

Honolulu, Hawaii

**FEB 05** , 2024

RE: H.B. No. 1533

H.D. 1

Honorable Scott K. Saiki  
Speaker, House of Representatives  
Thirty-Second State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2024  
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Human Services, to which was referred H.B. No. 1533 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO DEATH BENEFITS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to increase the amount of death benefits paid by the Department of Human Services to cover the cremation and disposition costs for a deceased person who was eligible for medical or financial assistance at the time of the person's death and whose body is unclaimed.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Hawaii Funeral and Cemetery Association, Inc.; Mililani Memorial Park and Mortuary; and Dodo Mortuary, Inc., and Crematory. Your Committee received comments of this measure from the Department of Human Services.

Your Committee finds that the State's mortuaries and cemeteries handle cremation, transportation, storage, and final disposition of a deceased person who was eligible for medical or financial assistance at the time of the person's death and whose body is unclaimed. Your Committee further finds that the current reimbursement rate of \$800 has remained unchanged for decades, with mortuaries and cemeteries covering all additional costs. As the costs of fuel, labor, and materials continue to rise, the



industry can no longer sustain offering this service at the current fee, with some mortuaries opting out of taking unclaimed remains. Increasing the reimbursement rate for cemeteries and mortuaries who dispose of unclaimed human remains on behalf of the State would help offset the costs to the funeral service industry.

Your Committee notes that in fiscal year 2023, the Department of Human Services paid a total amount of \$277,600 for this type of death benefit. If the benefit amount is doubled, the estimated increase in appropriations would be \$277,600.

Your Committee has amended this measure by changing the effective date to July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Human Services that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 1533, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 1533, H.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Finance.

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



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LISA MARTEN, Chair



