

HR-209

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 6:55:43 PM

Testimony for HLT on 3/23/2023 10:40:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Thaddeus Pham	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and HLT Committee members,

As a public health professional and concerned community member, I write in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HR209, which highlights Hep Free 2030 (the statewide hepatitis elimination strategy); recognizes the Hep Free Hawai'i coalition's efforts to make our state truly hepatitis free; and offers an informational briefing on viral hepatitis to the legislature before the next legislative session.

Hawai'i is on the forefront of hepatitis elimination efforts and has been a leader and inspiration for states and entities doing work in this field. This resolution is important because of the extraordinary burden of viral hepatitis on the people of Hawai'i. A recent Hawa'i DOH report demonstrated that death rates associated with hepatitis B are 3 times higher than the national average, especially impacting Asians and Pacific Islanders.

(<https://health.hawaii.gov/news/newsroom/doh-report-finds-high-rates-of-hepatitis-b-and-liver-cancer-mortality/>). The CDC also found disparities in these communities in Hawai'i for hepatitis C. Shockingly, a Hawai'i resident with hepatitis C is expected to die 20 years earlier than the average Hawai'i resident! (<https://academic.oup.com/cid/article/71/5/1149/5581721>)

Clearly, this is an important public health issue that needs more attention. HR209 will support Hawai'i to keep our local communities healthy and safe and "hep free".

With thanks,

Thaddeus Pham (he/him)