



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
STATE COUNCIL  
ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES  
1010 RICHARDS STREET, Room 122  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
TELEPHONE: (808) 586-8100 FAX: (808) 586-7543  
March 21, 2023

The Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair  
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services  
The Honorable Senator Chris Lee, Chair  
Senate Committee on Transportation and Culture and the Arts  
The Thirty-Second Legislature  
State Capitol  
State of Hawai'i  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Senator San Buenaventura, Senator Lee, and Committee Members:

SUBJECT: HB794 HD1 RELATING TO DISABILITY AWARENESS.

The Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities **supports the intent of HB794 HD1**, which designates the month of October as "Disability Awareness Month: Employment, Enrichment, and Inclusion" in recognition of the employment challenges and successes of persons with disabilities in the State.

The Council supports this measure's goal of supporting and bringing awareness to our working-age disability population. People with disabilities still face disparities in our workforce and, on average, earn less per year than their peers. Our intellectual and developmental disability population still faces challenges finding gainful employment and face unnecessary barriers to our workforce in Hawai'i. However, October is already established as National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), and our State has recognized this through proclamations from the Governor and our Mayors.

NDEAM was created to educate the general public on the issues that workers with disabilities face and how employers can be more inclusive in their hiring practices. This tradition started in 1945 with Public Law 176 from congress. This month has taken many forms over the years and currently resides in the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), which has been in charge of the month and its theme since 2001. This year makes 76 years since the first NDEAM was celebrated.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony **supporting the intent of HB794 HD1**.

Sincerely,

Daintry Bartoldus  
Executive Administrator



**HB794 HD1**  
**RELATING TO HOUSING**  
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services  
Senate Committee on Transportation and Culture and the Arts

March 21, 2023

3:05 PM

Room 224

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The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **STRONGLY SUPPORTS** HB794 HD1, which would designate the month of October as “Disability Awareness Month: Employment, Enrichment, and Inclusion” in recognition of the employment challenges and success of persons with disabilities in the State.

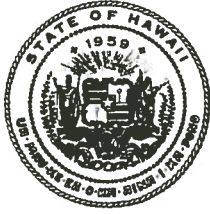
OHA is the principal public agency in the State responsible for the performance, development, and coordination of programs and activities relating to Native Hawaiians.<sup>1</sup> Native Hawaiians face numerous health disparities, which include a myriad of disabilities. OHA takes care to note that at least 11.2% of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander children experience at least one developmental disability, with almost one-third of these children experiencing more than one. Almost half of these families are low income with an annual household income less than 200% of the federal poverty level. Children with developmental disabilities are more likely to have a health issue.<sup>2</sup>

OHA appreciates the opportunity to support **HB794 HD1** and urges the Legislature to pass this measure in the hope of providing greater awareness and support for individuals and families facing disability and different ability. Mahalo nui loa.

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<sup>1</sup> HRS §10-3.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Elliott, Kortney Floyd James, Karen Coleman, *Cross-sectional Comparison of Disparities by Race Using White vs Hispanic as Reference Among Children and Youths With Developmental Disabilities Referred for Speech Therapy*, Oct. 4, 2022, available at <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/article-abstract/2797027>.



## DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

1010 Richards Street, Room 118 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813  
Ph. (808) 586-8121 (V) • TTY (808) 586-8162 • Fax (808) 586-8129

March 20, 2023

### TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AND TRANSPORTATION AND CULTURE AND THE ARTS

#### House Bill 794 HD1 – Relating to Disability Awareness

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports House Bill 794 HD1 – Relating to Disability Awareness. This bill would designate the month of October as "Disability Awareness Month: Employment, Enrichment, and Inclusion" in recognition of the employment challenges and successes of persons with disabilities in the State.

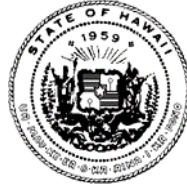
Disability Awareness Month is an opportunity to educate the public about disability employment issues and celebrate the contributions of workers with disabilities. In addition, awareness will reinforce the value and talent people with disabilities add to our workplaces and affirm the State's commitment to a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

KIRBY L. SHAW  
Executive Director

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



CATHY BETTS  
DIRECTOR  
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I  
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**  
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA  
Office of the Director  
P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

March 20, 2023

TO: The Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair  
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

The Honorable Senator Chris Lee, Chair  
Senate Committee on Transportation and Culture and the Arts

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 794 HD1 – RELATING TO DISABILITY AWARENESS.**

Hearing: March 21, 2023, 3:05 p.m.  
Conference Room 224 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this measure.

**PURPOSE:** This bill designates the month of October as "Disability Awareness Month: Employment, Enrichment, and Inclusion" in recognition of the employment challenges and successes of persons with disabilities in the State. Effective 6/30/3000. (HD1)

The House Committees on Culture, Arts, and International Affairs, and Health and Homelessness amended the measure by changing the effective date to June 30, 3000, to encourage further discussion.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one in five adult residents in Hawaii (over 258,000) identifies as having at least one disability that could affect their ability to work. These residents with disabilities represent the diverse demographics of our state, with many successfully employed as role models to other people with disabilities and the population

in general. One of the benefits of Disability Awareness Month will be to shine a spotlight on those people with disabilities in Hawai'i, along with employers who continue their commitment to having an inclusive workforce. This bill will hopefully motivate and encourage the business and educational communities to engage in strengthening the inclusion of people with disabilities in Hawai'i's workforce.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.

**HB-794-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 9:07:16 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/21/2023 3:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Louis Erteschik	Testifying for Hawaii Disability Rights Center	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support.



Testimony to the Senate Committees on Health and Human Services and on  
Transportation and Culture and the Arts  
Tuesday, March 21, 2023  
3:05 p. m.  
State Capitol Conference Room 224 and via videoconference

Re: HB 794 HD 1 Relating to Disability Awareness

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services, Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Transportation and Culture and the Arts:

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.

**The Hawai'i Family Caregiver Coalition supports HB 794 HD 1**, which designates the month of October as "Disability Awareness Month: Employment, Enrichment, and Inclusion" in recognition of the employment challenges and successes of persons with disabilities in the State.

The designation will raise awareness about including people with disabilities in all facets of community life. The designation also creates awareness of the difficulties that people with disabilities still face in fitting into the communities in which they live.

We urge you to support HB 794 HD 1, we urge you to recommend its passage.

We thank you 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)

**HB-794-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 9:28:14 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/21/2023 3:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kaili Swan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

i stand in support of this HB 794 HD1 please pass this bill thank you.



**HB-794-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/17/2023 12:14:11 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/21/2023 3:05:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

I support this bill.

Mahalo nui,

Cards Pintor

**HB-794-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/17/2023 11:31:34 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/21/2023 3:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jasmine Ramos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB794, HD1

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), provides that 1 in 5 adult residents in Hawaii (over 258,000) identifies as having at least one disability that could affect their ability to work. These residents with disabilities represent the diverse demographics of our state, with many of them successfully employed as role models to other people with disabilities. One of the benefits of Disability Awareness Month will be to place a spotlight on those people with disabilities in Hawai'i, and focus on their "abilities" rather than "disabilites" along with employers who continue their commitment to having an inclusive workforce. This bill should motivate and encourage the business and educational communities to engage in strengthening the inclusion of people with disabilities in Hawai'i's workforce, by focusing on their "abilites."

**HB-794-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/17/2023 11:41:14 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/21/2023 3:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tiffany Sims	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am providing testimony in support of HB794, HD1 which designates the month of October as "Disability Awareness Month: Employment, Enrichment, and Inclusion" in recognition of the employment challenges and successes of persons with disabilities in the State.

This bill will confirm the State's support of Hawaii's disability community, who at times feel forgotten or even invisible to society.

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

**HB-794-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/18/2023 1:36:20 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/21/2023 3:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mike Ching	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support of HB794, HD1

This bill for Disability Awareness Month is an opportunity to educate the public about disability employment issues and celebrate the contributions of workers with disabilities. In addition, awareness will reinforce the value and talent people with disabilities add to our workplaces and affirm the State's commitment to a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community.

**HB-794-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/18/2023 4:37:22 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/21/2023 3:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lisa Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB794, HD1

This bill is focused on supporting and bringing awareness to our working-age disability. People with disabilities still face disparities in our workforce and, on average, earn less per year than their peers. Our intellectual and developmental disability population still faces challenges finding gainful employment and face unnecessary barriers to our workforce in Hawai'i. This bill seeks to address this issue by providing awareness of our disability community and supporting a person's "abilities" rather than their disabilities.

**HB-794-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/18/2023 4:46:07 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/21/2023 3:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alan Garcia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB794, HD1 to designate the month of October as "Disability Awareness Month" to ensure Inclusion, Employment and Enrichment is recognized as it relates to employment challenges and successes of persons with disability in Hawaii.

It is time to recognize the disability community and support this stellar group, as they will help to move Hawaii forward and help our economy.