

STAND. COM. REP. NO. **3285**

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 22 2024

RE: H.B. No. 1826
H.D. 1
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Second State Legislature
Regular Session of 2024
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Higher Education, to which was referred
H.B. No. 1826, H.D. 1, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO EDUCATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH
PROFESSIONALS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to appropriate
funds for temporary positions to support the statewide expansion
of the University of Hawaii Windward Community College's mental
health-related programs.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure
from the University of Hawai'i System, Department of Health, State
Council on Mental Health, University of Hawaii Professional
Assembly, Mental Health America of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Psychological
Association, and one individual.

Your Committee finds that the State is experiencing a severe
shortage of mental health service providers, which has been
exacerbated by compassion fatigue, burnout, and inadequate
preparation for the provision of mental health services. To
address the ongoing shortage, the University of Hawaii Windward
Community College, in collaboration with the Hawaii State
Hospital, has developed an entry-level mental health technician
certificate of competence program, where students can take



additional coursework to earn a certificate of achievement that can be applied to a bachelor's degree pathway. Windward Community College is also actively planning a fall cohort for police officers in the Honolulu Police Department and has plans for an additional program for adult corrections officers focusing on trauma informed care. Accordingly, this measure seeks to address the State's shortage of mental health service providers while offering Hawaii's people with high quality postsecondary educational opportunities.

Your Committee notes that this measure contains an unspecified appropriation amount for the establishment of a scholarship program to support the mental health technician certificate. However, no testimony explaining the details of the scholarship program was altered at the public hearing on this measure. Accordingly, your Committee was unable to determine the need and cost for the program. Therefore, further deliberation and consideration is needed regarding the fiscal implications of the program as this measure continues through the legislative process.

Further, your Committee notes the testimony of the University of Hawaii System regarding employment rates for graduates of the mental health technician certificate program. Out of forty-seven graduates, nineteen students were employed at the Hawaii State Hospital. However, the testimony provided was unclear regarding the current employment status for the other twenty-eight graduates of the program. As the employment status for these graduates is unclear, your Committee questions the current need to expand the mental health technician program at this time. Therefore, your Committee requests further information from the University of Hawaii for your subsequent committees to consider regarding the employment status of the other twenty-eight graduates should they choose to deliberate on this measure.

Your Committee has amended this measure by 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 Higher Education that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 1826, H.D. 1, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass



Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 1826,
H.D. 1, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and
Means.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Higher Education,



DONNA MERCADO KIM, Chair



