

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 24 2023

RE: H.B. No. 622
H.D. 2
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Second State Legislature
Regular Session of 2023
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Health and Human Services, to which was referred H.B. No. 622, H.D. 2, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO SUICIDE PREVENTION,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to:

- (1) Make permanent the Prevent Suicide Hawaii Task Force within the Department of Health;
- (2) Require the Task Force to focus on reducing the suicide rate among Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders in the State; and
- (3) Require annual reports to the Legislature.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Human Services, Department of Public Safety, Prevent Suicide Hawai'i Taskforce, University of Hawai'i at Manoa John A. Burns School of Medicine, Stonewall Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii, Papa Ola Lokahi, Hawai'i Primary Care Association, Hawai'i Family Forum, Hawaii Medical Association, 'Ahahui o nā Kauka, and five individuals. Your Committee received testimony in opposition to this measure from the Department of Health.



Your Committee finds that there are on average, one hundred ninety-six suicide deaths in the State per year, which constitutes approximately twenty-two percent of all fatal injuries in the State, and that the number of suicide attempts are five times as many. Your Committee also finds that the Prevent Suicide Hawaii Task Force is a partnership of state, public, and private individuals, organizations, and community groups working in the area of suicide prevention, who collaborate to provide leadership, set goals and objectives, develop strategies, coordinate activities, and monitor the progress of suicide prevention efforts in the State. Your Committee further finds that Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders have a higher rate of suicide compared to other ethnicities such as Caucasians, Japanese, and Filipinos. This measure ensures that a strategic plan is developed and maintained to reduce suicides in the State, with particular focus on the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities.

Your Committee acknowledges the testimony of the Department of Health stating that this measure is premature, since the Prevent Suicide Hawaii Task Force is currently in the process of developing a strategic plan to reduce suicides in the State by at least twenty-five percent by 2025, as requested by H.C.R. No. 66 (2016). Your Committee also acknowledges the Department's request for the Legislature to await taking action on this matter, including naming participants to a permanent task force, in light of the fact that the task force has submitted an interim report to the Legislature in December 2017, and is currently working towards the development of a strategic plan to be delivered in 2025. Therefore, it is necessary to amend this measure to address this request.

Accordingly, your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Deleting language that would have made permanent the Prevent Suicide Hawaii Task Force within the Department of Health;
- (2) Inserting language that:
 - (A) Creates a Prevent Suicide Hawaii Working Group within the Office of Wellness and Resilience;



- (B) Designates the Executive Director of the Office of Wellness and Resilience to serve as the chair of the working group;
 - (C) Requires the working group to examine, evaluate, and determine methods to improve education, awareness, support services, and outreach to best prevent suicides in the State, particularly among Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, farmers, youth, LGBTQIA+, veterans, and other populations identified by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as a high-risk population for suicide;
 - (D) Requires the working group to implement the recommendations in the interim report issued by the Prevent Suicide Hawaii Task Force pursuant to H.C.R. No. 66, S.D. 1 (2016);
 - (E) Sets forth the members of the working group; and
 - (F) Requires the working group to report to the Legislature before the Regular Session of 2025;
- (3) Deleting section 1;
 - (4) Inserting an effective date of June 30, 2050, to encourage further discussion; and
 - (5) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Health and Human Services that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 622, H.D. 2, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 622, H.D. 2, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committees on Judiciary and Ways and Means.



Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Health and Human
Services,



JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA, Chair



