

March 25, 2022

TO: Chair Sen. Jarrett Keohokalol, Chair Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz,
Committee on Health, Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Joshua Brown

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF S.R. NO 206

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO RESTORE FUNDING FOR CERTAIN SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER TREATMENT AGENCIES FOR THE FISCAL YEARS 2022-2023 AND 2023-2024 FOR RESIDENTIAL, OUTPATIENT, AND ADOLESCENT SCHOOL-BASED SERVICES.

I, Joshua Brown, support senate resolution NO206. As a social work graduate student focused on public health, I have been researching substance use disorder (SUD), specifically opioid use disorder (OUD), and its detrimental effects on our community for the last several months. In the State of Hawai'i alone, from August 2017 to August 2018, there were 364 non-fatal opioid overdoses and 59 fatal opioid overdoses (Hawai'i Department of Health, 2018). That equates to one death every six days in the aloha state.

The state needs to address substance use disorder on several fronts, starting with this resolution, if we are going to end the opioid epidemic in Hawaii. With the recent arrival of fentanyl, Hawaii's citizens are in compounded danger of unintentional deaths caused by substance use. I have witnessed one friend lose his mother to opioids, and I know several incarcerated people due to OUD. The Department of Health needs to take all possible action in this fight to save lives and curb SUD in our aloha state. I strongly support the passing of S.R. NO 206.

Mahalo, for reading my testimony.