



STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
KA 'OIHANA PONO LIMAHANA

February 9, 2024

To: The Honorable Henry J.C. Aquino, Chair,
The Honorable Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair, and
Members of the Senate Committee on Labor and Technology

The Honorable Glenn Wakai, Chair,
The Honorable Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair, and
Members of the Senate Committee on Public Safety and
Intergovernmental and Military Affairs

Date: Friday, February 9, 2024

Time: 3:00 p.m.

Place: Conference Room 224 & Videoconference, State Capitol

From: Jade T. Butay, Director
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR)

Re: S.B. 2231 RELATING TO WORKERS' COMPENSATION MEDICAL BENEFITS

I. OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION

The **DLIR supports** this proposal. SB2231 proposes to amend Section 386-21.9, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) to improve female firefighters' access to comprehensive medical coverage by expanding workers' compensation medical benefits for firefighters to include coverage for breast cancer and cancer of the female reproductive organs.

II. CURRENT LAW

Section 386-21.9, HRS, states that medical care, services, and supplies for firefighters suffering from cancer, leukemia multiple myeloma, non-Hodgkin lymphoma, or cancer of the lung, brain, stomach, esophagus, intestines, rectum, kidney, bladder, prostate, or testes.

Section 386-21(a), HRS, states in part that the employer shall furnish to the employee so long as reasonably needed, all medical care, services and supplies as the nature of the injury requires.

III. COMMENTS ON THE SENATE BILL

The DLIR supports this measure to ensure that firefighters receive timely and appropriate medical treatment to include breast cancer and cancer of the female reproductive organs.



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

February 9, 2024

TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY, AND PUBLIC SAFETY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

Senate Bill 2231 – Relating to Workers' Compensation Medical Benefits

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports Senate Bill 2231 – Relating to Workers' Compensation Medical Benefits.

This bill adds cancer types that are common among females to the list of covered cancers as applicable to firefighters. It is important that all types of cancer that are correlated to environmental hazards to which firefighters are exposed are covered.

Thank you for considering our position.

Respectfully submitted,

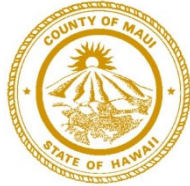
KIRBY L. SHAW
Executive Director

RICHARD T. BISSEN, JR.
Mayor

JOSIAH K. NISHITA
Managing Director

BRADFORD K. VENTURA
Fire Chief

GAVIN L.M. FUJIOKA
Deputy Fire Chief



DEPARTMENT OF FIRE & PUBLIC SAFETY
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 DAIRY ROAD
KAHULUI, MAUI, HAWAII 96732
www.mauicounty.gov

February 7, 2024

The Honorable Henry Aquino, Chair
Committee on Labor and Technology
The State Senate
State Capitol, Room 204
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

The Honorable Glenn Wakai, Chair
Committee on Public Safety and
Intergovernmental and Military Affairs
The State Senate
State Capitol, Room 407
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chairs Aquino and Wakai,

**SUBJECT: SENATE BILL (SB) 2231 RELATING TO WORKERS'
COMPENSATION MEDICAL BENEFITS**

I am Bradford K. Ventura, member of the Hawaii State Fire Council (SFC) and Fire Chief of the Maui Fire Department. The SFC strongly supports SB 2231, which expands workers' compensation medical benefits for firefighters to include coverage for breast cancer and cancer of female productive organs.

Over the last decade, the fire profession has experienced an increase in fire fighter deaths related to cancer. The University of Cincinnati and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health conducted studies as a result of the initial findings. They are the most comprehensive investigations into cancer-related diseases incurred by career fire fighters to date and support the initial findings.

A State of Hawaii (State) cancer taskforce performed an investigative study with assistance from medical insurance companies and found that fire fighters in the State are also experiencing elevated levels of exposure to the effects of cancer-related diseases, correlating Hawaii's information with the national studies.

The Honorable Henry Aquino, Chair

The Honorable Glenn Wakai, Chair

Page 2

February 7, 2024

A study published in Public Health in 2023 found that female firefighters may develop a wide variety of cancers and develop them at an earlier age than most other women. This proposed language ensures inclusion of cancers that may affect female firefighters.

There are approximately 40 female firefighters out of a total of about 2100 active firefighters in the state. Although this is not a high percentage of the total, female firefighters deserve to be covered due to anatomical differences. If passed, this bill will provide the female fire fighter and their family with the financial and moral support they require if affected. The SFC urges your committee's passage of SB 2231, for the welfare of our fire fighters.

If you have questions, please contact SFC Administrative Specialist Gary Lum at (808) 723- 7169 or glum@honolulu.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brad Ventura". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

BRADFORD K. VENTURA
Fire Chief

**HONOLULU FIRE DEPARTMENT
KA 'OIHANA KINAI AHI O HONOLULU
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

636 SOUTH STREET • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
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RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR
MEIA



SHELDON K. HAO
FIRE CHIEF
LUNA NUI KINAI AHI

JASON SAMALA
DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF
HOPE LUNA NUI KINAI AHI

February 7, 2024

The Honorable Henry Aquino, Chair
Committee on Labor and Technology
The State Senate
State Capitol, Room 204
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

The Honorable Glenn Wakai, Chair
Committee on Public Safety and
Intergovernmental and Military Affairs
The State Senate
State Capitol, Room 407
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chairs Aquino and Wakai:

Subject: Senate Bill (SB) 2231 Relating to Workers' Compensation Medical Benefits

I am Sheldon K. Hao, Fire Chief of the Honolulu Fire Department (HFD). The HFD strongly supports SB 2231, which expands workers' compensation medical benefits for fire fighters (FF) to include coverage for breast cancer and cancer of the female reproductive organs.

Over the last decade, the fire profession has experienced an increase in FF deaths related to cancer. The University of Cincinnati and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health conducted studies as a result of the initial findings. They are the most comprehensive investigations into cancer-related diseases incurred by career FFs to date and support the initial findings.

A State of Hawaii (State) cancer taskforce performed an investigative study with assistance from medical insurance companies and found that FFs in the State are also experiencing elevated levels of exposure to the effects of cancer-related diseases, thereby correlating Hawaii's information with the national studies.

The Honorable Henry Aquino, Chair
The Honorable Glenn Wakai, Chair
Page 2
February 7, 2024

A study published in Public Health in 2023 found that female FFs may develop a wide variety of cancers at an earlier age than most other women. This proposed language ensures inclusion of cancers that may affect female FFs.

There are approximately 40 female FFs out of a total of about 2,100 active FFs in the State. Although this is not a high percentage of the total, female FFs deserve to be covered due to anatomical differences. If passed, this bill will provide the female FF and their family with the financial and moral support they require if affected.

The HFD urges your committees' passage of SB 2231 for the welfare of our FFs.

Should you have questions, please contact Administrative Specialist Gary Lum at 723-7169 or glum@honolulu.gov.

Sincerely,

SHELDON K. HAO
Fire Chief

SKH/GL:cn



HAWAII FIRE FIGHTERS ASSOCIATION

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS LOCAL 1463, AFL-CIO
1018 PALM DRIVE, HONOLULU, HAWAII 96814-1929
TELEPHONE (808) 949-1566 FAX: (808) 952-6003
WEBSITE: www.hawaii firefighters.org

The Senate
The Thirty-Second Legislature
Regular Session of 2024

Committee on Labor and Technology
and
Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs

February 9, 2024

S.B. No. 2231 RELATING TO WORKERS' COMPENSATION MEDICAL BENEFIT LBT/PSM,
JDC/WAM

The Hawaii Fire Fighters Association (HFFA), Local 1463, IAFF, AFL-CIO represents more than 2,100 active-duty professional fire fighters throughout the State of Hawaii. The HFFA, on behalf of all our members, strongly supports S.B. No. 2231 which expands workers' compensation medical benefits for firefighters to include coverage for breast cancer and cancer of the female reproductive organs.

The International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) in partnership with the Cancer Firefighter Support Network (CFSN) concluded that female fire fighters have documented "increased risk of developing certain cancers and some are being diagnosed at higher rates compared to female non-fire fighters." Types of cancers and incidents found within the female fire fighter population are alarming.

According to the IAFF/CFSN, female fire fighters are at higher risk of developing cancer of the cervix, breast, thyroid, brain, and other cancers such as bladder, ovarian and melanoma. (see attached)

There are approximately forty female fire fighters through the Counties and State Airports and the exposure to carcinogens are the same as their male counterparts with potentially additional risks.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and we request the Committees approval of S.B. No. 2231.



Fire Fighter Cancer Awareness and Prevention



Female Fire Fighters and Cancer

Fire fighters face an elevated risk of being diagnosed with occupational cancer than the general public. This includes female fire fighters. The scientific studies that have been done have mainly centered around male fire fighters. This is due to the small percentage of female fire fighters in the workforce. Female fire fighters are being diagnosed with different cancers than their male colleagues and more research is needed to fully evaluate these differences.

Studies that have evaluated cancer risk among female fire fighters suggest that, like their male coworkers, they may be at an elevated risk for overall cancer incidence.¹ These studies also suggest that female fire fighters may be at an elevated risk for breast,¹ cervical, thyroid² and bladder cancers.¹

Reproductive cancers are also of interest because elevated incidence and mortality may be associated with exposures to endocrine-disrupting chemicals in the fire fighter population. Endocrine-disrupting chemicals could result in elevated incidence and mortality for reproductive cancers among female fire fighters as well. With the potential that these chemicals could affect female fire fighters, further research needs to be done to gain a better understanding of these health concerns.

Female fire fighters are documented having increased risk of developing certain cancers and some are being diagnosed at higher rates compared to female non-fire fighters:

- Cervical Cancer: 4 times higher risk¹
- Breast Cancer: Half of all cases^{1,3}
- Thyroid Cancer: 3 times higher risk^{2,3,4}
- Brain Cancer: 2.54 times higher risk⁴
- Bladder Cancer⁴
- Ovarian Cancer^{3,5,6}
- Melanoma: 1.68 times higher risk⁴

Some of these numbers are alarming; however, these studies have very small sample sizes due to the low number of female fire fighters in the workforce. More studies need to be done, and some are currently underway.

Sources:

1. Daniels, R. D., Kubale, T. L., Yiin, J. H., Dahm, M. M., Hales, T. R., Baris, D., . . . Pinkerton, L. E. (2014). Mortality and cancer incidence in a pooled cohort of US firefighters from San Francisco, Chicago and Philadelphia (1950-2009). *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 71(6), 388-97. doi:10.1136/oemed-2013-101662
2. Ma, F., Fleming, L. E., Lee, D. J., Trapido, E., & Gerace, T. A. (2006). Cancer incidence in Florida professional firefighters, 1981 to 1999. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 48(9), 883-88.
3. Ma, F., Fleming, L. E., Lee, D. J., Trapido, E., Gerace, T. A., Lai, H., & Lai, S. (2005). Mortality in Florida professional firefighters, 1972 to 1999. *American Journal of Industrial Medicine*, 47(6), 509-17.
4. Lee DJ, Koru-Sengul T, Hernandez MN, Caban-Martinez AJ, McClure LA, Mackinnon JA, Kobetz EN. Cancer risk among career male and female Florida firefighters: Evidence from the Florida Firefighter Cancer Registry (1981-2014). *Am J Ind Med*. 2020 Apr;63(4):285-299. doi: 10.1002/ajim.23086. Epub 2020 Jan 12. PMID: 31930542.
5. U.S. Fire Administration (USFA). March 2019. Emerging Health and Safety Issues Among Women in the Fire Service. https://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/emerging_health_safety_issues_women_fire_service.pdf
6. Maronpot RR. Ovarian toxicity and carcinogenicity in eight recent National Toxicology Program studies. *Environ Health Perspect*. 1987 Aug;73:125-30. doi: 10.1289/ehp.8773125. PMID: 3665857; PMCID: PMC1474570.

SB-2231

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 9:00:27 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/9/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tamara Paltin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

support our women firefighters

SB-2231

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 1:49:31 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/9/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Evan Yamagishi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of this measure.

Thank You,

Evan Yamagishi

SB-2231

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 8:11:46 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/9/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lindsay C.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As someone who has experienced firsthand the devastating impact of cancer, I am deeply invested in the need to expand workers' compensation coverage to include cancer, particularly breast cancer and cancers of the female reproductive organs. This bill is not just about providing greater protections and care; it's about acknowledging the real and urgent need to support individuals facing these life-altering diseases.

The findings of the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) highlight the heightened risks certain occupations, such as firefighting, pose for cancer. Firefighters, among others, confront increased rates of incidence and mortality for various cancers, including those affecting the female reproductive system.

By advocating for this bill, we are championing gender equity and advocating for fair compensation for all individuals affected by cancer-related injuries. I encourage you to prioritize the well-being and support of all individuals affected by these diseases, including our committed first responders.

SB-2231

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 2:38:43 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/9/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jaimie Song	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Jaimie Song. I am a female Fire Captain with the Honolulu Fire Department and have proudly served my community for 14 years.

I am writing **IN SUPPORT** of HB1889 - Relating to Workers' Compensation Benefits.

Expanding the coverage of workers' compensation to include coverage for breast cancer and cancer of female reproductive organs would mean greater protections and care for not only myself, but for all of my coworkers who put their lives on the line to protect and care for our communities every single day.

The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), which ranks different exposures for their cancer risk based on available science, classifies the occupation of firefighting as class 2B carcinogen, or possibly carcinogenic. Firefighters have higher incidence and higher mortality rates for many cancers. These increased incidence rates are also seen in breast cancer and other cancers involving female reproductive organs.

This bill is a clear statement that gender equity and fair compensation for ALL firefighting-related injuries is important to the state and the communities which we serve as legislators and firefighters.

Thank you,

Jaimie Song

SB-2231

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 10:33:30 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/9/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Monalisa Durkan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Monalisa Durkan, I am a Female Fire Training Specialist for the County of Hawaii Fire Department and have been in service to my community for almost 11 years.

I am writing IN SUPPORT of SB2231, a companion bill to HB1889- Relating to workers' compensation benefits.

I was unaware that breast cancer and cancer of womans reproductive organs were not already included under workmans compensation benefits. It's imperitive that this be added to protect the increasing amount of woman who enter the work force as Femal Firefighters. It's only fair to include these cancers that affect woman, especially in a high risk occupation such as firefighting.

Firefighters have higher incidence and higher mortality rates for many cancers. These increased incidence rates are also seen in breast cancer and other cancers involving female reproductive organs. Areas of the body that are warm or moist (such as the groin, armpits, and neck) tend to absorb chemicals to a greater degree. Thats why our breasts and reproductive organs are so vulnerable, and why cancers of these areas should be included under workmans compensation benefits.

This bill clearly represents gender equity and fair compensation for All firefighting-related injuries. I'm thankful that this bill has finally been introduced and have faith that the state and the communities which we serve by putting our lives and our HEALTH on the line, with approve this bill.

Thank you,

Monalisa Durkan

SB-2231

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 10:56:36 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/9/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lani Gomes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing IN SUPPORT of SB2231 - Relating to Workers' Compensation Benefits.

I am a female Fire Captain with Maui County Fire Department. Expanding the coverage of workers' compensation to include coverage for breast cancer and cancer of the female reproductive organs would mean greater protections and care for more of our coworkers who put their lives on the line to protect and care for our communities.

Sincerely,

Lani Gomes

SB-2231

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 12:42:55 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/9/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tasha Pagdilao	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Tasha Pagdilao. I'm a female Firefighger I with Maui County Fire Department. I have been with the department for 4 years, and was previously with state Fire for 1.5 years.

Through the years I've been witness to the growing pains of having a predominantly male profession try to integrate females into the profession. The inclusion of medical exams to include female reproductive organ exams is just another step in this equation.

I believe the intent of the law created was to include all firefighters, men and women.

I feel that this is a correction of the language and holds true to the original intent that of the bill.

I wholeheartedly support this bill.

thank you,

tasha Pagdilao

firefighter I

SB-2231

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 1:01:29 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/9/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jay Fujita	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I whole heartedly support this Bill. Furthermore I support any and all Bills relating to presumptive cancer for fire fighters.

SB-2231

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 2:01:19 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/9/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kilihea Inaba	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senators,

My name is Kilihea Inaba, a firefighter/ paramedic with the Hawai‘i County Fire Department for the last almost 10 years. I am asking for your support in passing this measure that would expand the medical coverage for wahine firefighters who develop breast and reproductive cancers. The toxins and contaminants that we are exposed to put us at risk of developing these cancers much earlier and sooner than non-firefighters and realize that this affects the possibility of conceiving and holding a pregnancy. This is a right that should not be taken away from female firefighters.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Kilihea Inaba

Kaloko, Kona, Hawai‘i

SB-2231

Submitted on: 2/2/2024 8:49:44 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/9/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dominique Lee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Dominique Lee. I have been working in emergency medicine for over a decade, initially as a City & County paramedic and currently as an emergency medicine PA. I am very much in support of this bill which I view as an important move towards gender equality. Our female HFD public servants at-will expose themselves to carcinogenic agents alongside their male counterparts in the line of duty and should be able to rely on workers comp support should these exposures lead to a cancer diagnosis. Please recognize the need for expansion of worker's compensation to cover breast and female reproductive cancers.

Mahalo,

Dominique Lee, PA-C

LATE

SB-2231

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 11:50:54 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/9/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marshela Ayap	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I 100% support the addition of workers comp benefit to women workers who develop cancer. If women in that field are more likely to get cancer then that should be covered.