and medical leave insurance program funded by payroll contributions.

The idea of being able to take paid leave from work in order to care for a family member is certainly appealing, but decades of data demonstrate that such programs rarely live up to their promise and may even harm those they intend to help.

It is often assumed that family leave policies will be especially helpful to female workers, as women are expected to benefit more from paid leave. However, research demonstrates that family leave programs show no benefit to female workforce participation, and may even have a negative effect.

A recent study of the long-term effects of California's Paid Family Leave Act found that it did not help narrow the pay gap, and was instead associated with reduced employment and earnings for first-time mothers.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Martha J. Bailey, Tanya S. Byker, Elena Patel, et al., "[The Long-Run Effects of California's Paid Family Leave Act on Women's Careers and Childbearing: New Evidence from a Regression Discontinuity Design and U.S. Tax Data](#)," National Bureau of Economic Research, October 2019.

A different study of maternity leave reform in the United Kingdom found that among highly educated workers, paid leave programs tend to increase gender inequality, with fewer women holding management and promotion-track jobs, while lower-educated female workers were 10 percentage points less likely to receive a promotion than they were before the reforms were enacted.<sup>2</sup>

Nor are the benefits of paid leave programs evenly distributed. Low-income workers are significantly less likely to take advantage of paid leave, making it little more than a government-subsidized leave program for well-paid workers.

In 2020, 18 million California workers paid into the state's family leave program and were eligible to take advantage of its benefits. However, only 14% of workers earning less than \$20,000 took paid leave, while workers earning \$80,000 to \$99,999 had a utilization rate four times higher than the lowest earners. Those making \$100,000 or more a year utilized paid leave three times as much as low income workers.<sup>3</sup>

Family leave policies in San Francisco<sup>4</sup> and New Jersey<sup>5</sup> have seen similar results, with low-income families far less likely to utilize leave policies than high-income earners.

In addition to problems of efficacy, paid leave programs also struggle with problems of cost. It is nearly impossible to properly evaluate the financial viability of the program proposed in this bill, as the contribution requirements are left to a later determination. However, there is a real risk of underestimating the full cost of the program, which could create a burden for the state budget and taxpayers.

The AEI-Brookings Working Group on Paid Family Leave analyzed the proposed federal FAMILY Act — which also relies on payroll contributions — and argued that the authors of the bill severely underestimated the costs of the paid-leave program. Depending on take-up rates, the funding mechanism might have only covered half the program's costs.<sup>6</sup>

Before embarking on an ambitious paid leave program such as the one proposed by HB2757, lawmakers should demand a strict analysis of its financial impact on the state budget and the economy as a whole to ensure that the program will not become a fiscal nightmare.

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<sup>2</sup> Jenna Stearns, [“The Long-Run Effects of Wage Replacement and Job Protection: Evidence from Two Maternity Leave Reforms in Great Britain.”](#) SSRN, May 7, 2018.

<sup>3</sup> Kristin Schumacher, [“Paid Family Leave Payments Don't Add Up for California Workers.”](#) California Budget and Policy Center, February 2022.

<sup>4</sup> Julia M. Goodman, William H. Dow and Holly Elser, [“Evaluating the San Francisco Paid Parental Leave Ordinance: Employer Perspectives.”](#) University of California at Berkeley, February 2019.

<sup>5</sup> Amy Dunford, [“Boosting Families, Boosting the Economy: How to Improve New Jersey's Paid Family Leave Program.”](#) New Jersey Policy Perspective, April 2017.

<sup>6</sup> AEI-Brookings Working Group on Paid Family Leave, [“Paid Family and Medical Leave: An Issue Whose Time Has Come.”](#) May 2017.

Finally, we must consider the effect that enacting this bill would have on Hawaii's business climate.

Because the proposed program is very broad, even including businesses with only five employees, it would add to the cost of doing business in our state. Employers would have to compensate for the increased costs associated with the program, which could mean fewer jobs or stagnant wages.

Support for family leave would go down if workers knew it would equate to higher taxes or require them to forego a raise or promotion.

As attractive as the idea of paid leave might be, the negative tradeoffs that accompany family leave programs cannot be ignored. Given the many questions raised by this bill, it seems clear that more analysis is needed of the effects and fiscal impact of paid family leave in Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our comments.

Sincerely,

Ted Kefalas  
Director of Strategic Campaigns  
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii



1001 Bishop Street | Suite 625 | Honolulu, HI 96813-2830  
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[facebook.com/AARPHawaii](https://facebook.com/AARPHawaii)

**The State Legislature**  
**House Committee on Labor and Government Operations**  
**Thursday, February 1, 2024**  
**Conference Room 309, 9:00 a.m.**

TO: The Honorable Scot Matayoshi, Chair  
FROM: Keali'i Lopez, State Director, AARP Hawaii  
RE: Support for H.B 2757 -Relating to Paid Family Leave

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice-Chair Garrett, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Keali'i Lopez, and I am the State Director for AARP Hawai'i. AARP is a nonpartisan, social impact organization that advocates for individuals age 50 and older. We have a membership of nearly 38 million nationwide and nearly 140,000 in Hawaii. We advocate at the state and federal level for the issues that matter most to older adults and their families.

**AARP supports H.B 2757 which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance payment of benefits.**

An estimated 154,000 family caregivers in Hawai'i provide \$2.6 billion of unpaid care. These unpaid heroes manage medications, prepare meals, help with bathing, feeding & dressing, providing transportation to medical appointments, and managing financial & legal matters to care for loved ones and keep them out of costly nursing homes. Many juggle work and caregiving. Others must balance child-care, work, and adult dependent care. Many family caregivers must cut back their work hours or even leave the workforce to care for loved ones, which can create a huge loss in income on top of any existing financial challenges related to caregiving expenses. It also puts their career advancement, retirement savings and social security at risk.

Establishing a paid family leave program in Hawai'i would allow workers to take time off and still receive part of their income when they need to care for their own serious health needs or those of a loved one, or to bond with a new child. It is noted that families who have access to paid leave – especially working women – are healthier, more economically secure, more likely to stay in the workforce, and less likely to need public benefits should they be forced to quit their jobs and lose their health benefits and income. No one should have to choose between their loved ones and their paycheck. Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify in **strong support of H.B. 2757.**



**ACOG**  
The American College of  
Obstetricians and Gynecologists

*American College of  
Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
Hawai'i, Guam & American Samoa Section*

TO: House Committee on Labor & Government Operations  
Representative Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair  
Representative Andrew Takuya Garrett, Vice Chair

DATE: Thursday, February 1, 2024 9:00 AM

PLACE: Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 309 and via videoconference

FROM: Hawai'i Section, ACOG  
Angel Willey, MD, FACOG, Chair  
Reni Soon, MD, MPH, FACOG, Legislative Chair

**Re: HB 2757 – Relating to Paid Family Leave**  
**Position: SUPPORT**

As a section of the nation's leading group of physicians dedicated to improving women's health and the health of our families, the Hawai'i Section of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (HI ACOG) **supports HB 2757.**

**Paid family leave fosters healthier families.** We care for patients across the life span, and we see every day how families in Hawai'i struggle to care for each other. We see all the time how new parents try to piece together disability, vacation or sick leave (if they have it) just to be able to spend a few weeks recovering from birth and bonding with their new baby. All too often, mothers and fathers return to work sooner than is medically recommended because they cannot afford not to. In addition, the newborn period is a critical time of development, and babies deserve this chance to bond with both parents if they can. Babies whose parents are able to take leave from work are more likely to receive regular medical checkups, vaccinations, and breastfeeding.<sup>1</sup> Time-off periods after childbirth reduce the risk of postpartum depression in new mothers.<sup>2</sup>

**Women who are often the primary caregivers of infants, children, and kūpuna, are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family leave.** We see this often too, as many of our patients leave the workforce to care for children or elderly parents which then confers long term financial consequences. No one should have to choose between their 'ohana and their paycheck.

HI ACOG is dedicated to the advancement of health for women and their families. Our communities benefit when families are allowed to care for each other and are able to be with the people they love when they need them the most without risking their economic security. For these reasons, HI ACOG supports HB 2757 and we respectfully urge you to pass this legislation.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

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<sup>1</sup> SB Kamerman. Parental Leave Policies: The Impact on Child Well-being. In P Mossand & M O'Brien, Eds., International Review of Leave Policies and Related Research 2006, 16-21. London, UK: Department of Trade and Industry, 2006. Retrieved from [http://www.leavenetwork.org/fileadmin/Leavenetwork/Annual\\_reviews/2006\\_annual\\_report.pdf](http://www.leavenetwork.org/fileadmin/Leavenetwork/Annual_reviews/2006_annual_report.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> P Chatterji & S Markowitz. Family Leave After Childbirth and the Health of New Mothers. National Bureau of Economic Research, 2008. Retrieved from <http://www.nber.org/papers/w14156>.



P.O. Box 4270 Kaneohe, HI 96744  
[www.breastfeedinghawaii.org](http://www.breastfeedinghawaii.org)

TO: Rep Scott Matayoshi, Chair, Rep Andrew Takuya Garrett, Vice Chair, and Members of the House Committee on Labor and Government Operations

FROM: Patricia Bilyk, RN, MPH, MSN, IBCLC (Retired)  
Maternal Infant Clinical Nurse Specialist  
Breastfeeding Hawaii Board Member

RE: HB2757 Relating to Paid Family Leave

DATE: Thursday, February 1, 2024 9am

Good Morning Rep. Matayoshi, Rep Takuya Garrett and Members of the House Committee on Labor and Government Operations. I am Patricia Bilyk and I am representing Breastfeeding Hawaii. We are in SUPPORT of HB 2757 which would require the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance payment of benefits.

Breastfeeding Hawaii is a 501c3 non profit organization whose mission is to protect, promote and support breastfeeding in the State of Hawaii, by providing education and advocacy to families, businesses, professionals and other community individuals.

Each day the Breastfeeding Hawaii Board Members work with breastfeeding families who are grappling with

- 1) establishing a relationship and caring for an infant,
- 2) establishing and maintaining a milk supply for the infant
- 3) planning to return to work 2 weeks to 3 months post delivery and with
- 4) the inability to take more time with their newborn because they need a paycheck.

We feel having paid family leave would significantly help our families with the above issues.

We further feel a Paid Family Leave Insurance Program should have the following components:

- 1) all businesses and employees covered
- 2) 16 weeks of paid leave
- 3) workers restored to the same position
- 4) progressive wage replacement

We feel it is time and Pono-the right thing to do, to provide a Paid Family Leave Insurance Program for Hawaii's working families!

We encourage this Committee to approve this bill and pass it out of Committee. Mahalo.



P.O. Box 4270 Kaneohe, HI 96744  
[www.breastfeedinghawaii.org](http://www.breastfeedinghawaii.org)





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## Testimony of Bob Hood

President of the Hawaii Energy Marketers Association (HEMA)

### HB 2757, RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE

House Committee on Labor & Government Operations

The Honorable Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair

The Honorable Andrew Takuya Garrett, Vice Chair

Thursday, February 1, 2024 @ 9:00 a.m.

Conference Room 309 & Videoconference

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Garrett, and Members of the Committee:

I am Bob Hood, President of the Hawaii Energy Marketers Association (HEMA). HEMA is a nonprofit trade association comprised of members who market motor fuel products and operate convenience stores across the state.

HEMA **opposes** HB 2757 which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance payment of benefits.

We recognize that some employees may sometimes need to take time off for reasons outside the scope of existing employer policies and programs. However, it is important that companies already implement complex scheduling policies balancing employee and business needs, which include attractive benefits like paid leave programs to attract and retain talent.

Whether it is remote or hybrid work, retirement compensation, or vacation, they are valuable tools to attract and retain employees. The added financial burden of mandated paid family leave will cost employers and small business capital that would prolong economic recovery as businesses reel from competitive workforce, national and local inflation, and increased costs and delays associated with goods and commodities.

While we understand the intent of the **measure, Hawaii employers are already burdened with many employer obligations and further shouldering them with added costs, step up wage increase, mandates, taxes and fees will tip the scale to shutter or risk passing on the costs to customers.**

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in opposition.



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## COMMITTEE ON LABOR & GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair

Rep. Andrew Takuya Garrett, Vice Chair

Thursday, February 1, 2024, at 9:00 A.M.

**RE: HB 2757 Relating to Paid Family and Medical Leave**

Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Garrett, and Members of the Committee:

**A coalition of comprised of the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii and The Society of Human Resource Management – Hawaii (“SHRM”)<sup>1</sup> respectfully oppose HB 2757 Relating to Paid Family and Medical Leave.**

While we appreciate the legislature taking some of the prior concerns into consideration and understand the intent of this bill to allow for paid family and medical leave in the workplace. However, we have serious concerns that this measure is not a reasonable, manageable or an affordable approach in addressing those needs.

As presented, the bill is premature and would place burdens upon virtually all businesses and employees in the State without a full understanding of what the financial and operational impacts upon the businesses and employees would be.

Essentially, this bill would require the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions on January 1, 2026, to finance payment of benefits, one year prior to actually taking claims under the act

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<sup>1</sup> SHRM Hawaii serves and represents nearly 600 members and employers’ statewide and human resource management is a critical component to the success and survival of the many businesses that make up our local economy. HR professionals are responsible for evaluating and balancing the needs of both the employers and employees and caring for businesses’ most valuable asset: the working people of our state.



commencing January 1, 2027. The proposal also specifies eligibility requirements and employee protections under the program.

Notably, the bill applies to all employers and employees, except state and federal employers and employees, including employers with five or less employees and self-employed individuals. If approved, the bill would take effect upon approval.

Similar bills were proposed last session the result of which was that the legislature determined that a study needed to be conducted to determine the impact of such a program, especially as to smaller employers. That study has not yet been completed. Nonetheless, this bill attempts to impose burdens upon all covered employers and employees within the state as soon as the bill is approved.

Furthermore, the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations is tasked with determining the monetary contribution of both the employer and each employee. For employers of more than five employees, the employer and employee must each contribute 50% of the designated - and as yet unknown - amount. For those employers with five or fewer, that contribution is 25% each. These monies are to be deposited into the Department's fund commencing January 1, 2026, i.e., in less than two years. However, as presented, the bill will be in effect without any knowledge of the amounts to be collected or the resulting impact upon the employers and employees. Thus, at best, the bill is premature until there is a determination as to the amount of contribution the employers and employees must make.

The bill is also onerous insofar as it applies to any employee who has been working for the employer for as few as six months as well as applies to a broad category of other individuals including but not limited to domestic partners, biologic children or those to whom the employee stands as "in loco parentis", grandparents, siblings, and many other individuals. Yet payments under the family leave section of the bill run for a maximum of three months and under the medical leave section of the bill for over six months during which time the employer must keep the position open or find a different position in which to reinstate the employee after the leave has ended. For an employer of a workforce of four, for example, to keep a six-month employee's position open for potentially longer than the employee has been employed, is quite simply untenable.

It is precisely these concerns, expressed last session, as well, which prompted a study into the impact of such a program on Hawaii employers and employees.



~~First,~~ Hawaii employers already pay Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) premiums based on payroll up to the allowable wage base. Expanding TDI benefits to now include family leave will not only increase administrative compliance, but, more importantly, employers will likely shoulder the burden of increases in TDI premium rates to the proposed extended coverage to family leave.

It is important to note that many businesses already offer paid time off and paid leave programs as a means of attracting and retaining their workforce, especially with the employment environment not yet recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, employers are already facing increased financial burdens from high inflation rates and the recent minimum wage increase.

Further, the proposed bill does not provide leave minimums. Rather, the leave may be taken intermittently and in any increment without regard to the employer's workplace needs. This could ultimately force local businesses to shut down operations or close permanently. With the way the pandemic has affected the economy, we need policies that will provide flexibility for businesses so they can help create more jobs for our economy. We need to be encouraging businesses to adopt their own innovative paid leave programs, rather than placing yet another mandate on employers, and employees.

We also have concerns about the impacts this bill will have on employees and small businesses that are still struggling to recover from the pandemic inasmuch as the bill requires half the contribution to come from the employees themselves. However, given the lack of substantiated data on the adverse impact of mandatory paid family and medical leave on Hawaii employers and employees, we respectfully request that the committee hold this bill and review the findings of the more recent study before enacting a one-size-fits-all policy.

We look forward to contributing positively to the development of sound public policy and continuing to serve as a resource to the legislature on matters related to labor and employment laws.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.

Erin Kogen and Rosanne M. Nolan  
Co-chairs, SHRM Legislative Affairs Committee





**To: Hawaii State Senate Committee on Health & Human Services**  
**Hearing Date/Time: February 1, 2024 9:00 AM**  
**Re: Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of HB2757**

Dear Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Garrett, and the Members of Committee,

The Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus writes in strong support of HB2757 Relating to Paid Family Leave which requires the establishment and administration of a family and medical leave insurance program within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations.

We believe the timing of this comprehensive proposal is ripe. During the past six-seven years, two analyses of establishing paid family leave programs have been conducted. These reports include an economic analysis, Hawai'i-based eligibility modeling and cost breakdowns, a feasibility study, opinion polling and focus groups, options for compliance, and enforcement protocols.

It is time now to put the robust analyses, hard work, focus, and the valuable resources already expended by government entities and stakeholders alike, into real policy that gives actual relief to Hawaii's hardworking families in an increasingly challenging economy.

As we discovered during the pandemic, paid family leave is essential for families, employers, and our workforce. Paid family leave is good for business because employees are more productive when they have a benefit that helps to protect their families. In order for full participation in our economy, workers must have access to the benefits of paid leave otherwise, our businesses face a shortage of workers.

A paid family leave policy also helps even the playing field for small businesses. Currently, most small businesses cannot afford to offer adequate paid family leave to their employees, which puts them at a disadvantage when it comes to attracting and retaining the best workers. A recent survey showed that two-thirds of small business owners support paid family leave.<sup>1</sup>

The Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus is a catalyst for progressive, social, economic, and political change through action on critical issues facing Hawaii's women and girls.

A paid family leave policy is a priority of the Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus. We ask that the committees pass this important measure for Hawaii's working families; and we thank the committee for this opportunity to provide our strong support of HB2757.

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<sup>1</sup> Survey: Small Businesses Support Tax Reforms to Pay for Robust Infrastructure Investments, Small Business Majority, June 8, 2021, [www.smallbusinessmajority.org](http://www.smallbusinessmajority.org)



## HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

RANDY PERREIRA, Executive Director • Tel: 808.543.0011 • Fax: 808.528.0922

The Thirty-Second Legislature, State of Hawaii  
The House of Representatives  
Committee on Labor and Government Operations

Testimony by  
Hawaii Government Employees Association

February 1, 2024

### H.B. 2757 — RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO opposes the '**contributions section**' of H.B. 2757, which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance payment of benefits.

While the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act allows employees up to 12 weeks of unpaid family leave each year, many employees cannot afford to survive without compensation for that long and are forced with a hard choice: take much needed time to care for yourself, your child or family member, or return to work. Paid Family and Medical Leave is a twenty-first century workforce benefit that employers can provide which can allow the employee personal and professional flexibility.

**Although we appreciate the intention, we respectfully oppose this measure. It is our position that Paid Family and Medical Leave should be a 100% employer paid program and benefit.** Employees should not be subject to mandatory payroll deductions to support this program. Additionally, government employees are already subject to hefty payroll deductions from the Employer-Union Health Trust Fund and the Employee Retirement System, among others. Adding an additional payroll deduction may cause financial constraint for our members and we cannot justify that for a program that all members may not take advantage of.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition of H.B. 2757.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Randy Perreira  
Executive Director



## House Committee on Labor and Government Operations

### Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Supports: HB2757

Thursday, February 1st, 2024 9:00 a.m Conference Room 309

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Garrett, and Members of the Committee,

We support HB2757 which by 1/1/2026, requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance payment of benefits. By 1/1/2027, requires the Department to start receiving claims and paying benefits under the program. And additionally, specifies eligibility requirements and employee protections under the program.

In 2018, only 17 percent of workers in the United States had access to paid family leave through their employers. Women, who are often the primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents, are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family leave. No one should have to sacrifice their financial well-being to care for their keiki or kupuna. The majority of Hawaii's workforce cannot afford to take unpaid leave to care for a new child or assist a family member with a serious health condition. Hawai'i law only provides a four-week extension of unpaid leave to employees of large employers with more than one hundred employees.

All workers deserve access to family leave, which is essential in allowing parents to care for newborn keiki and family members who are seriously ill. Hawai'i has one of the fastest growing populations over the age of 65 in the nation. From 2020 to 2030, the percentage of people aged 65 and over is expected to increase to 22.5 percent of the state's population. Nearly one-third of workers who do not have access to family leave will need time off to care for an ill spouse or elderly parent. Multiple studies have shown that family leave programs can be established in a manner that is affordable for small businesses and our state. When medical emergencies arise, no one should be forced to choose between caring for their loved ones or earning a paycheck.

At just \$58 per year per worker, a state-run family leave insurance plan is affordable for small businesses and our state. That is a small price to pay for the financial security guaranteed by 16 weeks of paid family leave.

Please support HB2757.

Mahalo for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Frederick', is written in a cursive style.

Anne Frederick, Executive Director



## HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Dear Chair Matayoshi, and Members of the Committee,

I appreciate the opportunity to testify on behalf of Hawai'i Appleseed in **favor** of **HB 2757**, which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to create a family and medical leave insurance program in Hawai'i.

Over the past seven years, our state legislature has debated the prospect of a paid family leave program through economic analyses, eligibility modeling, cost breakdowns, feasibility studies, and public opinion polling. Hawai'i has more than enough data to justify this program, and the need for relief on the part of working families is only growing.

The lack of paid family leave in the United States underscores the need for comprehensive action at the state level. Current offerings, such as the federal Family and Medical Leave Act and the Hawai'i Family Leave Law, fall short, leaving a significant portion of our workforce without adequate protection.

Low-wage workers, who often need paid leave the most, face the highest barriers to access. While some companies provide this benefit, it typically caters to higher-income employees. Only 6 percent of low-wage workers in the US have access to paid family leave, imposing a financial burden on those who need it most.

The consequences of this absence are profound, especially in Hawai'i, where a significant percentage of children live in households where both parents work. For the well-being of our communities and the sustainability of our workforce, it is crucial for the state to establish a robust safety net for families facing caregiving responsibilities.

To address this gap, HB 2757 proposes a family and medical leave insurance program that follows in the footsteps of successful models in 11 states and the District of Columbia. This approach involves contributions from both employees and employers into a dedicated insurance fund, spreading the burden fairly.

Experts across the political spectrum agree that a social insurance model, similar to programs like Social Security and Medicare, is highly effective in reducing costs, administrative expenses,



and preventing discrimination against leave-taking workers. This kind of system keeps workers, especially women, in the workforce while reducing their reliance on public benefits.

Research shows that job-protected paid family leave ensures that more workers are able to return to the labor force. In California, where a similar program has been in place for over 15 years, mothers with access to family leave showed increased work hours and higher average incomes than before the law's enactment. Studies have also highlighted the positive impact of paid leave on public assistance and SNAP reliance, with beneficiaries being significantly less likely to depend on these services.

HB 2757 would provide up to 12 weeks of leave for parental, caregiving, deployment, or safety concerns (such as situations involving domestic violence). In addition, it provides up to 26 weeks of medical leave. This wide range of coverage ensures that workers who need leave are able to take it. These leave provisions are further reinforced by partial wage replacement. In this way, it would support their health and well-being, while reducing the burden on the health care system.

Public sentiment strongly supports the implementation of paid family leave, as evidenced by a statewide poll for Hawai'i showing a 94 percent favorable perception. Nearly 60 percent of respondents were willing to contribute to a monthly paid leave program, with an average comfortable contribution of just over \$41.

We would also like to join other testifiers in calling for the following amendments that would strengthen the impact of this bill and bring it in line with Hawai'i's Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) law:

- Adding hanai family—which for many of Hawai'i's families is akin to biological family—to the definition of family member
- Including organ donations and termination of pregnancy to the definition of serious illnesses
- Expanding the scope of safe leave to include situations where the worker needs to take leave to assist a family member who is a victim of domestic violence
- Setting the waiting period to qualify for paid family leave at 14 weeks of employment over the last year
- Increasing the percentage of wage replacement to 90% for workers earning less than 50% of the state average weekly wage (SAWW), 75% for those earning between 50% and 100% of the SAWW, and 50% for those earning at least 100% of the SAWW
- Limiting the maximum penalty for erroneous payments and misrepresentation to 100% of benefits paid instead of 150%

In conclusion, HB 2757 would mark a massive leap forward for the well-being of Hawai'i's working families, giving them the time they deserve to adjust to significant changes in their life.

Mahalo for your attention and consideration.



**Hawaii  
Legislative  
Council  
Members**

Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair  
Rep. Andrew Takuya Garrett, Vice Chair  
Committee on Labor & Government Relations

Joell Edwards  
Wainiha Country  
Market  
Hanalei

Thursday, February 1, 2024  
9:00 am  
Via Videoconference

Russell Ruderman  
Island Naturals  
Hilo/Kona

RE: **HB2757** Paid Family/Medical Leave Insurance Program - **Support**

Dear Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Garrett & Members of the Committee,

Dr. Andrew Johnson  
Niko Niko Family  
Dentistry  
Honolulu

The Chamber of Sustainable Commerce represents over 100 small businesses across the State of Hawaii that strive for a triple bottom line: people, planet and prosperity – we know we can strengthen our economy without hurting workers, consumers, communities or the environment. This is why we support HB2757.

Robert H. Pahia  
Hawaii Taro Farm  
Wailuku

When discussing the concept of paid family and medical leave with some of our Hawaii Legislative Council members who have with the most employees, there was apprehension at first; but when we took a closer look at the language of HB2757, one exclaimed, “I am all for the paid family leave, after learning about it; I was under the misconception that the employer would carry the total expense and with it being State run, there would be a level of accountability.”

Maile Meyer  
Na Mea Hawaii  
Honolulu

Tina Wildberger  
Kihei Ice  
Kihei

Coming out of the Covid pandemic, our economy's resiliency validated the importance of having financial safety-nets for working families. It's important to compare and contrast how our state intervenes (or chooses not to intervene) when an individual family's crisis could lead to their homelessness compared to when an entire community faces homelessness because of wildfires, lava flow or global pandemic.

L. Malu Shizue Miki  
Abundant Life  
Natural Foods  
Hilo

HB2757 would provide a needed safety net to all working families, regardless if that family is suffering alone or with the entire state.

Kim Coco Iwamoto  
Enlightened Energy  
Honolulu

Chamber of  
Sustainable  
Commerce  
P.O. Box 22394  
Honolulu, HI  
96823

The Chamber of Sustainable Commerce submits A Better Balance's 2023 white paper titled "The Business Case for Paid Family and Medical Leave:" <https://www.abetterbalance.org/resources/the-business-case-for-paid-family-and-medical-leave/>

## The Business Case for Paid Family and Medical Leave

*Comprehensive paid family and medical leave presents a game-changing opportunity to support businesses and families. Paid family and medical leave will provide businesses with an unprecedented opportunity to recruit and retain valuable employees and increase productivity without creating significant administrative burdens.*

### State paid family and medical leave programs have proven to be successful for workers, businesses, and families.

- Thirteen states (RI, CA, NJ, NY, WA, MA, CT, OR, CO, MD, DE, MN, and ME) and Washington, D.C. have enacted paid family and medical leave laws,<sup>1</sup> which provide (or will provide) benefits to workers when they are unable to work due to a serious off-the-job illness or injury, to bond with a new child (including children newly placed for foster care or adoption) or to care for a family member with a serious health condition.
  - Ten states also provide (or will provide) paid family leave benefits to workers dealing with certain needs in connection with a family member's military deployment.
  - Six states also provide (or will provide) benefits known as "safe time," which covers certain needs arising from domestic or sexual violence.
- The state paid family and medical leave programs offer proven examples from which to build a national, paid family and medical leave program that is equitable and sustainable. They also prove that these policies can work for businesses as well as workers.
  - In a study of California businesses, the vast majority reported that the state's paid family leave program had a positive or neutral effect on their business; a vast majority also reported that the program resulted in no cost increases, with some even indicating that the program resulted in cost savings for their business by reducing benefit costs. Moreover, most businesses were able to adjust to the program easily; nearly two-thirds of businesses reported that temporarily reassigning work to other employees was their primary method for addressing the temporary absence of employees on paid family leave.<sup>2</sup>
  - In New Jersey, businesses of all sizes have easily adjusted to the state law. Most businesses reported no negative effects on business profitability and most reported that complying with the law is not difficult.<sup>3</sup>
  - In a survey of Rhode Island employers conducted a year after the state's paid family leave law went into effect, a majority of employers were strongly or somewhat in favor of the law. This was true among both large and small employers surveyed.<sup>4</sup>
  - In the first year after New York's paid family leave program went into effect, employers experienced a significantly easier time coordinating employee absences, especially longer absences. Additionally, after the program went into effect, the vast majority of employers were supportive of the program.<sup>5</sup>

### Paid family and medical leave programs can help small businesses thrive.

- Providing paid leave through a government program levels the playing field for small businesses. Small businesses that cannot afford to offer the same generous leave benefits as larger companies are at a competitive disadvantage in hiring.<sup>6</sup>
  - The vast majority of small business owners that want paid leave want a solution involving the federal government.<sup>7</sup>

- Small businesses have adapted well to state paid family and medical leave programs and report positive experiences with such laws.
  - A study of California businesses found that *any* negative effects from the state’s paid family leave program were exceedingly rare, but among those few employers who did report negative effects, small businesses were *less* likely than large businesses to report any negative effects resulting from the program. Additionally, nearly all of the businesses surveyed, including very small businesses, were able to craft solutions for addressing employee absences with little difficulty—often by relying on protocols already in place for other types of absences that routinely occurred prior to the implementation of the state’s paid family leave program.<sup>8</sup>
  - Another study of California’s program found that small businesses saw a 14% *decrease* in their per worker labor costs when workers take paid family leave. The smallest businesses had the greatest percentage-based savings.<sup>9</sup>
  - In New Jersey, approximately two-thirds of small businesses reported no increase in overtime pay costs due to the state paid family leave law,<sup>10</sup> and researchers have found that other employees do not resent absent co-workers.<sup>11</sup> This suggests that businesses were able to manage the temporary reallocation of absent employees’ workload without significant increased costs.

#### **Paid family and medical leave programs can help businesses recruit and retain talented workers.**

- Paid family and medical leave can help employers recruit talented employees and also helps employers retain employees. Human resources professionals consider family-friendly policies to be the most important factor in recruiting and retaining employees.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, small businesses that offer paid leave see it as necessary to recruit and retain talented employees—and those that don’t offer it report that it makes it challenging to hire.<sup>13</sup>
- Moreover, paid family and medical leave increases employee morale and employee loyalty. New Jersey employers have reported increased employee morale as a result of New Jersey’s paid family leave program, with one employer calling the effect “tremendous.”<sup>14</sup>
- By helping businesses retain valuable employees, paid family and medical leave can significantly cut down on turnover costs. Businesses spend, on average, around 21% of an employee’s salary to replace that employee if the employee quits.<sup>15</sup>
  - Paid family and medical leave can save employers money by enabling valuable employees to stay in their jobs instead of quitting when they have a child or a medical emergency. One study found that businesses in states with paid family leave laws were significantly less likely to experience high employee turnover compared to similar businesses without paid family leave benefits.<sup>16</sup>
  - For example, in California, 92.8% of employers reported that paid family leave had a positive or neutral effect on employee turnover,<sup>17</sup> saving employers the costly step of replacing an existing employee.<sup>18</sup>
- This is especially crucial at a time when many businesses are desperately seeking qualified employees.
  - More than one third of unemployed adults would be more willing to return to work sooner if their employer offered paid family leave, including nearly half of unemployed caregivers.<sup>19</sup> This suggests that continuing recruiting challenges are driven, in part, by workers’ ongoing caregiving responsibilities and their concerns

that those responsibilities may be incompatible with employment in the absence paid leave. Ensuring that workers can care for themselves and their families while working is key to robust economic recovery.

- A recent study found that workers with access to paid family and medical leave are 22% more likely than workers without such access to recommend their job to a friend.<sup>20</sup>

### **Paid family and medical leave can increase profitability and employee productivity.**

- Businesses that provide paid family leave benefits have seen marked improvements in employee productivity.
  - One study found that businesses in states with paid family leave laws significantly increased firm-wide productivity as compared to similar businesses without paid family leave benefits.<sup>21</sup> And a cross-industry analysis of 41 companies found increases of more than 50% on productivity measures after the adoption of a paid leave program.<sup>22</sup>
  - An overwhelming majority of California employers also reported positive or neutral effects on productivity (88.5%) and employee morale (98.6%).<sup>23</sup>
- Evidence suggests that increased productivity resulting from paid family and medical leave can increase employer profitability.
  - One study found an average of 63% improvement in revenue and 54% improvement in profit after companies adopted paid leave policies.<sup>24</sup>
  - An overwhelming majority (91.0%) of California employers reported that paid family leave had a positive or neutral effect on profitability/performance.<sup>25</sup>
  - A recent study of California's paid leave program found that businesses with employees who used paid family leave had *higher* per worker earnings across all workers (not just the workers who took paid family leave) than did businesses where no workers took paid family leave.<sup>26</sup>
- Paid leave also helps keep workers safe and healthy on the job, which increases productivity and decreases employer costs. Workers with paid leave are significantly less likely to suffer dangerous injuries on the job<sup>27</sup> or deaths on the job.<sup>28</sup>
  - Paid leave allows workers to recover and return to full productivity more quickly than they would by continuing to work. When workers must return to work before a chronic condition is stabilized or before they have healed from an injury, they are more likely to relapse or re-injure themselves while working.<sup>29</sup> Fewer workplace injuries can mean healthier, happier workers and lower workers' compensation costs.
- Paid family and medical leave also can also increase a firm's value. Researchers have found that Fortune 500 companies that announced the adoption of new family-friendly policies saw same-day increases in their share prices, indicating that investors anticipate that the benefits of such a program will outweigh any costs associated with providing it.<sup>30</sup>

### **Evidence shows that paid family and medical leave programs are not abused.**

- Evidence from the states show little to no abuse of paid family and medical leave programs.
  - In a survey of California employers, the vast majority said they were not aware of *any* instances of their employees abusing the state's paid family leave program.<sup>31</sup>
  - In a study of New Jersey's paid family leave program, not a single employer interviewed identified even a single instance of abuse. Indeed, several Human

Resources managers interviewed expressed their views that abuse of the program was a virtual impossibility.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A Better Balance, *Overview of Paid Family & Medical Leave Laws in the United States* (July 20, 2021), <https://www.abetterbalance.org/resources/paid-family-leave-laws-chart/>.

<sup>2</sup> EILEEN APPELBAUM & RUTH MILKMAN, LEAVES THAT PAY: EMPLOYER AND WORKER EXPERIENCE WITH PAID FAMILY LEAVE IN CALIFORNIA 7-9 (2011), <https://cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>; CENTER FOR ECONOMIC AND POLICY RESEARCH, p. 8, available at <https://cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> MIRIAM RAMIREZ, NEW JERSEY BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION, THE IMPACT OF PAID FAMILY LEAVE ON NEW JERSEY BUSINESSES (2012), <https://bloustein.rutgers.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Ramirez.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> ZACHARY CAMPBELL ET AL., THE IMPACT OF PAID LEAVE: EVIDENCE FROM TEMPORARY DISABILITY INSURANCE IN RHODE ISLAND 30 (July 2017), <https://www.mathematica-mpr.com/-/media/internet/conferences/2017/drc-annual-meeting2017/summaries/hastings.pdf?la=en>.

<sup>5</sup> Ann P. Bartel et al., *The Impact of Paid Family Leave on Employers: Evidence from New York* (Nat'l Bureau of Econ. Rsch., Working Paper No. 28672, 2021), [https://www.nber.org/system/files/working\\_papers/w28672/w28672.pdf](https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w28672/w28672.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> Eileen Appelbaum & Ruth Milkman, *Achieving a Workable Balance*, CENTER FOR WOMEN AND WORK (2006), p. 23, available at <https://smlr.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/images/achieving%20a%20workable%20balance%202006%20Appelbaum.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> SMALL BUSINESS FOR AMERICA'S FUTURE, PAID LEAVE POLICIES ON MAIN STREET (2021), <https://www.smallbusinessforamericafuture.org/small-business-for-america-s-future-releases-paid-leave-survey-results>.

<sup>8</sup> EILEEN APPELBAUM & RUTH MILKMAN, LEAVES THAT PAY: EMPLOYER AND WORKER EXPERIENCE WITH PAID FAMILY LEAVE IN CALIFORNIA 8-10 (2011), <https://cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>; CENTER FOR ECONOMIC AND POLICY RESEARCH, p. 8, available at <https://cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> GREER COWAN ET AL., THE CALIFORNIA EXPERIENCE: LESSONS FROM 20 YEARS OF CALIFORNIA'S PAID FAMILY LEAVE PROGRAM 13 (Sept. 2021), [http://www.bayareaconomy.org/files/pdf/BACEI\\_PFL\\_Sept2021.pdf](http://www.bayareaconomy.org/files/pdf/BACEI_PFL_Sept2021.pdf).

<sup>10</sup> SMALL BUSINESS FOR AMERICA'S FUTURE, PAID LEAVE POLICIES ON MAIN STREET (2021), <https://www.smallbusinessforamericafuture.org/small-business-for-america-s-future-releases-paid-leave-survey-results>.

<sup>11</sup> Sharon Lerner & Eileen Appelbaum, *Business as Usual: New Jersey Employers' Experiences with Family Leave Insurance*, CTR. FOR ECON. & POL'Y RSCH. (2014), <http://www.cepr.net/documents/nj-fli-2014-06.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> JOAN WILLIAMS. UNBENDING GENDER: WHY WORK AND FAMILY CONFLICT AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT (2001).

<sup>13</sup> SMALL BUSINESS FOR AMERICA'S FUTURE, PAID LEAVE POLICIES ON MAIN STREET (2021), <https://www.smallbusinessforamericafuture.org/small-business-for-america-s-future-releases-paid-leave-survey-results>.

<sup>14</sup> Sharon Lerner & Eileen Appelbaum, *Business as Usual: New Jersey Employers' Experiences with Family Leave Insurance*, CTR. FOR ECON. & POL'Y RSCH. (2014), <http://www.cepr.net/documents/nj-fli-2014-06.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> HEATHER BOUSHEY & SARAH JANE GLYNN, CTR. FOR AM. PROGRESS, THERE ARE SIGNIFICANT COSTS TO REPLACING EMPLOYEES (2007), <https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/CostofTurnover.pdf>.

<sup>16</sup> Benjamin Bennett et al., *Paid Leave Pays Off: The Effects of Paid Family Leave on Firm Performance* (Nat'l Bureau of Econ. Rsch., Working Paper No. 27788, 2021), [https://www.nber.org/system/files/working\\_papers/w27788/w27788.pdf](https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w27788/w27788.pdf).

<sup>17</sup> EILEEN APPELBAUM & RUTH MILKMAN, LEAVES THAT PAY: EMPLOYER AND WORKER EXPERIENCE WITH PAID FAMILY LEAVE IN CALIFORNIA (2011), <https://cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>; CENTER FOR ECONOMIC AND POLICY RESEARCH, p. 8, available at <https://cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> Replacing an employee costs 50-75% of an hourly employee's annual pay and up to 150% of a salaried employee's annual pay. Jodie Levin-Epstein, *Getting Punched: The Job and Family Clock* (2006), CENTER FOR LAW AND SOCIAL POLICY, p. 9, available at <http://www.clasp.org/resources-and-publications/files/0303.pdf>.

<sup>19</sup> *Morning Consult Poll: The Value of Paid Family Leave*, BIPARTISAN POL'Y CTR. (Sept. 7, 2021), <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/blog/morning-consult-poll-value-of-paid-family-leave/>.

<sup>20</sup> THEA GARON ET AL., UNPAID AND UNPROTECTED: HOW THE LACK OF PAID LEAVE FOR MEDICAL AND CAREGIVING PURPOSES IMPACTS FINANCIAL HEALTH 5 (Sept. 2021), [https://fhn-finhealthnetwork-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/2021/09/PulsePaidLeave\\_UnpaidUnprotected.pdf](https://fhn-finhealthnetwork-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/2021/09/PulsePaidLeave_UnpaidUnprotected.pdf).

<sup>21</sup> Bennett et al., *supra* note 15.

<sup>22</sup> PANORAMA & AM. SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS COUNCIL, THE BUSINESS IMPACTS OF PAID LEAVE (2019), [https://www.asbcouncil.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/panorama\\_report\\_-\\_business\\_impacts\\_of\\_paid\\_leave.pdf](https://www.asbcouncil.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/panorama_report_-_business_impacts_of_paid_leave.pdf).

<sup>23</sup> EILEEN APPELBAUM & RUTH MILKMAN, LEAVES THAT PAY: EMPLOYER AND WORKER EXPERIENCE WITH PAID FAMILY LEAVE IN CALIFORNIA (2011), <https://cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>; CENTER FOR ECONOMIC AND POLICY RESEARCH, p. 8, available at <https://cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>.

<sup>24</sup> PANORAMA & AM. SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS COUNCIL, THE BUSINESS IMPACTS OF PAID LEAVE (2019), [https://www.asbcouncil.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/panorama\\_report\\_-\\_business\\_impacts\\_of\\_paid\\_leave.pdf](https://www.asbcouncil.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/panorama_report_-_business_impacts_of_paid_leave.pdf).

<sup>25</sup> EILEEN APPELBAUM & RUTH MILKMAN, LEAVES THAT PAY: EMPLOYER AND WORKER EXPERIENCE WITH PAID FAMILY LEAVE IN CALIFORNIA 8 (2011), <https://cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>.

<sup>26</sup> GREER COWAN ET AL., THE CALIFORNIA EXPERIENCE: LESSONS FROM 20 YEARS OF CALIFORNIA'S PAID FAMILY LEAVE PROGRAM 13 (Sept. 2021), [http://www.bayareaconomy.org/files/pdf/BACEI\\_PFL\\_Sept2021.pdf](http://www.bayareaconomy.org/files/pdf/BACEI_PFL_Sept2021.pdf).

<sup>27</sup> Abay Asfaw et al., *Paid Sick Leave and Nonfatal Occupational Injuries*, 102.9 AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PUBLIC HEALTH e59-e64 (2012), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3482022/>.

<sup>28</sup> Daniel Kim, *Paid Sick Leave and Risks of All-Cause and Cause-Specific Mortality Among Adult Workers in the USA*. 14.10 INT. J. OF ENV. RESEARCH AND PUB. HEALTH 1247 (2017), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5664748/pdf/ijerph-14-01247.pdf>.

<sup>29</sup> T.G. Hollo, *Evaluating family and medical leave insurance for Washington state*, 11 Economic Opportunity Institute (May 2012), <http://www.opportunityinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/family-leave-insurance/EvaluatingFamilyandMedicalLeave-Jan13.pdf>.

<sup>30</sup> Michelle M. Arthur & Alison Cook, *Taking Stock of Work-Family Initiatives: How Announcements of "Family-Friendly" Human Resource Decisions Affect Shareholder Value*, 57 INDUSTRIAL & LAB. RELATIONS REV. 608-10 (2004).

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<sup>31</sup> EILEEN APPELBAUM & RUTH MILKMAN, LEAVES THAT PAY: EMPLOYER AND WORKER EXPERIENCE WITH PAID FAMILY LEAVE IN CALIFORNIA 4 (2011), <https://cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>.

<sup>32</sup> Sharon Lerner & Eileen Appelbaum, *Business as Usual: New Jersey Employers' Experiences with Family Leave Insurance*, CTR. FOR ECON. & POL'Y RSCH. 24 (2014), <http://www.cepr.net/documents/nj-fl-2014-06.pdf>.







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Date: January 31, 2024

To: Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair  
Rep. Andrew Takuya Garrett, Vice Chair  
Committee on Labor & Government Operations

From: Victor Lim, Legislative Lead

Subj: HB2757 Relating to Paid Family Leave

The Hawaii Restaurant Association representing 4,000 Eating and Drinking Place locations in Hawaii stand opposed to HB2757.

Our Industry has to be one of that was hit the hardest by the Covid Pandemic and up to today, we are still struggling to recover. We continue to be hit by very high inflation, supply chain delays, labor shortage, high medical insurance costs, and super high interest rates. Our minimum wage also just went up \$2 an hour which is one that jump the highest percentage in the country. On the aftermath of Lahaina Fire, we also anticipate a huge increase in our general and liability insurances. We continue to see business go under today and many more are struggling on very thin margins.

The one message we continue to hear from our membership is that we hope our legislators will not impose any new mandates that will increase our cost of doing business and additional administrative duties. Furthermore, this bill has no cost numbers or what the employer portion and employee portions spelled out for us to also better access.

Our restaurants are hurting and just cannot take on any additional mandates and cost increases.

Thank you giving us this opportunity to share our concerns.



**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 2:47:02 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Luanna Peterson	Mothering Justice	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**February 1, 2024**

**Members of the House Committee on Labor & Government Operations:**

**Chair Scot Z. Matayoshi**

**Vice Chair Andrew Takuya Garrett**

**Rep. Jeanne Kapela**

**Rep. Rose Martinez**

**Rep. Jackson D. Sayama**

**Rep. Adrian K. Tam**

**Rep. David Alcos III**

**Re: HB2757 Relating to Paid Family Leave**

**Dear Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Garrett, and Members of the House Committee on Labor & Government Operations:**

**The Hawai'i State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (HSCADV) addresses the social, political, and economic impacts of domestic violence on individuals, families, and communities. We are a statewide partnership of domestic violence programs and shelters.**

**On behalf of HSCADV and our 27 member programs statewide, I respectfully submit testimony in strong support of HB2757 which would implement paid family and medical leave in Hawai'i.**

**This critical policy is not only beneficial for caregivers and families throughout our islands but also to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking (all forms of intimate partner violence, IPV) who need to take time off to receive victim services, make court appearances, seek medical services, or relocate themselves and family. Currently, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Oregon, Colorado, Minnesota, and Maine include safe leave in their paid family leave laws.**

**As such, I respectfully request an amendment to § -2(a)(2)(D), page 8 at line 14 ("[F]amily leave insurance benefits shall be payable to an individual who...**

**(D) Because the covered individual or a family member is [Is] a victim of domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking who needs leave for the covered individual's or family member's medical attention; the covered individual's or family member's mental health care or other counseling; to seek victim services, including legal services, for the covered individual or the family member; the covered individual's or family member's court appearances; or relocation for themselves or a family member;**

**This change would ensure that safe leave is available to workers who themselves are survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking or to care for a family member who is a survivor.**

**Survivors of domestic violence face many challenges when making decisions about their safety. One of the most crucial factors is their finances. The ability to provide for themselves and their families is a key economic consideration for survivors when deciding to leave an abusive partner. It's also important to recognize the impact that financial abuse can have on survivors making it almost impossible to take unpaid time off to address their**

**medical, emotional, and/ or legal needs without extensive time off. We must support them in every way possible.**

**According to the CDC, approximately 75% of female intimate partner violence survivors and 48% of male domestic violence survivors experience some form of injury related to intimate partner violence. Negative health outcomes that are associated with intimate partner violence include conditions affecting the heart, muscles and bones, and digestive, reproductive, and nervous systems, many of which are chronic. Survivors can experience mental health problems such as depression and PTSD symptoms.**

**The lifetime per-victim cost is \$103,767 for women and \$23,414 for men. This economic cost estimate includes almost 32 million women and 12 million men who are victims of intimate partner violence during their lives in the US. The lifetime economic cost to the U.S. population is \$3.6 trillion for medical services for IPV-related injuries, lost productivity from paid work, criminal justice, and other costs.**

**Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.**

**Sincerely,**

**Luanna Peterson**



**LATE**

TO: Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair  
Rep. Andrew Takuya Garrett, Vice Chair  
Committee on Labor & Government Operations  
From: Michael Miller, Tiki's Grill & Bar

Date: Jan 31, 2024

Subj: HB2757 RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE.

Please vote no on HB2757

**All solutions result in higher costs of living for our community**, as all costs are borne by the taxpayer or passed through to the consumers/taxpayers, who are Hawaii's workers and families.

**While we at Tiki's Grill & Bar love Hawaii and support our community, we ask you to vote no on HB2757. We do offer paid time off (PTO) as a competitive edge.** PTO can be used for any reason, including sick leave and family leave.

Employees should have the choice to put money into a savings account or pay for a third-party insurance from a company like Aflac, rather than having the state a state mandated program that will require more staffing, equipment over all expense to the taxpayers.

Our employees also enjoy discounts, company events, and company-sponsored activities outside of work. These are benefits we choose to provide to retain our good employees and remain competitive. Competitive benefits ensure that our employees are proud to continue to provide excellent service at a popular destination location in Waikiki for both locals and visitors.

With Hawaii's low unemployment rate, companies that can afford to offer significant benefits will allow them to be competitive and get the best employees. **Employees should have an incentive to grow and do better to either move up or move to another company** if their current employer is unable to afford, or unwilling to provide, raises or better benefits packages.

In addition, there is a severe worker shortage in Hawaii. Companies already have a hard time filling open positions. Where are the new employees who will cover the shifts of those on family leave going to come from? How will businesses afford to pay for two employees to do the job of one, with benefits for both?

Policymakers should be focusing in on removing obstacles to business growth, job creation, and economic stability to benefit our workers and their families, **not adding additional costs that employers and employees and taxpayers cannot afford.**

Please vote no on HB2757

Mahalo,  
Michael Miller / Director of Operations ---- michaelm@tikisgrill.com

**LATE****HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 4:22:30 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dave Mulinix	Our Revolution Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

On behalf of our Revolution Hawaii's 5,000 members and supporters statewide we Stand in STRONG SUPPORT of HB2757 that requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance payment of benefits. And further requires the Department to start receiving claims and paying benefits under the program. Specifies eligibility requirements and employee protections under the program.

## **Paid Family Leave is important because it supports family well-being and the economy.**

- Mothers with paid leave are 39% less likely to receive public assistance after the birth of a child than those without.
- About 40% of the workforce is providing care for older parents — a figure that continues to increase
- 8 states and the District of Colombia have passed paid family leave laws.

### **What Paid Family Leave could look like in Hawai'i**

- All businesses and employees covered
- 16 weeks of leave
- Workers restored to the same position
- Progressive wage replacement: *Those who earn less than half of the average weekly wage would receive 90% of their weekly earnings, while middle-income to higher-income workers would receive 50-75% of their weekly earnings, with a weekly cap.*

*Qualifying reasons for leave:*

- Welcoming a new child (biological, adopted, or foster)
- Caring for a sick family member or handling own illness/health emergency. *Family includes child, parent, parent-in-law, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, spouse, or registered domestic partner.*

- Employees that have been victims/their family members have been victims of domestic or sexual violence

## **Paid Family Leave supports family well-being and the economy**

### **Health**

- PFL is associated with a 20% decrease in infant mortality
- The availability of family leave insurance benefits leads to increased rates of breastfeeding, which has been shown to have long-term health benefits.
- Increases health equity among different racial and socioeconomic groups
- Kūpuna deserve high quality care and currently there are not enough licensed care homes/ care home workers to care for the fast growing population of kūpuna here

### **Economic Security**

- Women who take paid parental leave and return to work are 39% less likely to receive public assistance and 40% less likely to receive food stamps than women who do not take paid leave and return to work.
- Women are the primary or co-breadwinners for almost two-thirds of families in the U.S., so a woman's income lost during maternity leave has significant economic impact on her entire family.
- In Hawaii, the majority of families are “working families” who cannot afford to take unpaid leave long enough to cover their caretaking needs—paid family leave alleviates economic instability for struggling families by ensuring job security.

### **Business Impact**

- Family leave insurance helps increase worker retention and loyalty. Workers who have access to family leave benefits are more likely to return to work after their leave is over
- A shared cost (employer/employee), state-run insurance fund, is an affordable solution that takes the burden off small businesses to provide leave and helps them compete against big corporation competitors.

## **Paid Family Leave is affordable for employers and employees**

An actuarial analysis using a simulation model to study the use and cost of family leave insurance for Hawaii found that the annual cost to cover sixteen weeks of leave for a worker making \$48,000 would be around \$58, averaging out to cost about \$1.11 per week.

Funding: 50/50 employer/employee cost split. Employers should have the option of covering the entire insurance premium (estimated to be around \$5/ month for the average worker under a social insurance model), but employers may require employees to contribute up to 50% of the premium cost.

**As you can see there are many excellent reasons to support Paid Family Leave.  
Please pass HB2757.**

**Mahalo for you kind attention,**

**Dave Mulinix, CoFounder, Our Revolution Hawaii**



January 31, 2024

Ref: This email is about HB2757.

**LATE**

Please vote NO to this bill!

This bill will create an increased burden on Hawaii businesses and our communities at large. Over the past five years, businesses have only been hit with continuous tax increases and mandatory wage hikes. These taxes only make Hawaii more expensive and work against the goal of making living in Hawaii more affordable.

The 604 Hospitality Group offers our employees very competitive pay, PTO, Emergency Leave, AFLAC, and other benefits to help our employees impacted by taxes and regulations that drive up costs. Our employees can participate in FSAs, AFLAC, or personal savings account options we offer. Outside of these benefits, our employees are our ohana; therefore, we offer them significant discounts, awards, and sponsored events for themselves and their families, amongst other fun team-building activities that they would not have otherwise participated in due to the already high cost of living in Hawaii.

Please consider voting NO to this bill and looking for alternatives to support our employees in promoting independence versus dependence on State benefits. Bills such as these are detrimental to creating strong communities that do not have to depend on the government but build strong families that can contribute to their community and help their neighbors in need. Keep in mind previous bills that have passed which already increased our state's cost of living and burdened taxpayers and businesses. They are NOT achieving the goal of making Hawaii more affordable while promoting individual independence away from government services.

Contrary to the belief that all businesses have lots of discretionary funds, our profit margins (along with sales) have shrunk tremendously due to such bills to the point of cutting benefits from our employees, increasing the cost of dining out for our community. How much more expensive do you want Hawaii to be? How will businesses afford to pay for two employees to do the job of one, with benefits for both, while continuing to pile on more taxes?

Our community of businesses will be more than willing to participate in a State think tank to find REASONABLE solutions to tackle such issues instead of the traditional "tax increases" to fund government programs. Please start looking at solutions to remove business-killing policies and allow businesses to flourish. This would increase job creation, increased pay, expansive benefit offerings, economic spending, and focused growth in our tourism sector.

In short, we CANNOT afford this bill, and it will have a negative impact with mostly likely staff reductions and more price increases. Such outcomes will only leave people the choice to rely entirely on government services versus promoting independence away from such services.

Respectfully VOTE NO!

Mahalo!

604 Hospitality Group



1200 Ala Kapuna Street • Honolulu, Hawaii 96819  
Tel: (808) 833-2711 • Fax: (808) 839-7106 • Web: www.hsta.org



**Osa Tui, Jr.**  
President  
**Logan Okita**  
Vice President  
**Lisa Thompson**  
Secretary-Treasurer  
**Ann Mahi**  
Executive Director

## TESTIMONY TO THE HAWAII HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

Item: **HB2757 - Relating to paid family leave**  
Position: **Support**  
Hearing: **February 1, 2024, 9:00 a.m., Conference Room 309**  
Submitter: **Osa Tui, Jr. – President, Hawai'i State Teachers Association**

Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Garrett, and members of the committee,

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association **supports** HB2757 which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations by 1/1/2026 to establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance payment of benefits and then requires the Department by 1/1/2027 to start receiving claims and paying benefits under the program. It also specifies eligibility requirements and employee protections under the program.

Workers who have access to family leave benefits are more likely to return to work after their leave is over. In a 10-year study of the California family leave insurance program, businesses reported that family leave had a positive or neutral effect on their business. Small businesses were less likely than large businesses to report any negative effects.

This bill is also for workers. The majority of our workforce in Hawai'i cannot afford to take unpaid leave to care for a new child or assist a family member with a serious health condition. Hawai'i law only provides a four-week extension of unpaid leave to employees of large employers with more than one hundred employees. All workers deserve access to family leave.

A public insurance model that includes all eligible workers in the state is affordable. The Institute for Women's Policy Research studied the use and cost of family leave insurance for our state and found that the annual cost to cover sixteen weeks of leave for a worker making \$48,000 would be roughly \$58 - a small price to pay for the financial security guaranteed by sixteen weeks of paid family leave.

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** this bill.



207 E Buffalo Street, Suite 211  
Milwaukee, WI 53202  
FamilyValuesAtWork  
@FmlyValuesWork

**LATE**

**TESTIMONY ON HB 2757  
RELATING TO FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE INSURANCE PROGRAM**

**House Committee on Labor and Government Operations**

**Feb 1, 2024**

Submitted by: Preston Van Vliet (he/him), Family Values @ Work

My name is Preston Van Vliet, and I am a States Organizer and part of the State Policy team with Family Values @ Work (FV@W). While at FV@W, I led our policy work on inclusive family definitions within PSSD and PFML bills across the country. I continue to work closely with states to develop and improve their PFML and PSSD programs. I was also an integral part of including ‘safe time’ as part of the 2019 improvement bill for New Jersey’s PFML program, which became the first PFML program that added ‘safe time’ for domestic violence survivors and their families as a qualifying reason for leave. As a representative of FV@W, I’m submitting testimony regarding HB 2757.

Family Values @ Work (FV@W) and our movement Network grew from the reality that valuing caregiving and supporting people to be good providers and family members are essential to achieving racial, gender, disability, immigrant, and economic justice. For over twenty years, our movement has shaped the debates around Paid Sick and Safe Days (PSSD) and Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML), engaged a wide range of partners, and guided the development of the most inclusive policies to date, and with our Network Members, have passed PFML in 14 states (including Washington, D.C.), and PSSD laws in more than 60 jurisdictions.

We applaud the continued efforts of legislators and advocates like Hawai'i Children's Action Network to figure out how to make paid family and medical leave a reality for workers and families in Hawai'i. Guaranteeing access to PFML would benefit workers, employers, families, and Hawai'i's economy. When we have time to care, our families are healthier, our communities are safer, and we advance toward equity. When our human need to care for ourselves, our families, and our communities is prevented by a lack of policy change, no one wins. There is no functioning economy without vibrant, interdependent communities—that is when individuals and families can support each other's health in pursuit of our collective physical and mental well-being.

The best way to realize a society that honors our care needs is through comprehensive PFML. PFML supports health, including improved infant and child development,<sup>1</sup> increased breastfeeding rates,<sup>2</sup> reduced infant mortality,<sup>3</sup> improved maternal health,<sup>4</sup> better ability to manage and afford cancer treatment,<sup>5</sup> and reduced occupational injuries.<sup>6</sup> These programs also benefits businesses, from supporting recruitment<sup>7</sup> to reduced turnover<sup>8</sup> to increase productivity.<sup>9</sup> That said, the details of how a PFML program is written is extremely important, and here we have specific recommendations for what we think will improve HB 2757.

## Strengthen Job Protection

We encourage legislators to follow well-established standards of equivalent job reinstatement as found in other PFML programs. We urge legislators to remove the phrase “provided that job duties and hours in the new position need not be identical to the previously-held position, but the employer shall make a reasonable effort to make them similar, at the employee's request” in subsection 7 (a). We also recommend including relative geographic proximity as part of reinstatement, so that employers do not force an employee to relocate to a geographical location that is not possible for the employee.

<sup>1</sup> Brito, N. H. et al. (2022). Paid maternal leave is associated with infant brain function at 3 months of age. *Child Development*, 93, 1030–1043. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.13765>; Kozak, K. et al. (2021), Paid maternal leave is associated with better language and socioemotional outcomes during toddlerhood. *Infancy*, 26: 536-550. <https://doi.org/10.1111/infa.12399>.

<sup>2</sup> Pac J. et al., Paid family leave and parental investments in infant health: Evidence from California. *Econ Hum Biol.* 2023 Dec;51:101308. doi: 10.1016/j.ehb.2023.101308. Perry et al., Association Between State Paid Family and Medical Leave and Breastfeeding, Depression, and Postpartum Visits. *Obstetrics & Gynecology* 143(1):p 14-22, January 2024. | DOI: 10.1097/AOG.0000000000005428.

<sup>3</sup> Chen, F. (2023) Does paid family leave save infant lives? Evidence from California's paid family leave program. *Contemporary Economic Policy*, 41(2), 319–337. <https://doi.org/10.1111/coep.12589>; Heymann, J. et al. Creating and using new data sources to analyze the relationship between social policy and global health: the case of maternal leave. *Public Health Rep.* 2011 Sep-Oct;126 Suppl 3(Suppl 3):127-34. doi: 10.1177/003335491112608317.

<sup>4</sup> Mandal, B. The Effect of Paid Leave on Maternal Mental Health. *Matern Child Health J* 22, 1470–1476 (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10995-018-2542-x>; Van Niel MS et al. The Impact of Paid Maternity Leave on the Mental and Physical Health of Mothers and Children: A Review of the Literature and Policy Implications. *Harv Rev Psychiatry.* 2020 Mar/Apr;28(2):113-126. doi: 10.1097/HRP.0000000000000246. PMID: 32134836.

<sup>5</sup> Public Opinion Strategies, “Key Findings—National Surveys of Cancer Patients, Survivors, and Caregivers,” (Dec. 2017) <https://www.fightcancer.org/sites/default/files/ACS%20CAN%20Paid%20Leave%20Surveys%20Key%20Findings%20Press%20Memo%20FINAL.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Asfaw A et al. Paid sick leave and nonfatal occupational injuries. *Am J Public Health.* 2012 Sep;102(9):e59-64. doi: 10.2105/AJPH.2011.300482. Epub 2012 Jun 21.

<sup>7</sup> Thea Garon et al., *Unpaid And Unprotected: How The Lack Of Paid Leave For Medical And Caregiving Purposes Impacts Financial Health 5* (Sept. 2021), <https://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/economic-justice/paid-leave/unpaid-and-unprotected-how-lack-paid-leave-impacts-financial-health.pdf>; Small Business for America's Future, Paid Leave Policies on Main Street, <https://www.smallbusinessforamericasfuture.org/small-business-for-america-s-future-releases-paid-leave-survey-results>.

<sup>8</sup> *Paid Leave Pays Off: The Effects of Paid Family Leave on Firm Performance* (Nat'l Bureau of Econ. Rsch., Working Paper No. 27788, 2021), [https://www.nber.org/system/files/working\\_papers/w27788/w27788.pdf](https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w27788/w27788.pdf); *The Economic and Social Impacts of Paid Family Leave in California: Report for the California Employment Development Department*, (Oct. 13, 2016), [https://edd.ca.gov/siteassets/files/disability/pdf/PFL\\_Economic\\_and\\_Social\\_Impact\\_Study.pdf](https://edd.ca.gov/siteassets/files/disability/pdf/PFL_Economic_and_Social_Impact_Study.pdf); Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis, House of Representatives, *America's Pandemic Workforce: Persistent Structural Inequities Harm Workers & Threaten Future Crisis Response* (Oct. 2022), p. 41, <https://coronavirus.house.gov/sites/democrats.coronavirus.house.gov/files/2022.10.25%20Persistent%20Structural%20Inequities%20Harm%20Workers%20and%20Threaten%20Future%20Crisis%20Response.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> Benjamin Bennett et al., *Paid Leave Pays Off: The Effects of Paid Family Leave on Firm Performance* (Nat'l Bureau of Econ. Rsch., Working Paper No. 27788, 2021), [https://www.nber.org/system/files/working\\_papers/w27788/w27788.pdf](https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w27788/w27788.pdf).

## Wage Replacement

Paid leave programs should ensure that the wage replacement rate is high enough that workers, particularly low-income workers, can afford to take time off through the program they are paying into. The current standard at the state level, which we have implemented across the country, is a tiered wage replacement, which ensures that low-wage workers can afford the benefit. This tiered structure requires that low-wage workers receive between 90-100% of their wages while utilizing the program..

## Eligibility Criteria

We encourage legislators to find solutions for all workers who pay into the program to meet eligibility, rather than using a flat, 180 day standard at one employer to determine benefit eligibility. Focusing on one employer excludes many workers who may spend years paying into the program by working at multiple employers.

## Family Definition

We appreciate the inclusion of grandparents, grandchildren, and siblings as covered family members for family caregiving. While this is better than how the federal, unpaid, Family and Medical Leave Act defines “family,” the statewide standard for family definition in PFML increasingly includes at least some extended family and chosen family members, with 8 out of the 14 PFMLs<sup>10</sup> covering these loved ones. Inclusive definitions of family are important for many diverse communities, as well as for aging adults.<sup>11</sup> We encourage the family definition to be amended to add language similar to that of Maine’s PFML family definition: “any other individual with whom the covered individual has a significant personal bond that is or is like a family relationship, regardless of biological or legal relationship.”

Establish worker and small business advisory boards that help to guide equitable implementation of a paid family and medical leave program.

Workers, families, business owners, and administering agencies in already-existing programs have reported this need to our Network Members repeatedly. These bodies provide guidance on funding, outreach strategies, materials, and more, so that as many workers as possible who are eligible for the program know about and feel empowered to access the program. Oregon’s PFML program currently has this body.

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<sup>10</sup> PFMLs that cover some extended family and chosen family members: New Jersey, Connecticut, Oregon, Colorado, Washington, California, Minnesota, and Maine.

<sup>11</sup> *Navigating the Demands of Work and Eldercare*, U.S. Department of Labor (2016), p. 25, <https://www.dol.gov/sites/default/files/NavigatingTheDemandsOfWorkAndEldercare.pdf> (referring to unpaid, nonprofessional caregivers).



207 E Buffalo Street, Suite 211  
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## Implementation Recommendations

### Establishment of Outreach Grants for Community-Based Organizations

In a state that has robust direct service sectors, establishing a Request for Proposals program that Community-Based Organizations can apply for in order to educate their communities, clients, and constituents would be a highly effective way to connect more workers to the PFML application process. New Jersey piloted this program, and soon Minnesota will follow suit. Minnesota's program will allot up to 0.5% of program funds to be used for outreach grants for community-based organizations, in addition to the administrative staff's outreach capacity.

## Multi-Lingual Supports

We support requiring that employer's materials are in the languages spoken by at least 5% of an employer's workforce. With over 25% of Hawai'ian population speaking another language at home besides English,<sup>12</sup> this standard is important in ensuring equitable access to PFML. We further encourage that the PFML program itself has its materials, applications, and outreach strategies tailored to different communities who speak different languages.

## Safe Time Recommendations

Of the 6 state PFML programs that cover safe time, 5 of them also cover family caregiving for safe time purposes.<sup>13</sup> We encourage this coverage.

We also recommend reducing the length of time needed to work before becoming eligible for safe time. In Connecticut, there is no time requirement for becoming eligible for safe time under their PFML program. While this is the current exception rather than the standard, we encourage creating survivor-centered solutions like these that reduce barriers to PFML for workers and their families who are experiencing this destabilizing violence.

Finally, in "Sharing Technology" section, we encourage adding language that protects the privacy of all applicants, and particularly those requesting safe time, when sharing information across different departments and policies.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide this information. We look forward to continuing to work with you to make paid leave a reality for all workers in Hawai'i. If you have any questions about the information provided, please contact me at [preston@familyvaluesatwork.org](mailto:preston@familyvaluesatwork.org).

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<sup>12</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (2023). Population Estimates, July 1, 2022 (V2022) -- HI ["People"]. *Quick Facts*. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/HI/PST045222>

<sup>13</sup> Oregon's safe time in their PFML only covers the worker and dependent children.



# HAWAII WORKERS CENTER

(503) WORKERS

LATE \*Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

Defending and Respecting the workers of  
Hawaii'i

hawaiiworkerscenter@gmail.com  
Mail: 2252 Puna St., Honolulu, HI 96817  
hawaiiworkerscenter.org

February 1, 2024

**Executive Board  
Committee**

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**Executive Director**

Sergio Alcubilla III, Esq.

Hawaii'i State House of Representatives  
Committee on Labor and Government Relations  
Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair  
Rep. Andrew Takuya Garrett, Vice Chair

**LATE**

**RE: STRONG SUPPORT for H.B. 2575 RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE.**

Dear Chair Rep. Matayoshi, Vice-Chair Rep. Garrett, and Members of the Committee on Labor and Government Relations:

The Hawaii'i Workers Center (HWC) envisions a Hawaii'i in which all workers are empowered to exercise their right to organize for their social, economic and political well-being.

It is a resource of information, education, training and organizing for Hawaii's workers.

The HWC stands in strong support of H.B. 2575 which requires the state's Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family and medical leave insurance program.

Paid family and medical leave is often a luxury that is afforded to higher paying jobs and professional industries. However, the majority of Hawaii's workforce is not afforded this luxury and cannot afford to take unpaid leave to care for a new child or assist a family member who is sick. Our current system only allows an extension of unpaid leave to employees of large employers with more than 100 employees.

Allowing parents to care for newborn children or family members who are ill should not be a luxury or benefit afforded only to the few. As Hawaii's population ages and many continue to live in multigenerational homes, it is imperative that we have a system in place to support our kupuna, young families, and working class communities. This program will begin to lay the framework so that all of Hawaii's workers will not have to make the choice between caring for a loved one and bonding with their newborn or being able to pay rent the next month.

We ask that you please pass and support H.B. 2757.

Sincerely,

Sergio Alcubilla  
Executive Director

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/29/2024 7:27:59 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Kunitake	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Scot Z. Matayoshi, Vice Chair Andrew Takuya Garrett, and House Committee Labor & Government Operations,

My name is Caroline Kunitake and I am providing testimony in support of HB2757.

Women, as primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents, are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family and medical leave. According to AARP Hawaii, there are approximately 157,000 unpaid family caregivers in the State. According to American Association of University Women (AAUW), moms working full-time, year-round are paid 74 cents for every dollar paid to dads. This is known as the motherhood penalty.

HB2757 would require the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish and administer a **family leave insurance program**. The program extends family leave to 16 weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees. Mothers who gave birth would be able to take paid family leave in addition to temporary disability insurance (TDI). This bill would eliminate the previous threshold of 100 employees for employers to be subject to the family leave law.

Please support this legislation. Our state needs to support the caregivers of our keiki and kupuna.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide supportive testimony. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Mahalo,

Caroline Kunitake



**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/29/2024 7:58:03 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Elizabeth Hansen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha - please support this bill.

The United States is the only developed country without national paid family leave. Thirteen states and the District of Columbia have passed paid family leave laws, and the states with paid family leave have seen significant health, social and economic benefits. Paid family leave is good for business—employees become more productive and loyal when they have it.

Paid family leave allows workers to take time off and still receive part of their income when they need to care for their own serious health needs or those of a loved one, or to bond with a new child.

HB2757 would require the department of labor and industrial relations to establish and administer a family and medical leave insurance program. The program extends family leave to 12 weeks and medical leave to 26 weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees. Employees can take family leave to care for a new child, a family member with a serious health condition, to care fo a qualifying service member who is individual’s next of kin, and for victims of domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking to take self care. Employees can take medical leave when they have a serious health condition that makes the covered individual unable to perform the functions of the individual's position. The medical leave insurance program would meet Hawai‘i’s temporary disability insurance (TDI) requirement.

Mahalo,

Elizabeth Hansen, Hakalau HI 96710

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/29/2024 8:12:06 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rodger Hansen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha/ please support this bill. The USA is the only country without national paid family leave. Thirteen states and the District of Columbia have passed paid family leave laws, and the states with paid family leave have seen significant health, social and economic benefits. Paid family leave is good for business—employees become more productive and loyal when they have it.

Paid family leave allows workers to take time off and still receive part of their income when they need to care for their own serious health needs or those of a loved one, or to bond with a new child.

HB2757 would require the department of labor and industrial relations to establish and administer a family and medical leave insurance program. The program extends family leave to 12 weeks and medical leave to 26 weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees. Employees can take family leave to care for a new child, a family member with a serious health condition, to care fo a qualifying service member who is individual’s next of kin, and for victims of domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking to take self care. Employees can take medical leave when they have a serious health condition that makes the covered individual unable to perform the functions of the individual's position. The medical leave insurance program would meet Hawai‘i’s temporary disability insurance (TDI) requirement.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Rodger Hansen / Hakalau HI 96710

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/29/2024 9:36:21 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cardenas Pintor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support this bill.

Mahalo nui,

Cardenas Pintor

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 8:06:54 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jessie L Gonsalves	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT HB2757! PAID FAMILY LEAVE IS A MUST FOR WORKING MOTHERS WHO'S JOBS ONLY HAVE TDI AND FMLA TO USE AND CAN ONLY BE OUT OF WORK FOR A SHORT TIME AFTER HAVING A BABY. THIS NEEDS TO BE PASSED!

Jessie Gonsalves

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 8:35:17 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mele Andrade	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Garrett and committee members,

I am asking for your support of HB2757 for Paid Family Leave. The US is the ONLY industrialized country in the WORLD that does not have a paid leave program for families. Some states in the US have passed a paid leave program and Hawaii should be next! We are losing what makes Hawaii special, our 'ohana. Too many are forced to leave Hawaii due to the high cost of living to raise their keiki somewhere else!

Mothers and fathers also deserve time to bond with their new baby. Early attachments are so important, they are the foundation for every other relationship in life. Mothers who are able to stay home are also more likely to breastfeed and less likely to have postpartum depression. Strong mother's raise strong keiki. We need better supports in order to raise healthy, strong, and thriving keiki.

When I had my children, we could not afford to take off from work without pay and we could not afford \$2000 per month for infant child care. My husband and I worked varied shifts, meaning when he was working, I was home with the kids and vice versa. He worked overnight shifts mostly, which was very taxing on his physical and mental health. Because of this schedule, I also had no help. We were both like single parents. I struggled with my own postpartum depression because of the lack of support I was getting and the stress of juggling schedules.

Please don't let families have to continue to struggle and make these types of decisions! No one should have to choose between caring for a loved one and a paycheck! And everyone will need some type of care in their lifetime!

Please support HB 2757 to keep Hawaii the special place that it is!

Mahalo,

Mele Andrade

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 8:36:59 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tricia-Lee Lum Ho	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Please pass this bill!

Mahalo,

Tricia-Lee Lum Ho

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 8:38:43 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Bryan Mick	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Me and my partner both have government jobs, and luckily had enough paid leave to use during the 12 weeks of unpaid FLMA following the birth of our son. It was still a challenge to leave our son at home (the waitlist for infant daycare is a whole other issue) and return to work, and I cannot fathom what it is like for new parents who don't have any paid leave.

Government folks always give lip service to putting children first, but its funding priorities say otherwise. Please take this chance to show your support for families and pass this bill.

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 8:51:39 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Arianna Feinberg	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB2757 for paid family leave! Working families need a safety net in case of sickness or injury of themselves or a loved one as well as time to bond with new babies. Thank you for your support!



**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 8:54:50 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello,

I am writing to you in strong support of HB2757 for the implementation of paid family and medical leave in Hawai‘i. This critical policy is not only beneficial for keiki, kūpuna, caregivers, and families throughout our islands, but also contributes to the overall well-being of our community. Paid leave should be accessible to ALL.

The U.S. is the ONLY developed country in the world without paid family and medical leave. Thirteen states have passed paid leave laws. But as of right now, Hawai‘i’s workers are guaranteed 0 weeks of paid leave. This simply is not acceptable. I should be able to take time off to care for myself and my loved ones without sacrificing my paycheck and worrying about putting food on my table.

Paid family and medical leave provides an important safety net for employees during significant life events – things that can and do happen to everyone. This policy promotes the health and stability of families, but also fosters a more compassionate and supportive work environment. I know I am more likely to work for a company that values my health and ‘ohana, as well as my output. It’s a win-win for businesses and families.

Paid leave is an investment in our community that will improve health, relationships, and overall quality of life. It's time that ALL families and workers have access to paid family and medical leave so they can THRIVE in Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for your consideration and I look forward to your support in moving HB2757 forward.

Me ke aloha ‘āina,

Nanea Lo

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 8:56:34 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Younghee Overly	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Because I was fortunate enough to work at a large national corporation, I was able to combine personal choice holidays, vacation, and maternity leave to take 16 weeks off 27 years ago giving me time to bond with my son and adjust to my new life as a mom. I cannot believe most of the workers in Hawaii still do not have this option. Small businesses in Hawaii will lose workers to national corporations. Please pass this measure for our newborns, kupuna, working families and small businesses.

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 8:56:58 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Zoe Brooks-Jeffiers	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Garrett, and Committee on Labor & Government Operations Members, my name is Zoe.

I am testifying in support of bill HB 2757, which would create a paid family and medical leave program in Hawai'i. The US is the ONLY "developed" country that does not have guaranteed paid family and medical leave. Thirteen states are wroking to close that gap, but right now, Hawai'i is not one of them. We have 0 weeks of paid leave. Here, 'ohana is ojur priority, but with the ever increases cost of living, families are having to choose work over caring for themselves, their kupuna, and their keiki in order to put food on their tables and pay their bills. This program would allow working families to take time off to care for themselves and their loved ones without sacrificing pay. Paid leave is proven to be good for businesses, the economy, and most importantly, families.

I have seen this first hand. My brother was born with a rare condition that required him to be hospitalized for the first month of his life and has to have multiple surgeries throughout his time. My parents tried to hide it from me, but I knew how worried they were about money and taking time off to care for them and paying for the bills, when they should have just had to worry about caring for him and helping him heal. Every part of the family is affected when we can't take time to care for our families. So, let's change tha. Let's put our 'ohana first.

Thank you for taking the time to read my story and allowing me to share my support of bill HB 2757. I look foward to seeing it prioritized and passed.

Mahalo nui loa,

Zoe Brooks-Jeffiers

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 9:24:21 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Terri Yoshinaga	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Creates a paid family and medical leave program in Hawai'i. Right now, we have 0 weeks of paid leave, but this bill would allow working families to take time off to care for loved ones – PAID!

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 9:26:59 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Krystal Baba	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Garrett, and Committee Members,

Mahalo for spending time with my family on Opening Day! Sharing the day with my daughter emphasized the importance of caring for our loved ones.

Our ‘ohana needs your support and care for paid leave. Paid leave keeps families afloat when we need it the most. Please **SUPPORT HB2757** to help families thrive in Hawai‘i and stay in Hawai‘i.

Paid leave helps when expecting, when medical needs arise, when service members and their families are caring for our country, when we need safety, when we adopt...

Paid leave is worth my payroll contribution to not have to piecemeal time to care.

Mahalo for listening and taking careful consideration.

Mahalo,  
Krystal Baba

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 9:28:20 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ryan Samonte	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. Please **SUPPORT HB2757**.

Thank you!

Ryan S.

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 9:32:31 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Will Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support creation of a Paid Family Leave program in Hawai‘i. It is LONG past due that Hawai‘i provide this critical workforce and family support to the workers that power our economy and their families.

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 10:14:54 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Wesley Palmer-Lasky	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

My name is [name]. I am testifying in **support** of bill HB2757: Relating to Paid Family Leave.

This bill is important to me because the cost of living in Hawaii is so high that we have 'an epidemic' of people working on the brink of/or in poverty, as well as terrible rates of houslessness. Having a safety net plan like this in place will ensure that life events as specified in this bill, won't further worsen or send people into poverty or force them into unhoused situations.

Mahalo for listening and allowing me to share my support.

Sincerely,

Wesley D. Palmer-Lasky, MD



**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 12:18:40 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Aria Juliet Castillo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As someone who works as a manager for a small business (10< employees) that cannot afford to give paid leave to their workers, I strongly support the Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program. This is a necessity for small businesses and their employees. We lose workers every year because we cannot compete with government benefits packages. A program like this will allow us to retain more employees and take care of them.

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 12:44:29 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sophie Wright	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,**

**My name is Sophie Wright. I am a resident of Hawaii and the parent of a young child born in 2023. I am writing today to testify in strong support of Bill HB2757 which would establish a paid family leave program in our state.**

**Becoming a new parent has given me a firsthand understanding of the challenging decision between maintaining my income and prioritizing my child's well-being during the crucial first 12-weeks of her life. While the early months were marked with joyful moments, they were also filled with sleepless nights, frequent doctor visits, unforeseen expenses, and financial stress.**

**According to a recent study by the National Bureau of Economic Research, new parents collectively lose an average of 4-6 weeks of sleep in the first 12-weeks after their child's birth. This significant sleep deprivation can have substantial impacts on their physical and mental health, potentially affecting their ability to work effectively. For this reason it is necessary for parents to have the option of 12-weeks of paid leave to care for a newborn while also acknowledging that mothers need time to physically recover.**

**In 2024, it is nearly impossible to survive in Hawaii on a single income and for many it is not possible at all to live without any income for 12-weeks while on unpaid FMLA. The current unpaid FMLA policy assumes that each family has another source of income while parents take off minimal time to care for their newborns. For those who are not as fortunate, they have to choose between caring for their child or being able to afford to live.**

**Paid family leave is not just a benefit for individual families; it is also a benefit for our entire society. Studies have shown that paid family leave leads to improved health outcomes for children and parents, reduced stress and depression, and increased economic security. According to a study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, children whose parents have access to paid family leave are less likely to be hospitalized or to have developmental delays.**

**In addition, paid family leave can help to boost the economy by allowing parents to return to work sooner and by supporting local businesses. A study by the Center for American Progress found that paid family leave programs can increase GDP by up to 1.5%. This is**

**because parents are able to spend more money on goods and services, and businesses are able to retain and attract a more productive workforce.**

**By supporting HB2757, you have the opportunity to make a tangible and positive impact on the lives of countless families in Hawaii. Your vote in favor of this bill will contribute to a more equitable and supportive society, where parents can nurture their children, caregivers can provide essential support, and individuals can navigate health challenges with dignity and financial stability. Join us in shaping a brighter future for Hawaii by supporting HB2757.**

**Mahalo for listening and allowing me to share my support.**

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 12:54:49 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Abby Simmons	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and esteemed members of the Committee,

I'm testifying in support of HB2757.

In 2018, only 17 percent of workers in the United States had access to paid family leave through their employers. Women, who are often the primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents, are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family leave. No one should have to sacrifice their financial well-being to care for their keiki or kupuna. The majority of Hawai'i's workforce cannot afford to take unpaid leave to care for a new child or assist a family member with a serious health condition. Hawai'i law only provides a four-week extension of unpaid leave to employees of large employers with more than one hundred employees.

All workers deserve access to family leave, which is essential in allowing parents to care for newborn keiki and family members who are seriously ill. Hawai'i has one of the fastest growing populations over the age of 65 in the nation. From 2020 to 2030, the percentage of people aged 65 and over is expected to increase to 22.5 percent of the state's population. Nearly one-third of workers who do not have access to family leave will need time off to care for an ill spouse or elderly parent. Multiple studies have shown that family leave programs can be established in a manner that is affordable for small businesses and our state. When medical emergencies arise, no one should be forced to choose between caring for their loved ones or earning a paycheck.

Please support this bill.

Mahalo nui loa,

Abby Simmons

Hawai'i Island

Thursday February 1, 2024, Room 309

To: House Committee Labor and Government Relations  
Chair, Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi  
Vice Chair, Rep. Andrew Takuya Garrett

From: Jean Evans, (Individual)

Re: **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2757, Relating to Paid Family Leave**

Dear Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Garrett, and Committee members,

My name is Jean Evans and **I am Strong support of HB 2757 Relating to Paid Family Leave**

It is shocking to know that the United States is the **ONLY** developed country in the world that does not provide paid family leave. Currently 13 states and the District of Columbia do have such laws and all reports show they help to retain talented productive employees while increasing family well-being.

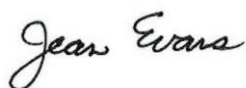
The proposed bill for family and medical leave is based on the successful insurance model which includes a large pool of companies and employees to make it affordable. The leave may be taken to care for a new child, a family member with a serious health condition, or a qualifying service member who is individual's next of kin. This leave may also be taken for self-care for victims of domestic abuse, sexual assault. In addition, an employee may take this leave if they are injured, sick or disabled and cannot perform their duties.

As well as benefiting employees and their families, paid family leave is good for businesses. Many companies are having significant difficulty recruiting employees who often initially choose to apply to a potential employer based their benefit package and, in particular, how they are seen to value and care for their staff. This benefit also has been shown to increase employee retention and loyalty.

Without paid family leave, it's been demonstrated that, workers and working families are relocating to areas that allow families to take paid time leave. This is true here in Hawaii where the cost of living is so high that workers cannot survive if they take unpaid leave or have to quit their job due to a family medical/health issue.

Please pass HB 2757 for the sake of working families in Hawaii.

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony today and I encourage you to pass this important measure.



Jean Evans

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 1:28:01 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rev. Samuel L Domingo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In 2018, only 17 percent of workers in the United States had access to paid family leave through their employers. Women, who are often the primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents, are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family leave. No one should have to sacrifice their financial well-being to care for their keiki or kupuna. The majority of Hawai'i's workforce cannot afford to take unpaid leave to care for a new child or assist a family member with a serious health condition. Hawai'i law only provides a four-week extension of unpaid leave to employees of large employers with more than one hundred employees.

All workers deserve access to family leave, which is essential in allowing parents to care for newborn keiki and family members who are seriously ill. Hawai'i has one of the fastest growing populations over the age of 65 in the nation. From 2020 to 2030, the percentage of people aged 65 and over is expected to increase to 22.5 percent of the state's population. Nearly one-third of workers who do not have access to family leave will need time off to care for an ill spouse or elderly parent. Multiple studies have shown that family leave programs can be established in a manner that is affordable for small businesses and our state. When medical emergencies arise, no one should be forced to choose between caring for their loved ones or earning a paycheck.

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 1:30:17 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rachel Ebert	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

My name is Rachel Ebert, LCSW, PMH-C I am testifying in **support** of bill HB2757.

This bill is important to me because I am a mom and I am a therapist specializing in maternal mental health. For myself in the mini families, I work with having time to heal, bond, and care for new children postpartum is vital to the mental health and well-being of Hawaii's families. Please help our families have more of this precious time together.

Mahalo for listening and allowing me to share my support.

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 1:48:10 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Laurie Temple	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this bill to help Hawaii's working families. Thank you for your support.



**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 1:59:45 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jinan Banna	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In Hawai‘i, where many families live paycheck to paycheck, it is critical that our state implement programs so that families are able to thrive, not just survive. It allows families to provide care for their kūpuna and children and has been shown to increase health equity. As a caregiver for my elderly mother, I clearly see the need for such a measure. This action will strengthen families and our community.

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 2:37:37 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Isis Usborne	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this common sense bill to provide paid family leave for the working families of Hawaii.

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 2:42:31 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kristy Arias	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and Committee Members,

My name is Kristy Arias. I am testifying in support of Bill HB#2757. This bill is important to me because unfortunate things happen in which we are needed outside of work. Families depend on their paychecks. Having paid leave will allow that person to keep supporting their family while they are in need to help a loved one. Please find it in your hearts to support this much needed bill. Mahalo for listening and allowing me to share my support to you all,

Kristy Arias

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 2:45:52 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Camile Cleveland	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Camile Cleveland and I'm a resident of Kaimukī on the Island of O‘ahu. I am testifying on this measure as an individual citizen, and **I strongly support HB2757.**

Paid family leave is critical in order to keep Hawaiian families in Hawai‘i. **13 states and the District of Columbia have passed paid family leave laws although the United States is the only developed country that doesn’t have national paid family leave. The United States is embarrassingly behind** - demonstrating how we undervalue parental responsibilities and other caretakers as a society. The average amount of paid family leave in OECD nations is about one year. The second-worst nation after the United States (which has zero weeks of paid leave) is Mexico, which has 12 weeks of leave.

Hawai‘i struggles to keep our working-age families from moving away. [34,898 residents of Hawai‘i moved to states that passed paid leave laws in 2021.](#) We are competing with states that have paid family and medical leave – including the entire West Coast – for the best workers. When young couples are deciding where to start a family, paid family and medical leave may be an important deciding factor for them.

Hawai‘i has [154,000 unpaid family caregivers](#) for adult family members, providing 144 million hours of care worth \$2.6 billion per year, and those numbers will continue to increase as our population ages.

I would love to see this measure pass with **more than twelve weeks paid family leave**, and see Hawai‘i be a leader in passing a Paid Family Leave policy which truly values the parents and caretakers and drives longer-term benefits in the state. As stated in a [brief by the National Conference of State Legislatures](#), "**Families lose billions in wages by taking unpaid leave, reducing their time at work to care for family members, or by paying for child care. Studies suggest that paid leave leads to healthier babies who have better outcomes later in life, and enables mothers to stay better connected to the workforce, which leads to higher earnings.**"

Paid Family Leave should be a unanimous, common-sense measure. Such a policy shows that we value those who care for keiki and kūpuna, and is long overdue for Hawai‘i.

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 3:13:11 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Anna Mackey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

No one should have to sacrifice their financial well-being to care for their family. A majority of Hawai'i's workforce cannot afford to take unpaid leave to care for a new child or assist a family member with a serious health condition.

Hawai'i law provides only a four-week extension of unpaid leave to employees of large employers with more than 100 employees. In 2018, only 17 percent of workers in the United States had access to paid family leave through their employers. Women—often the primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents—are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family leave.

Hawai'i has one of the fastest growing populations over the age of 65 in the nation. From 2020 to 2030, the percentage of people aged 65 and over is expected to increase to 22.5 percent of the state's population. Nearly one-third of workers who do not have access to family leave will need time off to care for an ill spouse or elderly parent.

Multiple studies have shown that family leave programs can be established in a manner that is affordable for small businesses and our state. When medical emergencies arise, no one should be forced to choose between caring for their loved ones or earning a paycheck. It's time for Hawai'i to step up and provide this critical economic and social support for workers and their families.

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 3:38:26 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Heather Lusk	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Garrett and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2757 which would require the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance payment of benefits. By 1/1/2027, requires the Department to start receiving claims and paying benefits under the program. Specifies eligibility requirements and employee protections under the program.

Hawai‘i law provides only a four-week extension of unpaid leave to employees of large employers with more than 100 employees. In 2018, only 17 percent of workers in the United States had access to paid family leave through their employers. Women—often the primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents—are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family leave.

As a community which values family above much else, we must walk our talk by expanding family leave

thank you

Heather Lusk

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 3:58:23 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Marilyn Mick	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

No one should have to sacrifice their financial well-being to care for their family. A majority of Hawai'i's workforce cannot afford to take unpaid leave to care for a new child or assist a family member with a serious health condition.

Hawai'i law provides only a four-week extension of unpaid leave to employees of large employers with more than 100 employees. In 2018, only 17 percent of workers in the United States had access to paid family leave through their employers. Women—often the primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents—are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family leave.

Hawai'i has one of the fastest growing populations over the age of 65 in the nation. From 2020 to 2030, the percentage of people aged 65 and over is expected to increase to 22.5 percent of the state's population. Nearly one-third of workers who do not have access to family leave will need time off to care for an ill spouse or elderly parent.

Multiple studies have shown that family leave programs can be established in a manner that is affordable for small businesses and our state. When medical emergencies arise, no one should be forced to choose between caring for their loved ones or earning a paycheck. It's time for Hawai'i to step up and provide this critical economic and social support for workers and their families.

Mahalo, Marilyn Mick, Honolulu

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 4:03:31 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shannon Matson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In 2018, only 17 percent of workers in the United States had access to paid family leave through their employers. Women, who are often the primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents, are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family leave. No one should have to sacrifice their financial well-being to care for their keiki or kupuna. The majority of Hawai'i's workforce cannot afford to take unpaid leave to care for a new child or assist a family member with a serious health condition. Hawai'i law only provides a four-week extension of unpaid leave to employees of large employers with more than one hundred employees.

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

As a working parent of two, with an aging parent, I strongly support this bill. All workers deserve access to family leave, which is essential in allowing parents to care for newborn keiki and family members who are seriously ill. Multiple studies have shown that family leave programs can be established in a manner that is affordable for small businesses and our state. When medical emergencies arise, no one should be forced to choose between caring for their loved ones or earning a paycheck. Let's show Hawai'i we value 'ohana by providing this necessary support.

Mahalo,

Shannon M.

Hawai'i Island Resident



**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 4:31:00 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nate Hix	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We all believe that people should be able to take care of their family members when it's needed. Hawai'i has a great opportunity to give its residents this ability by passing this bill and joining almost all of the other developed nations who already have paid family leave policies in place. Please pass this bill.

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 4:37:54 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Anne Leake	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

All people, regardless of how much their job pays, should be able to take time off to care for a family member. Lower paying jobs don't often have this benefit. As a retired nurse practitioner I've seen several low income families who have suffered tremendously when the bread winner must leave a job to care for an elder or a sick child. Please give favorable consideration to HB2757

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 4:52:59 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Raymond Catania	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee members,

I fully support HB2757. This basically is a Bill that supports the right of women workers who need paid time off to care for their families.

Mahalo,

Raymond Catania, Lihue Kauai

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 4:56:40 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
RoAnn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to express my wholehearted support for the proposed Paid Family Leave Bill, a crucial piece of legislation that addresses a fundamental need in our society. The proposed bill not only recognizes the importance of fostering strong family bonds but also acknowledges the economic realities many face when navigating these critical life events.

Paid family leave is not just a matter of personal choice; it is an investment in the well-being of families and the broader community. This legislation, by providing financial support during significant life events like childbirth or caring for a sick family member, empowers individuals to make decisions that prioritize family without sacrificing economic stability. Moreover, studies consistently show that access to paid family leave correlates with improved health outcomes, reduced stress, and increased job satisfaction, ultimately contributing to a more productive and resilient workforce.

In addition to the social benefits, the Paid Family Leave Bill is an essential step towards achieving gender equality in the workplace. By establishing a framework that allows both men and women to take time off for family-related matters without jeopardizing their professional standing, we move closer to dismantling the barriers that perpetuate gender-based disparities in the workforce.

This legislation is not just a policy; it's a statement about the values we uphold as a society, reflecting our commitment to supporting families and fostering a more inclusive and equitable work environment.

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 6:13:46 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christy MacPherson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Garrett, and members of the House Committee on Labor and Government Operations,

I am in strong SUPPORT of HB2757. It is time that ALL workers, particularly low-wage workers, are provided with the same *humane* working conditions that other workers are afforded. Being able to stay home when you are sick or when your young children are sick and not lose your pay (that is unfortunately never enough to begin with) is a benefit that all employers should be providing for their employees. This also obviously reduces the spread of viruses that could have serious health impacts for co-workers.

I can't even begin to count the number of times I have seen friends and families whom I worked with having to *drag* themselves to work when they are feeling their absolute worst because they have to pay their bills. I've witnessed single, homeless parents having to call in sick in order to take care of their babies or toddlers because no one else could care for them. That meant money taken out of the paychecks they depended on in order to move out of our shelter and into housing. These are just a few examples of what our low-wage workers are going through out there.

Mahalo nui to our legislators who introduced and support this critical piece of legislation.

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 6:22:03 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jennifer Lieu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha! Hawai‘i families face unique challenges, and the implementation of paid family leave is essential to address these pressing issues. In a state where many families are grappling with the high cost of living and financial instability, it is imperative that we establish programs enabling families to not merely survive but thrive. Currently, only one in four private sector workers in Hawai‘i has access to paid family leave, highlighting a significant gap that must be bridged. Paid Family & Medical Leave (PFML) is not just a matter of financial relief; it brings about tangible health benefits. PFML allows individuals to better manage chronic diseases by providing the time needed for proper treatment. Moreover, it plays a pivotal role in enhancing the health of both mothers and fathers. For mothers, the ability to stay with their children promotes increased breastfeeding, fostering lifelong health benefits for infants. Beyond this, PFML enables families to care for their kūpuna, maintaining the cultural fabric of Hawai‘i. Embracing paid family leave has been shown to contribute to increased health equity, recognizing and addressing the diverse needs of our community. It's time for Hawai‘i to prioritize the well-being of its families and invest in a brighter, healthier future through comprehensive paid family leave programs.

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 6:55:13 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kathy Shimata	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I believe that no one should have to sacrifice their financial well-being to care for their family. A majority of Hawai'i's workforce cannot afford to take unpaid leave to care for a new child or assist a family member with a serious health condition.

Hawai'i law provides only a four-week extension of unpaid leave to employees of large employers with more than 100 employees. Women—often the primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents—are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family leave.

Hawai'i has one of the fastest growing populations over the age of 65 in the nation. From 2020 to 2030, the percentage of people aged 65 and over is projected to increase to 22.5 percent of the state's population. Nearly one-third of workers who do not have access to family leave will need time off to care for an ill spouse or elderly parent.

Multiple studies have shown that family leave programs can be established in a manner that is affordable for small businesses. When medical emergencies arise, no one should be forced to choose between caring for their loved ones or earning a paycheck. It's time for Hawai'i to step up and provide this critical economic and social support for workers and their families.

Mahalo for considering my views.

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 7:16:37 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
John Bickel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This program is long overdue. If we really care about families, we need paid family leave insurance.



**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 7:19:28 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Greg and Pat Farstrup	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

we support this bill.

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 7:36:51 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susannah Lee Kandikatti	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

My name is Susannah Lee Kandikatti. I am testifying in **support** of bill HB2757.

This bill is important to me because I have a young child and am also taking care of my aging father. This bill will provide the financial support and peace of mind if an emergency within my family unit comes up and I need to take leave from work.

Mahalo for listening and allowing me to share my support.

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 7:39:44 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Renee Rabb	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Paid family leave is critically important to provide economic security for new parents. If we want to be a state that values families, let's pass this bill.

Renee Rabb

District 4

Keaau, HI

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 8:03:55 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nancy Manali-Leonardo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a retired Registered Nurse and I strongly support paid time off for families, or individuals who need to care for themselves, or their close family members.

Not allowing for the security of paid time off from a job can add to person's stress, prolong healing, deny close needed bonding of new, or adopted children, ill children, newly diagnosed adults or elders, or escalate financial hardship by disabling an individuals conditions even more because they have no other options for short-term care but a family member.

Thank you in advance for passing the important Bill.

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 9:23:06 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mamiko Carroll	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Garrett, Rep. Kapela, Rep. Martinez, Rep. Sayama, Rep. Tam, and Rep. Alcos,

I am writing in SUPPORT of HB2757, which would create a paid family and medical leave program in Hawai'i. This program would allow people to take time off to care for themselves and their families without sacrificing pay. I support this bill as someone who was able to dedicate myself to home hospice care of a beloved family member recently. It was the hardest thing I have ever had to do, and one of the most beautiful, joyful, and loving times of my life. We should all have the opportunity to be able to make the choice to care for our loved ones without having to worry about losing pay. With our high cost of living, losing even one paycheck can be devastating. No-one should have to choose between a paycheck and the ability to care for a loved one in a time of need.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in SUPPORT of HB2757.

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 9:30:36 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Leilani Kailiawa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

I am writing to you in strong support of HB2757 for the implementation of paid family and medical leave in Hawai‘i. This critical policy is not only beneficial for keiki, kūpuna, caregivers, and families throughout our islands, but also contributes to the overall well-being of our community. Paid leave should be accessible to ALL.

The U.S. is the ONLY developed country in the world without paid family and medical leave. Thirteen states have passed paid leave laws. But as of right now, Hawai‘i’s workers are guaranteed 0 weeks of paid leave. This simply is not acceptable. I should be able to take time off to care for myself and my loved ones without sacrificing my paycheck and worrying about putting food on my table.

Paid family and medical leave provides an important safety net for employees during significant life events—things that can and do happen to everyone. This policy promotes the health and stability of families, but also fosters a more compassionate and supportive work environment. I know I am more likely to work for a company that values my health and ‘ohana, as well as my output. It’s a win-win for businesses and families.

Paid leave is an investment in our community that will improve health, relationships, and the overall quality of life. It's time that ALL families and workers have access to paid family and medical leave so they can THRIVE in Hawai‘i.

In my own personal experience, I am from Hawai'i Island. I spent 6 weeks on Oahu before my youngest son was born. He was hospitalized at Kapiolani Medical Center for Women & Children for 7 months. I was at his bedside for the duration of his stay there. I was on TDI, however, those funds were exhausted. I needed to quit because I wanted to be able to take care of my son, who needs medical care. It was important for me, as a mother, to be at his bedside to care for him. Paid Family Leave would have been beneficial for our family.

Mahalo for your consideration, and I look forward to your support in moving bill #2757 forward.

With gratitude

Leilani Kailiawa

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 10:11:07 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Axel Beers	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I am writing in strong support of HB2757, requiring the establishment of a paid family leave program for Hawai`i. Paid family leave has proven benefits, including decreased infant mortality rates, lessened burdens on senior care homes and care workers, and increased health equity across racial and socioeconomic groups.

According to the Aloha United Way, about half of the households in Maui County make below the household survival budget. We are asset limited, income constrained, and employed. In the event that a member of the household gets a serious illness, or an elder requires senior care, our families would be in severe crisis and unable to make the income required for survival.

The United States is the only modernized country which does not mandate paid family leave, and a number of states have enacted this legislation. In Hawai`i, where we value so closely our family, we should also have this legislation.

My only feedback at this time is to examine funding mechanisms to ensure that the burden to pay for this program does not fall on median income earners and below. Please fund this program through methods that raise revenue from high income earners.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Axel Beers



**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 10:27:16 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sara Harris	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am an OBGYN on Oahu and I am in strong support of paid family leave.

As a new mother who just completed her 12 weeks of maternity leave, this is an issue near and dear to my heart. I was so fortunate to be able to be off for a full 12 paid weeks after the birth of my son but the logistics and nuances behind the process were very confusing, even for me - someone who works in the medical field and is expected to fill out forms for my patients for such leave all the time. I had to piece together sick leave and vacation hours, in addition to my extra earned leave in order to be paid for the full time off. I know that many of my patients are not so lucky.

I have so many patients who get far less time off and often not at full pay. They must struggle with the difficult decision to return to work too soon after birth or take unpaid leave, which many just cannot afford to do. I can't even think about what I would have done if I had to return to work at 6 weeks postpartum, juggling the balance of providing for my family financially while also physically providing for my child. I know I would not have been able to do my job at work or complete my responsibilities at home to the best of my ability. Paid family leave can eliminate these challenging choices and ultimately will lead to a more effective workforce with parents returning to work after a more reasonable time with their family.

Please support HB2757! Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sara Harris, MD

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/30/2024 11:06:20 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tony Radmilovich	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is well planned bill, please pass it!

**Chair Scot Matayoshi**  
**Vice Chair Andrew Garrett**

**House Committee on Labor & Government Operations**

**Thursday, February 1, 2024**  
**9:00 AM**

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Garrett, Members of the House Committee on Labor & Government Operations,

My name is Jun Shin. I am a labor and social justice activist, testifying as an individual in **SUPPORT** of **HB2757**, Relating to Paid Family Leave. As you may already know and as other testifiers will attest, there is no federal law guaranteeing paid family and medical leave for private sector workers. Hawai'i law provides only a four-week extension of unpaid leave to workers in workplaces with more than 100 employees.

Working people should not be asked/forced to choose between caring for a family member or taking care of themselves and getting paid. The vast majority of our people are struggling to survive in Hawai'i with our high cost of living and the general affordability crisis. It might be a bit of a cliché at this point, but a cliché is a cliché for a reason. This is especially the case for workplaces/industries with low wages and/or little to no benefits. Making sure that workers are able to at least receive a portion of their lost wages will go a long way in making sure they and their families are able to maintain a sense of stability during difficult times.

It's also a huge issue that even with unpaid leave, there is a huge chunk of workers left out. Half of our workers labor daily in small businesses<sup>1</sup>. Small business workers should also be able to pay the bills while taking care of either themselves or their family members. A future paid family and medical leave program **MUST** include small business workers.

Please **PASS** House Bill 2757 out of your committee. Give working people a break, literally!

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Jun Shin,  
State House District 23 | State Senate District 12  
Cell: 808-255-6663  
Email: junshinbusiness729@gmail.com

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<sup>1</sup>

<https://advocacy.sba.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Small-Business-Economic-Profile-HI.pdf>



**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 1:25:28 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Thomas Brandt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 6:44:44 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Justin Hughey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha members of Labor and Government Operations Committee,

**I am testifying in strong support of HB2757!**

In 2018, only 17 percent of workers in the United States had access to paid family leave through their employers. Women, who are often the primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents, are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family leave. No one should have to sacrifice their financial well-being to care for their keiki or kupuna. The majority of Hawai'i's workforce cannot afford to take unpaid leave to care for a new child or assist a family member with a serious health condition. Hawai'i law only provides a four-week extension of unpaid leave to employees of large employers with more than one hundred employees.

All workers deserve access to family leave, which is essential in allowing parents to care for newborn keiki and family members who are seriously ill. Hawai'i has one of the fastest growing populations over the age of 65 in the nation. From 2020 to 2030, the percentage of people aged 65 and over is expected to increase to 22.5 percent of the state's population. Nearly one-third of workers who do not have access to family leave will need time off to care for an ill spouse or elderly parent. Multiple studies have shown that family leave programs can be established in a manner that is affordable for small businesses and our state. When medical emergencies arise, no one should be forced to choose between caring for their loved ones or earning a paycheck.

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 7:18:52 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Erica Yamauchi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, Chair, Vice Chair and members of the committee:

I'm Erica Yamauchi, and am writing in strong support of this bill for paid family leave. I am a mother of two children and even with a lot of privileges, it was difficult for our family to find appropriate childcare for our daughters.

In Hawai'i, where many families live paycheck to paycheck, it is critical that our state implement programs so that families can thrive. Only one in four private sector workers has access to paid family leave right now.

Paid family leave has many known health benefits, and is a critical investment in the health of our community. It allows people to better manage their chronic disease by creating time they can get treatment, improves wellness for both mothers and fathers, and allows families to provide care for their kūpuna.

It has also been shown to increase health equity, which has community and societal benefits.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 7:45:12 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Chris Barzman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

My name is Chris Barzman. I am testifying in **support** of bill HB2757.

This bill is important to me because this bill creates a paid family and medical leave program in Hawai'i. Right now, we have 0 weeks of paid leave, but this bill would allow working families to take time off to care for loved ones – PAID!

Mahalo for listening and allowing me to share my support.



**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 7:46:21 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Maki Morinoue	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

I SUPPORT HB2757

Please create the path to nourishing our future to not only survive but thrive and build families here.

Mahalo

Maki Morinoue

Hōlualoa



Testimony on H.B. 2757, Relating to Paid Family Leave  
Hawaii House of Representatives  
Committee on Labor and Government Operations  
January 31, 2024

Written Testimony of  
Vicki Shabo, Senior Fellow for Gender Equity, Paid Leave and Care Policy and Strategy  
Better Life Lab at New America

As a paid leave policy expert, I write **to provide comments on H.B. 2757**, which would establish a statewide paid family and medical leave program (PFML) in Hawaii. I commend the effort to create a statewide paid leave program and suggest some modifications to ensure that this proposal is as effective as possible at meeting the needs of Hawaii's workers and families based on other states' experiences and a large body of research.

### Why Paid Leave?

Before discussing specific program parameters, it is important to outline the value of paid leave policies to workers and families, businesses, and the public. In Hawaii, the need for paid leave and the constituencies that high-quality paid leave will disproportionately help are outline [here](#).

Well-designed paid leave programs support the [financial security of families](#), [women's labor force participation rate](#) and [women's earnings](#), and paid leave for men supports both women's earnings and [fathers' engagement](#) with their children. Paid leave is also associated with improved health, including improved [infant](#) and [child development](#), increased [breastfeeding rates](#) and [early-month immunizations](#) among first children, reduced [infant mortality](#), improved [maternal health](#), better [ability to manage and afford cancer treatment](#) and a [better likelihood of cancer patients staying employed](#), and reduced [occupational injuries](#). On maternal health, a [brand new paper](#) from Obstetrics and Gynecology, published this month, shows positive effects on breastfeeding, depression and post-partum visits for women in paid leave states, including larger effects on populations eligible for Medicaid.

Paid leave also benefits businesses, from [supporting recruitment](#) to reduced turnover to increased productivity and [firm performance](#). In states with the longest-standing paid leave programs small employers are supportive of paid leave programs and most report positive or neutral effects on productivity, morale, loyalty, and the ease of dealing with employees' leaves (see studies evidence on each of [California](#), [New Jersey](#), [Rhode Island](#), and [New York](#)). In New York and New

Jersey, academic research shows that small businesses [became even more favorable](#) toward paid leave programs in those states over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, and that larger employers who had an employee take a paid leave became more favorable too.

Access to paid leave also associated with [reduced use of public assistance programs](#) and receipt of lower dollar amounts in public assistance; paid sick leave has also been linked to [less need for other forms of public assistance](#).

### **H.B. 2757 and Suggested Modifications**

If enacted, Hawaii would join 13 other U.S. states and the District of Columbia in guaranteeing workers access to paid leave. A resource guide with an overview of state paid leave programs can be found [here](#), including the states in which these programs exist, the utilization of these programs as a share of the workforce, and the distribution of parental, family caregiving, and personal medical claims. An overview of the benefits provided, the funding mechanisms used, and the family members covered, please see this [explainer](#) and the charts and tables therein.

To make Hawaii's program as effective as possible, I would recommend some modifications to H.B. 2757 as written:

- **Benefit levels.** Adjust the wage replacement scheme to be more in line with other states, both with respect to the rate of benefits for lower-income workers and the percentage of state average weekly wage (SAWW) to which that rate applies – ideally workers earning 50% of SAWW rather than 30% would receive 90% of their wages; legislators should also consider just two tiers instead of three for simplicity. The best research shows that low-earners and men need about 80% of their typical wages to be able to utilize leave. Even if no additional changes are made, clarifying language is needed about how benefits are calculated as a share of SAWW for workers who are in the second and third tier of earners defined by the bill to be clear that it's only the portion of wages above the lowest tier on which benefits are paid at a lower rate. See Minnesota for a structure like the current one, and Washington state for a two-tier model.
- **Eligibility.** Workers who have requisite earnings to qualify for paid leave should be able to access the program even if they have been at their job for a short period of time. The 180-day tenure requirement is restrictive. The best practice in states is to tie eligibility to earnings, and to make that threshold relatively low to address the needs of lower-wage workers.
- **Family member – include non-blood relatives.** Many states include family caregiving leave for people that are close, like family, but are not blood relatives. This disproportionately helps seniors, LGBTQ people, and people with disabilities.
- **Domestic Violence purpose.** To be consistent with other states and with workers' needs, DV/SA leave should apply not just to a victim/survivor but to a relative of a victim/survivor aiming to help them.

- **Health care provider certification.** To meet the needs of Hawaii workers with relatives in need of caregiving in other countries, health care certifications should also be accepted from the country or jurisdiction in which the family member with a serious health condition resides or if that jurisdiction is outside of the United states.
- **Employment protections – create consistency with right to reinstatement in the FMLA.** The language in the bill is not as protective as the FMLA and may create confusion. The right to restoration to a different job needs to be tighter and more protective. See [29 U.S.C. § 2614](#) and [29 C.F.R. § 825.215\(e\)](#).
- **Timeline for filing claims.** The bill should specify that claims can be filed in a period of time (30 or 60 days) before a qualifying event begins when the need for leave is foreseeable to lessen burdens on people who are anticipating a qualifying event. This means that the language about claims being paid within two weeks should be adjusted to be clear that a first payment should be made within two weeks of the start of leave, rather than from the filing of a claim, unless leave has already commenced when the claim is filed. It's best practice to also permit claim filing within a period of time after a period of leave is needed and has begun (e.g., 60 days as an outer limit).
- **Implementation timeline.** The program implementation timeline is too short. There should be time (ideally two years) allotted for hiring, stakeholder engagement in regulations, the issuance of regulations, the procurement of IT systems, etc., before payroll contributions can be collected, and then another year from the collection of contributions to the payment of benefits. Since the bill does not have money released to start up an office until January 1, 2025, payroll tax collection should not begin until January 1, 2027, and benefits should begin on January 1, 2028. This recommendation is based on research and interviews with state agency personnel that we have done at New America to advise another state that is currently implementing a new program.
- **Data collection and outreach and education.** It will be critically important to provide adequate funding for the data collection, outreach, and education functions of the program. All of this helps with effective implementation of the program and ensuring that the communities most affected by lack of paid leave can utilize the program they are helping to fund. Business outreach is also very important, so that the private sector can be an active partner in ensuring workers receive the leave they need.

Hawaii is the only one of the original five U.S. states that guaranteed temporary disability insurance to its workers not to have already taken this step; of those states, California (enacted 2002), New Jersey (2008), Rhode Island (2013) and New York (2016) all added paid family leave benefits to its TDI program or requirement and each has expanded their PFL programs since then to be even more inclusive of workers' needs and realities.

I commend Hawaii for considering a program like the one outlined in H.B. 2757 and look forward to providing any technical advice or policy expertise that would be helpful.

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 8:08:07 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Gracie Flores	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawai‘i families need paid family leave:

- In Hawai‘i, where many families are living paycheck to paycheck, it is critical that our state implement programs so that families are able to thrive, not just survive.
- Currently, only one in four private sector workers has access to paid family leave.
- Paid Family & Medical Leave has health benefits:
  - It allows people to better manage their chronic disease by creating time they can get treatment.
  - PFML improves health for both mothers and fathers.
  - When mothers can stay with their children, breastfeeding is increased, which leads to life-long health benefits for babies.
  - It allows families to provide care for their kūpuna.
  - It has been shown to increase health equity.

PFML:

- Is insurance, funded by small deductions from paychecks, that is used to pay employees when they need:
  - Parental leave – for parents, including fathers and adoptive and foster parents, to bond with a new child
  - Medical leave – for a worker to recover from their own serious illness or injury
  - Caregiving leave – for a worker to care for a family member with a serious health condition

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 8:09:42 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Aimee Grace	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hi - my name is Aimee Grace, MD, MPH, FAAP, and I am a mother of two young children, a pediatrician by background, and a health policy/public health professional and writing in my personal capacity. I STRONGLY support paid family leave. It is critical for our keiki, our parents, and our families to make them strong and supported. Last year, I had a new baby and it was stressful financially to not have income while I took maternity leave. Please support this measure - Hawaii should lead on this! Mahalo, Aimee

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 8:43:24 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Michelle K.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am supportive of this bill that every worker deserves paid family and medical leave. It is only when worker's health and family life is stable will they be able to continue to work without worry. The paid leave would help achieve this through community effort. Instead of additional deductions from people's paycheck, perhaps see if current taxes pay to the government is enough to fund this program. Paid leave is worth funding over some of the other projects, e.g. a new stadium. Thank you for your consideration!

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 8:50:33 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Travis Counsell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. My wife and I are considering having children. We both work full time jobs and need both incomes to afford to pay our mortgage and other life expenses. Neither of our jobs have paid family leave for maternity or paternity. They follow the Family & Medical Leave Act, which prohibits them from firing us for 3 months, but does not provide any financial assistance. The fact that we have to decide to either continue working and pay our mortgage or consider having children and become very financially stressed, should not be the primary factors going into having a child or not.

Hawai'i has an incredibly high cost of living, and in many sectors lower income than other places in the US. We strongly support this bill. Providing paid family leave to support the ability for families to afford to live in Hawai'i while also caring and growing their family just makes sense.

As a previous small business owner, I can understand the concern some businesses will express around additional payroll costs, however this cost is split between the employer and employee, and in the long term benefits the employer by having higher employee retention rates. Please support this bill and help improve the quality of life for all families in Hawai'i. Thank you.



To: Hawaii State Senate Committee on Labor and Government Operations

Hearing Date/Time: Thursday February 1, 2024, 9:00am

Place: Hawaii State Capitol, CR 309 & Videoconference

Re: Judith Ann Armstrong supports HB2757 relating to paid family leave.

Dear Chair Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Vice Chair Rep. Andrew Takuya Garrett and members of the Labor and Government Operations Committee,

I, Judith Ann Armstrong, support HB2757 Relating to Family Leave.

The United States is the only developed country without national paid family leave. Thirteen states and the District of Columbia have passed paid family leave laws, and the states with paid family leave have seen significant health, social and economic benefits. Paid family leave is good for business—employees become more productive and loyal when they have it.

Paid family leave allows workers to take time off and still receive part of their income when they need to care for their own serious health needs or those of a loved one, or to bond with a new child.

HB2757 would require the department of labor and industrial relations to establish and administer a **family and medical leave insurance program**. The program extends family leave to 12 weeks and medical leave to 26 weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees. Employees can take family leave to care for a new child, a family member with a serious health condition, to care for a qualifying service member who is individual's next of kin, and for victims of domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking to take self care. Employees can take medical leave when they have a serious health condition that makes the covered individual unable to perform the functions of the individual's position. The medical leave insurance program would meet Hawai'i's temporary disability insurance (TDI) requirement.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB2757.

Sincerely,

Judith Ann Armstrong

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 8:54:19 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Harald Ebeling	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to voice my strong support for HB2757. We are lagging far behind the civilized world when it comes to basic and fundamental support for families in need, paid maternity / paternity leave being perhaps the most glaring and disgraceful omission. HB2757 will at least move us closer to establishing benefits that allow us to care for family members that need help without a severe financial penalty through loss of income.

Please do your part to help HB2757 become law!

Mahalo,  
Harald Ebeling

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 9:00:34 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Raya Esteban	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Marten, Vice Chair Amato and respected committee members,

Thank you for hearing HB 2757. I am in STRONG SUPPORT of this bill.

Mahalo,

Raya Esteban

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 9:13:13 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ka`iulani Galon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a Native Hawaiian and a community advocate for economic justice, I am in support of Paid Family Leave in an effort to mitigate system inequities and support young families to thrive from conception forward. It is important to give support to our families with young children that will give them the best start after being born, by showing through Paid Family Leave that our state feels mothers, fathers and babies are a priority.

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 9:14:42 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Charlene K. Rowley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Legislators,

I am writing in support of this measure which Will improve The quality of life for families In my community.

Kiana Rowley,

'Oma'opio, Kula Maui 96790

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 9:15:18 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Marsha Hee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB2757.

Marsha Hee

Resident of Volcano HI 96785

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 9:27:38 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Arthur John Tarsa. Jr.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Date: Jan. 31, 2024

To: Hawaii State House Committee Labor & Government Operations

Chair: Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi

Vice Chair: Rep. Andrew Takuya Garrett

From: Your Name – Arthur J. Tarsa

Hearing Date/Time/Room: Thursday, February 1, 2024, 9:00 am, Rm. 309

RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB xxxxx/HB xxxxx

Dear Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Garrett and members of the Committee. My name is Arthur J. Tarsa and I am in support of HB2757 and HB1658/SB2046

The United States is the only developed country without national paid family leave. Thirteen states and the District of Columbia have passed paid family leave laws, and the states with paid family leave have seen significant health, social and economic benefits. Paid family leave is good for business—employees become more productive and loyal when they have it.

Paid family leave allows workers to take time off and still receive part of their income when they need to care for their own serious health needs or those of a loved one, or to bond with a new child.

I support paid family leave and urge passage of HB2757 and HB1658/SB2046.

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 9:48:42 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kealoha Madriaga	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Kealoha Madriaga, support HB2757. Growing up in Hawai'i, I witnessed my parents struggle living paycheck to paycheck. Now many years later, as an adult and mother of 2 children, the trend continues as we struggle to raise our own family. It is critical that our state implement programs like these so our local families are able to thrive. The stress of living paycheck to paycheck while caring for our loved ones should be the least of our worries.

Paid Family & Medical Leave will benefit all and allow people to manage their health. Having a health professional background, I have seen firsthand the amount of patients who aren't able to address their own health due to not having the ability to take off of work. If this bill is passed, this will allow patients to take the necessary time to address their health. This will create more time for patients to address any care gaps and improve their overall health. We hope that this will reduce the health disparities we see in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time!



**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 9:58:39 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alapaʻi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We need a paid family and medical leave program in Hawai‘i. Right now, we have 0 weeks of paid leave, but this bill would allow working families to take time off to care for loved ones – PAID! Hawai‘i is a tourist and retirement community. We need to cater to the needs of our people.

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 10:01:47 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cheryl Ho	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am Cheryl Ho, retired social worker, grandmother of 8, testifying from Nu‘uanu, **in strong support of HB2757..**

During the past several months, I have been assisting a friend from church, to arrange for and travel to Fresno, for a critically-needed surgery. It was expected that she would need 2 weeks for the trip, including travel, actual surgery, hospital recuperation, and travel back to Honolulu.

This friend is a single parent with shared legal custody of an 11-year old son. Grandparents in this case are either deceased, or living overseas.

The boy’s mother works night shift in a care facility, and needs to sleep during the day (except on certain weekend days). Leading up to the trip, it became a huge, conflict-ridden issue of how the son would be cared for. She knew that if she had to take time off to care for her son, she would lose up to two weeks of pay.

Two (2) weeks is a long time to expect anyone to take leave without pay, to care for a child. If PAID FAMILY LEAVE is enacted, children who depend on parents for their physical, emotional, and social health will be assured of that care. Their caregiving parent will be able to take leave from work without the worry and financial stress of loss of income.

I strongly urge you to pass this bill, to begin the administrative processes that will bring Paid Family Leave into a reality.

Mahalo for your attention!

Cheryl Ho, Nu‘uanu

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 10:03:17 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joell Edwards	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

My name is Joëll Edwards . I am testifying in **support** of bill HB2757.

This bill remains important to me . I testified last year during committee and will continue to rally for support .

our working families need to know they are supported while they care for their ohana knowing they will have security in the jobs. This also will reduce the stress of the patient. I know that while I was caring for my own mom she would ask me if my was going to lose my job by taking time off work when her diagnosis changed to critical.

I worked in California at that time and was able to take FMLA intermittently and have a work/life balance and support my mom too.

I implore you to not delay this bill again this year , not wait for review from the state as there have been plenty of research, planning etc.

Mahalo for listening and allowing me to share my support.

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 10:03:44 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jill Meinecke	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Garrett and members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my strong support of HB2757 relating to paid family leave.

Right now, workers in the U.S. are not guaranteed a single paid day off from work by federal law. Further, workers in Hawaii, who suffer from the highest cost of living, many who live paycheck to paycheck while caring for their family members, also have no right to paid family leave.

In Hawaii, caring for family members is the backbone of our culture. It's no wonder there's been an increase of crime and worsening mental health due to the stressful conditions and constraints families are operating under. People are struggling to make a living and survive here day to day, and many do not have the means to take care of themselves, much less a dependent loved one.

If we want to have a happier, more productive and successful society here, we must pass a paid family leave law. Imagine new mothers being able to provide the newborn care to their babies without having to worry about how she's going to afford formula or when her next check will come. Picture a world where an adult child has the means to take time off work to find a qualified caregiver for their aging parent with dementia rather than leaving them to fend for themselves, or expecting that person to work full time and care give full time.

It's absolutely time we are realistic about the demands of raising and maintaining healthy families in our tight knit communities. I am sure all of you have been personally affected by the demands of caring for a dependent, whether it was a child, a parent, grandparent, auntie, friend, or other relative.

It's no longer enough to expect folks to "make do" when they can barely care for themselves. Paid Family Leave supports family well-being and the economy, and is an affordable solution for employers and employees. Please, for the sake of our communities, families, and future, pass this legislation.

Mahalo for your consideration.



**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 10:20:53 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dana Fulton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

If we want families to stay in Hawai'i, middle-class families at that, not just the wealthy, we need to support families.

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 12:13:56 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Loren L.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill because I believe family leave is essential to the overall health and well-being.

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 1:09:13 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Michaela Nartia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members.

My name is Michaela Nartia. I am testifying in support of HB2757.

This bill is important to me because I will be a first-time mother in March. I am blessed that I was able to negotiate paid leave with my employer, but this should not have to be the case. Paid family leave is a necessity and should be offered to all. The future of our keiki is heavily impacted when parents are unable to bond with their children.

Mahalo for listening and allowing me to share my support.



**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 1:15:23 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kristin Mills	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong support of HB2757, Paid Family and Medical Leave. Our ohana need to be able to take paid leave to support, care for, and bond with new keiki and to address caregiving needs for themselves or loved ones.

Please support HB2757!

Mahalo,

Kristin Mills

Maui resident, parent, epidemiologist, and health educator

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 1:17:25 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Patrick Karjala	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear members of the LGO committee,

I am writing today in SUPPORT of HB 2757.

Hawaii Family Leave Law (HFLL) covered in HRS 398-3

([https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/hrscurrent/Vol07\\_Ch0346-0398/HRS0398/HRS\\_0398-0003.htm](https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/hrscurrent/Vol07_Ch0346-0398/HRS0398/HRS_0398-0003.htm)) allows for up to 4 weeks of paid leave for the care of a newborn (or other applicable situations). This is unfortunately woefully inadequate in terms of allowing for a parent to properly care for a newly born child.

Drexel University reports: "The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists states that a minimum of six weeks paid leave is essential for the health of mother and child and benefits the employer as well. Six weeks is also the youngest age that most childcare facilities begin offering services. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends 12 weeks of paid leave for parental, medical, and family caregiving purposes. The recommended leave suggested by the International Labour Organization based on their research is 18 weeks, and more than half of countries globally offer more than 14 weeks."

Additionally, increases in paid leave are shown to benefit both families and employers by allowing for better early childhood outcomes for children, lower stress and better health for parents, and better retention and performance from employees taking longer leave. (<https://drexel.edu/hunger-free-center/research/briefs-and-reports/making-the-case-for-paid-family-leave/>)

I am writing to ask the committee support the proposed law to guarantee paid leave for Hawaii families.

Mahalo,

Patrick Karjala  
Mililani, HI

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 1:51:33 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kealakai Hammond	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am a Licensed Mental Health Counselor and Certified Perinatal Mental Health Counselor practicing in Honolulu. Ensuring paid family and medical leave provides new mothers, fathers, caregivers, adoptive parents and other community members the necessary opportunity to recover from childbirth and bond with infants or newly adopted or fostered children, care for dependents experiencing health issues and has a myriad of physical and mental health benefits, that create a positive ripple effect in the greater community. Paid leave provides peace of mind financially when people need to take this time off and contributes significantly to family and child well-being, reduces health care costs, and reduces infant mortality rates.

I work every day with women who are struggling after child birth to care for their new babies while worried about needing to return to work due to financial necessity, and who have to return to work before they are ready or their babies ready because we don't have paid leave. Having access to adequate paid leave would greatly positively impact these women and their families.

Let Hawaii lead in caring for our keiki and families! I strongly urge you to support this bill.

Mahalo,

Kealakai Hammond, LMHC, PMH-C

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 2:15:57 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jesus Guillen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Please pass this bill!**

**LATE**

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 3:24:03 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Serafina Gajate	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

No one should have to sacrifice their financial well-being to care for their family. A majority of Hawai'i's workforce cannot afford to take unpaid leave to care for a new child or assist a family member with a serious health condition.

Hawai'i law provides only a four-week extension of unpaid leave to employees of large employers with more than 100 employees. In 2018, only 17 percent of workers in the United States had access to paid family leave through their employers. Women—often the primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents—are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family leave.

Hawai'i has one of the fastest growing populations over the age of 65 in the nation. From 2020 to 2030, the percentage of people aged 65 and over is expected to increase to 22.5 percent of the state's population. Nearly one-third of workers who do not have access to family leave will need time off to care for an ill spouse or elderly parent.

Multiple studies have shown that family leave programs can be established in a manner that is affordable for small businesses and our state. When medical emergencies arise, no one should be forced to choose between caring for their loved ones or earning a paycheck. It's time for Hawai'i to step up and provide this critical economic and social support for workers and their families.

To: Representative Scot Matayoshi, Chair  
Representative Andrew Garrett, Vice Chair and  
Members of the Committee on Labor and Government

**LATE**

From: Jeanne Y. Ohta

RE: HB 2757 Relating to Paid Family Leave

Position: Strong Support

I am writing in support of HB 2757 Relating to Paid Family Leave. As we discovered during the pandemic, paid family leave is essential for families, employers, our workforce, and the health of our communities.

Paid family leave is good for business because employees are more productive when they have a benefit that helps to protect their families. Paid family leave also protects our workplaces, allowing employees who are sick to stay home to prevent passing illnesses to others.

Paid family leave enables full participation in our economy, workers must have access to the benefits of paid leave otherwise employers face a shortage of workers.

Paid family leave is a priority of the Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus. I respectfully ask the Committee to pass this important measure. Thank you for the opportunity to provide my testimony in strong support of HB2757.

**LATE**

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 4:32:07 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Amy Monk	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, Rep.s Matayoshi and Garrett and LGO Committee members:

Hawaii families have long supported paid family leave. The reasons listed in the document below from 2017 are current today. Since this bill is in the Kupuna package, I would like to highlight reasons #2 and 5 as especially germane to the mission of this caucus. I note there are now 13 states and the District of Columbia with mandatory paid family leave systems and another 8 states with voluntary paid family leave.

[Top10Reasons\\_PaidFamLeave.pdf](#)

**LATE**

June 12, 2022

Representative Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair

Via email only

And the Honorable Members of the Labor & Government Operations Committee  
Hawaii State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Oahu, Hawaii 96813

Re: Testimony in Strong Support of House Bill 2757, Relating to Paid Family Leave  
To be heard via Videoconference on Thursday, 1. February at 9.00 am

Dear Representative Matayoshi,

It is with great pleasure that I write in strong support of House Bill 2757, Relating to Paid Family Leave.

I have been a resident of Hawaii for more than sixty years, and of Kauai almost fifty years. I have been active in the communities of West Kauai and at Kōke'e for almost all of that time. Our son and daughter in law are expecting their first child in February. We were surprised to learn that current Hawaii law allows only up to four weeks of paid leave for a newborn child, or other applicable situations, in stark contrast to much of the rest of the civilized world.

It is my understanding that the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists states that a minimum of six weeks paid leave is essential for the health of mother and child, and benefits the employer as well. I also understand that six weeks is the youngest age that most childcare facilities begin offering services, and that more than half the countries world-wide offer more than fourteen weeks.

Hawaii has long been in the forefront of social services offered to our island population. In this regard – paid family leave – we are left far behind by those many jurisdictions who offer a more reasonable period in which the family must adjust to a new child, and that child adjust to a very different world outside the womb.

I believe that the proposed measure offers much to benefit our island community and urge you to pass House Bill 2757 with your strong support.

Me ke aloha,





**LATE**

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 9:09:12 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lauren Nelson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support. To have a healthy population and future generations, paid family leave is essential.

**HB-2757**

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 6:24:18 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/1/2024 9:00:00 AM

**LATE**

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>		<b>Testify</b>
Ronnie Texeira	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a physician practicing in Hawaii I support this bill.

Ronnie Texeira, MD

The Honorable Scot Z. Matayoshi  
Committee on Labor and Government Operations  
Hawaii State House of Representatives, Room 309  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

**LATE**

January 31, 2024

RE: Testimony in support of HB2757, Relating to Paid Family Leave

Aloha e Chair Matayoshi and Members of the Committee on Labor and Government Operations,

I am writing in **SUPPORT of HB2757, Relating to Paid Family Leave**. All of us will face a time when we will need to care for a new child or a seriously ill family member, or our own serious illness. However, many of our people have to choose between a paycheck and caring for themselves or their loved ones. Paid family leave creates an essential financial support system that helps people thrive, not just survive these stressful life events that we will all inevitably face.

In 2016, my mother was unexpectedly diagnosed with terminal cancer. It was a devastating and horribly stressful time. However, I was extraordinarily fortunate to have been working for the State of Hawai'i, whose policies enabled me to use my accrued sick leave as family medical leave. This ensured I could take leave from work to care for my mother as she died, without worrying about losing a paycheck or not having a job to return to after she passed. This was an enormous privilege that I, and other state workers, including members of the state legislature, benefit from. **Unfortunately, ¾ of private sector workers in Hawai'i do not have this benefit. Passing HB2757 will create equity in benefits across public and private sectors, across high and low wage workers, and across genders, creating a support system for all Hawai'i residents so they can provide essential care to their new children or critically ill 'ohana.**

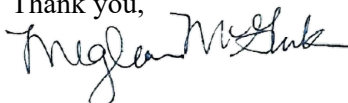
**Paid family leave benefits create healthier, stronger communities.** The state of California has had a paid family leave program like the one introduced in HB2757 since 2004. Data on the effects the law have shown **increases in the amount of time that babies breastfeed—an important factor affecting both mothers' and infant's long-term health—and improvements in bonding between parents and new or adopted children—critical for our keiki's wellbeing.**

(<https://www.cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>)

**Paid family leave also benefits employers.** California employers of all sizes have reported positive effects of paid family leave on their **employees' productivity, performance, morale, and turnover** as well. HB2757 proposes a model like California's, in which **funding for paid family leave comes from employees themselves** through small deductions in their paychecks. Employers do not fund paid family leave, nor do they pay for their employee's wages while they are on leave. However, they benefit from stronger, more resilient workers.

Paid family leave makes sense for our economy, our health, and our wellbeing. I ask that you pass HB2757 to build supports for families to thrive in Hawai'i.

Thank you,



Meghan D. McGurk  
Makiki Resident