

**HB-2396**

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 8:11:26 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/14/2024 9:10:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Bingham L. Tuisamatatele Jr.	Hawaii Army National Guard	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

When Hawaii Army National Guard Soldiers are called up for State Active Duty in support of domestic / emergency operations for the State of Hawaii they leave their jobs as teachers, police officers, doctors, etc. Some of our Soldiers professions benefits are stopped while serving on active duty status which causes a burden for the Soldier and family members. This bill will provide some certainty for Soldiers and their families knowing they will have medical coverage should their support extend beyond 30 x days. As we all know medical insurance comes with a hefty price tag when looking for coverage for larger families. So to sit here and ask Soldiers to support the State of Hawaii domestic / emergency operations, but you have to pay for your own medical insurance is not really taking care of people that are supporting a greater cause for the people of Hawaii.

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



KENNETH S. HARA  
DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY  
MANAGEMENT

JAMES DS. BARROS  
ADMINISTRATOR OF  
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I  
**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**  
**KA 'OIHANA PILI KAUA**  
**HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY**  
4204 DIAMOND HEAD ROAD  
HONOLULU, HAWAI'I 96816-4420

**LATE**

STATE OF HAWAI'I  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 2396,  
RELATING TO EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
**LABOR AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS**

BY

JAMES DS. BARROS  
ADMINISTRATOR  
HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

FEBRUARY 14, 2024

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice-Chair Garrett, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony to **SUPPORT** HB 2396.

HI-EMA **strongly supports** House Bill 2396 as this bill, which authorizes the payment of allowances for TRICARE Reserve Select coverages to junior officers, warrant officers, or enlisted personnel of the Hawai'i National Guard ordered to active duty for more than 30 days in service to the state, recognizes the importance of healthcare coverage for those tasked to protect and serve Hawai'i.

This measure demonstrates the state's commitment to supporting its National Guard members. By providing access to healthcare coverage, it shows that the state values and cares for the well-being of its Guard members and their families. This can have positive impacts on morale and retention within the National Guard, as it fosters a sense of support and appreciation for the sacrifices made by these individuals, especially those that served an extended period during the Maui Wildfires.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 2396.

James Barros: [james.barros@hawaii.gov](mailto:james.barros@hawaii.gov); 808-733-4300

HEADQUARTERS  
HAWAII ARMY NATIONAL GUARD  
91-1227 ENTERPRISE AVENUE  
KAPOLEI, HAWAII 96707-2150

TESTIMONY IN **SUPPORT** OF SENATE BILL 3085  
RELATING TO THE HAWAII ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS,  
AND COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONS, MILITARY, AND VETERANS

BY

COLONEL TYSON Y. TAHARA  
CHIEF OF STAFF, HAWAII ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

**LATE**

February 14, 2024

Chairs Matayoshi and Hashem, Vice-Chairs Garrett and Chun, and members of both committees:

I am Colonel Tyson Tahara, Chief of Staff of the Hawaii Army National Guard (HIARNG) in the State Department of Defense.

The HIARNG provides written testimony **IN SUPPORT OF** HB 2396.

The HIARNG takes great pride in serving the people and government of the State of Hawaii during times of need. Our recent service history includes our response during the Puna lava flow, our state-wide support during COVID-19, and our deployment to Maui following the wildfires there.

While our Soldiers quickly respond to calls from the community and place themselves in harm's way, they do not receive comprehensive health insurance coverage for their periods of State Active Duty (SAD) service. Many of our Soldiers have and use health insurance coverage provided through their civilian employment, but a sizeable minority do not have health insurance coverage. Additionally, for periods of absence exceeding 30 days, many employers suspend health insurance coverage. The result is that Soldiers and their families may lapse insurance coverage when they are called to serve their State for periods exceeding 30 days.

This bill would grant an allowance for TRICARE Reserve Select coverage for Hawaii National Guard (HING) Servicemembers in the junior grades, for officers in the grade of O-3 and below, warrant officers in the grades of CW-2 and below, and for enlisted in the grades of E-6 and below while serving on SAD service for more than 30 days. This allowance will alleviate the stress placed on our Soldiers and their families during service to our State. Removing the Soldiers' concerns about health insurance coverage will increase the available volunteer pool and improve the HING's response to future emergencies within the State.

Thank you for this opportunity to offer testimony **IN SUPPORT OF** HB 2396 providing an allowance for Tricare Reserve Select.

Colonel Tyson Tahara; [tyson.y.tahara.mil@army.mil](mailto:tyson.y.tahara.mil@army.mil); 808-672-1456

**HB-2396**

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 9:08:28 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/14/2024 9:10:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Bradley Cabrera	HIARNG	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill because it provides service members of the Hawaii National Guard a “peace of mind” when it comes to medical care in an event where the service member succumbs to illness or work related injury while serving on State active duty operations.

**HB-2396**

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 6:22:07 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/14/2024 9:10:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mike Golojuch, Sr.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB2396. Please pass this bill.

Mike Golojuch, Lt Col, USAF(Ret)

**HB-2396**

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 1:42:03 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/14/2024 9:10:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Gerald Mina	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawaii Army National Guard Soldiers should receive medical coverage when ordered to serve active duty for more than 30 days in service to the State. Soldiers put their families and civilian jobs on hold in order to assist in State Active Duty missions. Affording Soldiers medical coverage while on State Active Duty is one less burden for Soldiers to worry about in the event they must seek medical care. Many times Soldiers are put on State Active Duty during natural disasters such as lava flow missions on the Big island to more recently in assistance to Lahaina Wildfire relief. These types of environments may increase the likelihood of a Service Member being injured.

**HB-2396**

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 2:47:25 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/14/2024 9:10:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Michael Rosner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Having access to TRICARE Reserve Select while serving on State Active Duty during an emergency will ensure Soldiers' health needs are fully supported and provide them and their family members great confidence and peace of mind.

**HB-2396**

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 3:47:01 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/14/2024 9:10:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jeffrey Ulep	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the Hawaii National Guard enlisted and officers.



**HB-2396**

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 4:41:55 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/14/2024 9:10:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Michael Buendia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

**HB-2396**

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 12:41:43 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/14/2024 9:10:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Melvin Caraang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill because it provides service members of the Hawaii National Guard an option and solution when it comes to medical care in an event where the service member succumbs to illness or work-related injury while serving on State Active Duty operations.

**HB-2396**

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 12:50:11 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/14/2024 9:10:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kamakana Schutte	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill because it provides service members of the Hawaii National Guard a “peace of mind” when it comes to medical care in an event where the service member succumbs to illness or work-related injury while serving on State active duty operations.

**HB-2396**

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 2:57:20 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/14/2024 9:10:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
ROY T. YAMADA	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB2396 as I feel it will increase the readiness of the Hawaii National Guard by providing medical coverage to our junior members and their families during prolong state activations. I have witnessed on our most recent state activation to support the Maui wildfires relief efforts how medical coverage became a concern to our force. Our junior Service Members would have peace-of-mind knowing they and their families would be taken care of and be able to concentrate on their assigned mission in supporting the state's needs in crisis.

**HB-2396**

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 3:00:55 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/14/2024 9:10:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Justin Nishimura	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill because it provides service members of the Hawaii National Guard a “peace of mind” when it comes to medical care in an event where the service member succumbs to illness or work-related injury while serving on State active duty operations.

**HB-2396**

Submitted on: 2/9/2024 10:01:20 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/14/2024 9:10:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
eric madarang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this initiative as it will significantly reduce the financial hardships for individuals affected.

**HB-2396**

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 9:57:41 AM

Testimony for LGO on 2/14/2024 9:10:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sean Dodge	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support this bill and the National Guard. They have been called on heavily by the state for the past 5 years. Take care of ur citizen soldiers.