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Testimony in SUPPORT of S.B. 3123
RELATING TO FEES

SENATOR JARRETT KEOHOKALOOLE, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Hearing Date: 1/31/2022

Room Number: Via Videoconference

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

3 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health (DOH) **strongly supports** S.B. 3123,
4 which is part of the Governor's Administrative Package, to increase the marriage license fee to
5 support the Hawaii Birth Defects Program (HBDP), modernization of the vital statistics system,
6 operating costs of marriage license agents, and spouse and child abuse programs of the
7 Department of Human Services and Judiciary.

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

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

7 There are 43 states that have birth defects programs. HBDP is needed for the collection, analysis,
8 and reporting of birth defects data. As an active surveillance system, birth defects data are
9 directly abstracted from medical and other records at hospitals and other medical facilities
10 statewide. It provides more complete data (birth defect rate of approximately 4% births)
11 compared to the birth certificate data (congenital anomaly rate of less than 0.2% births).

12 Based on diagnostic codes, the number of possible cases reviewed increased from approximately
13 1,000 to over 2,000 cases in the past few years. Annually approximately 400 babies are found to
14 have birth defects and the entire medical record is reviewed. The data is essential to identify and
15 investigate factors that may cause higher rates of birth defects and to provide information to
16 answer concerns about increased birth defects in a community.

17 Increasing the marriage license fee to keep up with inflation will support HBDP in maintaining
18 its mandated responsibilities. HBDP staff salaries and fringe expenses doubled from 2002 to
19 2021. Based on inflation, a \$60 marriage license fee in 2002 would be equivalent to \$92.88 in
20 December 2021.

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

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