



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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Testimony in SUPPORT of SB1370
RELATING TO LICENSES TO SOLEMNIZE MARRIAGES.

SEN. JOY SAN BUENAVENTURA, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Hearing Date: February 13, 2023

Room Number: 225

1 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health (DOH) strongly supports this
2 Administration Proposal. The preceding measures on the topic of persons authorized by law to
3 solemnize marriages stemmed from a lawsuit (Weinberger v Char, 1:20-CV-00405), and with the
4 assistance of the Legislature the DOH was able to rectify the inequity for non-religiously
5 affiliated and non-judicial performers ([Act 221 SLH 2021](#)). However, a well-intentioned
6 amendment to establish a fee created a new issue since religious and judicial performers
7 previously paid no fee.

8 This measure proposes an across-the-board fee for persons wishing to solemnize marriages of
9 any kind. State resources are required to process these licenses and the department absorbs the
10 cost. It is common for many license holders to subsequently charge couples for solemnization
11 services that range from \$100 - \$500 per ceremony, so it is reasonable for the State to recover
12 costs.

13 Currently, there are over 11,000 performers listed on the department's website prior to enactment
14 of Act 221 SLH 2021. Performers with local addresses are commissioned for 5 years, and those
15 with non-local addresses are commissioned for 1 year.

16 DOH expects wedding industry professionals will quickly recover this cost, given the
17 approximately 20,000 marriage licenses issued each year. However, for an individual seeking a
18 license for which profit is not a motive, for example they wish to solemnize the marriage of a

1 close friend or family member, the Legislature may consider a shorter term license such as \$25
2 for two months.

3 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

4 **Offered Amendments:** N/A.

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