



STATE OF HAWAII
Executive Office on Early Learning
2759 South King Street
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96826

February 24, 2024

TO: Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Yuuko Arikawa-Cross, Director
Executive Office on Early Learning

SUBJECT: Measure: S.B. No. 2474 S.D. 1 – RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE

EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON EARLY LEARNING'S POSITION: Support

The Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) is committed to enhancing systems of support for families across the State with young children. Our office supports S.B. No. 2474 S.D. 1 and defers to the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) regarding implementation.

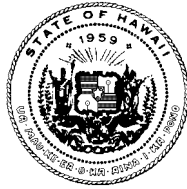
We know that high-quality early learning experiences at the youngest years of a child's life are critical for their growth and development, contributing to life-long success and wellbeing. Bonding and fostering nurturing attachment between caregivers and children are a crucial aspect of these early learning experiences.

We also know many of Hawai'i's families either face economic hardship or are on the brink of doing so. When needing to care for a newborn or a family member, Hawai'i's families simply cannot afford to take unpaid leave.

Our office is committed to protecting early learning opportunities for families and their children, and as such, we strongly promote policies such as paid family leave, which allows families the ability to meaningfully connect with their keiki without interfering with their employment and ensuring financial stability.

EOEL appreciates the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELawe KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

February 26, 2024

TO: The Honorable Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways & Means

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 2474 SD1 – RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE.**

Hearing: February 28, 2024, 10:01 a.m.
Conference Room 211, State Capitol & Video Conference

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the intent of this measure and provides comments. DHS defers to the Department of Labor & Industrial Relations regarding implementation and resource needs, the Department of the Attorney General, and the Department of Budget and Finance.

PURPOSE: This bill requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program. Provides family leave insurance benefits and extends the period of family leave to sixteen weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees who meet the hourly qualifications. Eliminates the previous threshold of one hundred employees for employers to be subject to the family leave law. Declares that the general fund expenditure ceiling is exceeded. Appropriates funds. Takes effect 7/1/2050.
(SD1)

The Committees on Labor and Technology and Health and Human Services amended this measure by:

- (1) Clarifying that the family leave insurance fund is a trust fund;
- (2) Inserting language that allows contributions withheld by the employers to be deposited into the family leave insurance trust fund;
- (3) Requiring the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to collect contributions from employers and employees;
- (4) Requiring collected contributions to be shared at one-half the cost of the premiums per employee;
- (5) Deleting the definition of "designated person" and inserting the definitions of "next of kin", "qualifying service member", "reciprocal beneficiary", and "spouse";
- (6) Deleting the reference to "unpaid leave permitted" in section 398-4, Hawaii Revised Statutes, and replacing it with "paid family leave";
- (7) Inserting a blank appropriation amount and blank full-time equivalent position number necessary for the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish and operate the Family Leave Insurance Program;
- (8) Inserting an effective date of July 1, 2050, to encourage further discussion; and
- (9) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

Currently, only one in four private sector workers have access to a single day of paid leave in Hawaii. Low-wage workers have the least access to paid leave and often struggle financially to provide care without losing employment. As we witnessed during the pandemic, working families need support and strong public policies to remain employed and self-sufficient and care for their family members. DHS looks forward to the day when Hawaii will have a paid family leave program available to all residents.

Women bear the disproportionate burden of caring for family members, from young children to elder care. A family leave program would help balance work and family responsibilities without negatively impacting productivity, engagement, and wellness. It will also ensure that Hawaii's working families receive appropriate caregiving while maintaining the ability to return to work after an absence. Sixteen states and numerous municipalities have passed and implemented paid family leave programs.

A [2020 report](#) of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries that had adopted paid family leave policies, amongst other things, showed improved health outcomes for children in that parents had more time to spend with them and to take them to health care visits, and paid paternity leave resulted in health benefits for mothers by decreasing mother's need to seek health care services for birth-related complications.

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Passing an equitable state-paid family leave program to cover most workers will require robust investment so that workers know the benefits are available and that the income replacement is adequate. A good family leave program can help businesses thrive as employee satisfaction and loyalty improve, increasing the likelihood that parents and caregivers can return to work.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.



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 28, 2024

TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senate Bill 2474 SD1 – Relating to Family Leave

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports Senate Bill 2474 SD 1, Relating to Family Leave. This bill would provide employees with up to sixteen weeks of paid family leave during the first year after the birth, adoption, or fostering of a child, to care for a family member with a serious health condition, to care for a qualifying service member who is the employee's next of kin, due to a qualifying exigency, or to care for their own serious health condition.

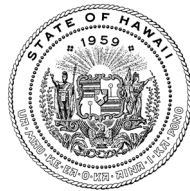
Statistics indicate that only seventeen percent of workers in the United States have access to paid family leave through their employers. This gap negatively impacts our residents and can lead to people making the difficult choice to quit their jobs in order to provide care. There is also a negative impact to businesses that must then recruit and train replacement employees.

For the above reasons, we support Senate Bill 2474 SD1.

Thank you for considering our position.

Respectfully submitted,

KIRBY L. SHAW
Executive Director



JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

LUIS P. SALAVERIA
DIRECTOR

SABRINA NASIR
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
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ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT

WRITTEN ONLY

TESTIMONY BY LUIS P. SALAVERIA
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
ON
SENATE BILL NO. 2474, S.D. 1

February 28, 2024
10:01 a.m.
Room 211 and Videoconference

RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

Senate Bill (S.B.) No. 2474, S.D. 1, amends Chapter 398, HRS, to establish within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) a Hawai'i Family Leave Insurance (FLI) Program and a FLI Trust Fund (FLITF). The FLITF shall consist of employer and employee contributions, as provided in this bill.

This measure provides FLI benefits, to be paid by DLIR from the FLITF as specified in the bill, and extends the period of family leave to 16 weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees who meet the hourly qualifications. The measure also eliminates the previous threshold of 100 employees for employers to be subject to the family leave law.

S.B. No. 2474, S.D. 1, appropriates unspecified general funds for FY 25 for the purpose of administering the FLI Program, including the oversight of payroll deductions and administrative processes and payment to covered individuals. The measure also

appropriates unspecified general funds for FY 25 for the establishment of unspecified full-time equivalent positions for the establishment and operation of the FLI Program.

The bill directs DLIR to adopt rules pursuant to Chapter 91, HRS, to implement the purposes of this Act. DLIR is also required to submit an annual report to the Legislature beginning with the regular session of 2025 on any outreach efforts and projected and actual program participation, including premium rates and fund balances under this program.

B&F defers to DLIR on the overall merits of this proposal; however, although an actuarial study was conducted in 2016, B&F strongly recommends first conducting an updated feasibility/actuarial study of the impact of this program. B&F also believes it would be prudent to conduct an operational study of the resources DLIR would need to implement it before going forward with program implementation.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.



**Hawaii
Legislative
Council
Members**

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Committee on Ways & Means

Joell Edwards
Wainiha Country
Market
Hanalei

Wednesday , February 28, 2024
10:01 AM, Room 211 or Via Videoconference

Russell Ruderman
Island Naturals
Hilo/Kona

RE: **SB2474 SD1** Paid Family/Medical Leave Insurance Program - **Support**

Dr. Andrew Johnson
Niko Niko Family
Dentistry
Honolulu

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki & Members of the Committee,

The Chamber of Sustainable Commerce represents over 100 small businesses across the State that strive to achieve a triple bottom line: people, planet and prosperity – we know Hawaii can strengthen its economy without hurting workers, consumers, communities or the environment. This is why we support SB2474 SD1.

Robert H. Pahia
Hawaii Taro Farm
Wailuku

Leslie Malu Shizue Miki, owner of Abundant Life Natural Foods store in Hilo, and one of our members shared her thoughts on this bill:

Maile Meyer
Na Mea Hawaii
Honolulu

“At first I thought, ‘I care about my employees but we don't have the funds to pay 16 weeks of paid leave – my grocery store would go under and we'd all be out of a job’; then I took a closer look at SB2474 and realized the state could help me be a better and more profitable small business owner by running this insurance program just like TDI (temporary disability insurance). Under SB2474, I would be able to afford my share of the premiums to cover 16 weeks of paid leave if an employee had to care for their dying loved one! It's the humane thing to do”.

Tina Wildberger
Kihei Ice
Kihei

L. Malu Shizue Miki
Abundant Life
Natural Foods
Hilo

Coming out of the Covid pandemic, our economy's resiliency validated the importance of having financial safety-nets for working families. It's important to compare and contrast how our state intervenes (or chooses not to intervene) when an individual family's crisis could result in their homelessness compared to when an entire community faces homelessness because of wildfires, lava flow or global pandemic. SB2474 SD1 would provide a needed safety net to all working families, regardless whether that family is suffering alone or with the entire state.

Kim Coco Iwamoto
Enlightened Energy
Honolulu

Chamber of
Sustainable
Commerce
P.O. Box 22394
Honolulu, HI
96823

The Chamber of Sustainable Commerce submits A Better Balance's 2023 white paper titled "The Business Case for Paid Family and Medical Leave:" <https://www.abetterbalance.org/resources/the-business-case-for-paid-family-and-medical-leave/>

The Business Case for Paid Family and Medical Leave

Comprehensive paid family and medical leave presents a game-changing opportunity to support businesses and families. Paid family and medical leave will provide businesses with an unprecedented opportunity to recruit and retain valuable employees and increase productivity without creating significant administrative burdens.

State paid family and medical leave programs have proven to be successful for workers, businesses, and families.

- Thirteen states (RI, CA, NJ, NY, WA, MA, CT, OR, CO, MD, DE, MN, and ME) and Washington, D.C. have enacted paid family and medical leave laws,¹ which provide (or will provide) benefits to workers when they are unable to work due to a serious off-the-job illness or injury, to bond with a new child (including children newly placed for foster care or adoption) or to care for a family member with a serious health condition.
 - Ten states also provide (or will provide) paid family leave benefits to workers dealing with certain needs in connection with a family member's military deployment.
 - Six states also provide (or will provide) benefits known as "safe time," which covers certain needs arising from domestic or sexual violence.
- The state paid family and medical leave programs offer proven examples from which to build a national, paid family and medical leave program that is equitable and sustainable. They also prove that these policies can work for businesses as well as workers.
 - In a study of California businesses, the vast majority reported that the state's paid family leave program had a positive or neutral effect on their business; a vast majority also reported that the program resulted in no cost increases, with some even indicating that the program resulted in cost savings for their business by reducing benefit costs. Moreover, most businesses were able to adjust to the program easily; nearly two-thirds of businesses reported that temporarily reassigning work to other employees was their primary method for addressing the temporary absence of employees on paid family leave.²
 - In New Jersey, businesses of all sizes have easily adjusted to the state law. Most businesses reported no negative effects on business profitability and most reported that complying with the law is not difficult.³
 - In a survey of Rhode Island employers conducted a year after the state's paid family leave law went into effect, a majority of employers were strongly or somewhat in favor of the law. This was true among both large and small employers surveyed.⁴
 - In the first year after New York's paid family leave program went into effect, employers experienced a significantly easier time coordinating employee absences, especially longer absences. Additionally, after the program went into effect, the vast majority of employers were supportive of the program.⁵

Paid family and medical leave programs can help small businesses thrive.

- Providing paid leave through a government program levels the playing field for small businesses. Small businesses that cannot afford to offer the same generous leave benefits as larger companies are at a competitive disadvantage in hiring.⁶
 - The vast majority of small business owners that want paid leave want a solution involving the federal government.⁷

- Small businesses have adapted well to state paid family and medical leave programs and report positive experiences with such laws.
 - A study of California businesses found that *any* negative effects from the state’s paid family leave program were exceedingly rare, but among those few employers who did report negative effects, small businesses were *less* likely than large businesses to report any negative effects resulting from the program. Additionally, nearly all of the businesses surveyed, including very small businesses, were able to craft solutions for addressing employee absences with little difficulty—often by relying on protocols already in place for other types of absences that routinely occurred prior to the implementation of the state’s paid family leave program.⁸
 - Another study of California’s program found that small businesses saw a 14% *decrease* in their per worker labor costs when workers take paid family leave. The smallest businesses had the greatest percentage-based savings.⁹
 - In New Jersey, approximately two-thirds of small businesses reported no increase in overtime pay costs due to the state paid family leave law,¹⁰ and researchers have found that other employees do not resent absent co-workers.¹¹ This suggests that businesses were able to manage the temporary reallocation of absent employees’ workload without significant increased costs.

Paid family and medical leave programs can help businesses recruit and retain talented workers.

- Paid family and medical leave can help employers recruit talented employees and also helps employers retain employees. Human resources professionals consider family-friendly policies to be the most important factor in recruiting and retaining employees.¹² Similarly, small businesses that offer paid leave see it as necessary to recruit and retain talented employees—and those that don’t offer it report that it makes it challenging to hire.¹³
- Moreover, paid family and medical leave increases employee morale and employee loyalty. New Jersey employers have reported increased employee morale as a result of New Jersey’s paid family leave program, with one employer calling the effect “tremendous.”¹⁴
- By helping businesses retain valuable employees, paid family and medical leave can significantly cut down on turnover costs. Businesses spend, on average, around 21% of an employee’s salary to replace that employee if the employee quits.¹⁵
 - Paid family and medical leave can save employers money by enabling valuable employees to stay in their jobs instead of quitting when they have a child or a medical emergency. One study found that businesses in states with paid family leave laws were significantly less likely to experience high employee turnover compared to similar businesses without paid family leave benefits.¹⁶
 - For example, in California, 92.8% of employers reported that paid family leave had a positive or neutral effect on employee turnover,¹⁷ saving employers the costly step of replacing an existing employee.¹⁸
- This is especially crucial at a time when many businesses are desperately seeking qualified employees.
 - More than one third of unemployed adults would be more willing to return to work sooner if their employer offered paid family leave, including nearly half of unemployed caregivers.¹⁹ This suggests that continuing recruiting challenges are driven, in part, by workers’ ongoing caregiving responsibilities and their concerns

that those responsibilities may be incompatible with employment in the absence paid leave. Ensuring that workers can care for themselves and their families while working is key to robust economic recovery.

- A recent study found that workers with access to paid family and medical leave are 22% more likely than workers without such access to recommend their job to a friend.²⁰

Paid family and medical leave can increase profitability and employee productivity.

- Businesses that provide paid family leave benefits have seen marked improvements in employee productivity.
 - One study found that businesses in states with paid family leave laws significantly increased firm-wide productivity as compared to similar businesses without paid family leave benefits.²¹ And a cross-industry analysis of 41 companies found increases of more than 50% on productivity measures after the adoption of a paid leave program.²²
 - An overwhelming majority of California employers also reported positive or neutral effects on productivity (88.5%) and employee morale (98.6%).²³
- Evidence suggests that increased productivity resulting from paid family and medical leave can increase employer profitability.
 - One study found an average of 63% improvement in revenue and 54% improvement in profit after companies adopted paid leave policies.²⁴
 - An overwhelming majority (91.0%) of California employers reported that paid family leave had a positive or neutral effect on profitability/performance.²⁵
 - A recent study of California's paid leave program found that businesses with employees who used paid family leave had *higher* per worker earnings across all workers (not just the workers who took paid family leave) than did businesses where no workers took paid family leave.²⁶
- Paid leave also helps keep workers safe and healthy on the job, which increases productivity and decreases employer costs. Workers with paid leave are significantly less likely to suffer dangerous injuries on the job²⁷ or deaths on the job.²⁸
 - Paid leave allows workers to recover and return to full productivity more quickly than they would by continuing to work. When workers must return to work before a chronic condition is stabilized or before they have healed from an injury, they are more likely to relapse or re-injure themselves while working.²⁹ Fewer workplace injuries can mean healthier, happier workers and lower workers' compensation costs.
- Paid family and medical leave also can also increase a firm's value. Researchers have found that Fortune 500 companies that announced the adoption of new family-friendly policies saw same-day increases in their share prices, indicating that investors anticipate that the benefits of such a program will outweigh any costs associated with providing it.³⁰

Evidence shows that paid family and medical leave programs are not abused.

- Evidence from the states show little to no abuse of paid family and medical leave programs.
 - In a survey of California employers, the vast majority said they were not aware of *any* instances of their employees abusing the state's paid family leave program.³¹
 - In a study of New Jersey's paid family leave program, not a single employer interviewed identified even a single instance of abuse. Indeed, several Human

Resources managers interviewed expressed their views that abuse of the program was a virtual impossibility.³²

¹ A Better Balance, *Overview of Paid Family & Medical Leave Laws in the United States* (July 20, 2021), <https://www.abetterbalance.org/resources/paid-family-leave-laws-chart/>.

² EILEEN APPELBAUM & RUTH MILKMAN, LEAVES THAT PAY: EMPLOYER AND WORKER EXPERIENCE WITH PAID FAMILY LEAVE IN CALIFORNIA 7-9 (2011), <https://cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>; CENTER FOR ECONOMIC AND POLICY RESEARCH, p. 8, available at <https://cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>.

³ MIRIAM RAMIREZ, NEW JERSEY BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION, THE IMPACT OF PAID FAMILY LEAVE ON NEW JERSEY BUSINESSES (2012), <https://bloustein.rutgers.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Ramirez.pdf>.

⁴ ZACHARY CAMPBELL ET AL., THE IMPACT OF PAID LEAVE: EVIDENCE FROM TEMPORARY DISABILITY INSURANCE IN RHODE ISLAND 30 (July 2017), <https://www.mathematica-mpr.com/-/media/internet/conferences/2017/drc-annual-meeting2017/summaries/hastings.pdf?la=en>.

⁵ Ann P. Bartel et al., *The Impact of Paid Family Leave on Employers: Evidence from New York* (Nat'l Bureau of Econ. Rsch., Working Paper No. 28672, 2021), https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w28672/w28672.pdf.

⁶ Eileen Appelbaum & Ruth Milkman, *Achieving a Workable Balance*, CENTER FOR WOMEN AND WORK (2006), p. 23, available at <https://smlr.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/images/achieving%20a%20workable%20balance%202006%20Appelbaum.pdf>.

⁷ SMALL BUSINESS FOR AMERICA'S FUTURE, PAID LEAVE POLICIES ON MAIN STREET (2021), <https://www.smallbusinessforamericafuture.org/small-business-for-america-s-future-releases-paid-leave-survey-results>.

⁸ EILEEN APPELBAUM & RUTH MILKMAN, LEAVES THAT PAY: EMPLOYER AND WORKER EXPERIENCE WITH PAID FAMILY LEAVE IN CALIFORNIA 8-10 (2011), <https://cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>; CENTER FOR ECONOMIC AND POLICY RESEARCH, p. 8, available at <https://cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>.

⁹ GREER COWAN ET AL., THE CALIFORNIA EXPERIENCE: LESSONS FROM 20 YEARS OF CALIFORNIA'S PAID FAMILY LEAVE PROGRAM 13 (Sept. 2021), http://www.bayareaconomy.org/files/pdf/BACEI_PFL_Sept2021.pdf.

¹⁰ SMALL BUSINESS FOR AMERICA'S FUTURE, PAID LEAVE POLICIES ON MAIN STREET (2021), <https://www.smallbusinessforamericafuture.org/small-business-for-america-s-future-releases-paid-leave-survey-results>.

¹¹ Sharon Lerner & Eileen Appelbaum, *Business as Usual: New Jersey Employers' Experiences with Family Leave Insurance*, CTR. FOR ECON. & POL'Y RSCH. (2014), <http://www.cepr.net/documents/nj-fli-2014-06.pdf>.

¹² JOAN WILLIAMS. UNBENDING GENDER: WHY WORK AND FAMILY CONFLICT AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT (2001).

¹³ SMALL BUSINESS FOR AMERICA'S FUTURE, PAID LEAVE POLICIES ON MAIN STREET (2021), <https://www.smallbusinessforamericafuture.org/small-business-for-america-s-future-releases-paid-leave-survey-results>.

¹⁴ Sharon Lerner & Eileen Appelbaum, *Business as Usual: New Jersey Employers' Experiences with Family Leave Insurance*, CTR. FOR ECON. & POL'Y RSCH. (2014), <http://www.cepr.net/documents/nj-fli-2014-06.pdf>.

¹⁵ HEATHER BOUSHEY & SARAH JANE GLYNN, CTR. FOR AM. PROGRESS, THERE ARE SIGNIFICANT COSTS TO REPLACING EMPLOYEES (2007), <https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/CostofTurnover.pdf>.

¹⁶ Benjamin Bennett et al., *Paid Leave Pays Off: The Effects of Paid Family Leave on Firm Performance* (Nat'l Bureau of Econ. Rsch., Working Paper No. 27788, 2021), https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w27788/w27788.pdf.

¹⁷ EILEEN APPELBAUM & RUTH MILKMAN, LEAVES THAT PAY: EMPLOYER AND WORKER EXPERIENCE WITH PAID FAMILY LEAVE IN CALIFORNIA (2011), <https://cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>; CENTER FOR ECONOMIC AND POLICY RESEARCH, p. 8, available at <https://cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>.

¹⁸ Replacing an employee costs 50-75% of an hourly employee's annual pay and up to 150% of a salaried employee's annual pay. Jodie Levin-Epstein, *Getting Punched: The Job and Family Clock* (2006), CENTER FOR LAW AND SOCIAL POLICY, p. 9, available at <http://www.clasp.org/resources-and-publications/files/0303.pdf>.

¹⁹ *Morning Consult Poll: The Value of Paid Family Leave*, BIPARTISAN POL'Y CTR. (Sept. 7, 2021), <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/blog/morning-consult-poll-value-of-paid-family-leave/>.

²⁰ THEA GARON ET AL., UNPAID AND UNPROTECTED: HOW THE LACK OF PAID LEAVE FOR MEDICAL AND CAREGIVING PURPOSES IMPACTS FINANCIAL HEALTH 5 (Sept. 2021), https://fhn-finhealthnetwork-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/2021/09/PulsePaidLeave_UnpaidUnprotected.pdf.

²¹ Bennett et al., *supra* note 15.

²² PANORAMA & AM. SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS COUNCIL, THE BUSINESS IMPACTS OF PAID LEAVE (2019), https://www.asbcouncil.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/panorama_report_-_business_impacts_of_paid_leave.pdf.

²³ EILEEN APPELBAUM & RUTH MILKMAN, LEAVES THAT PAY: EMPLOYER AND WORKER EXPERIENCE WITH PAID FAMILY LEAVE IN CALIFORNIA (2011), <https://cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>; CENTER FOR ECONOMIC AND POLICY RESEARCH, p. 8, available at <https://cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>.

²⁴ PANORAMA & AM. SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS COUNCIL, THE BUSINESS IMPACTS OF PAID LEAVE (2019), https://www.asbcouncil.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/panorama_report_-_business_impacts_of_paid_leave.pdf.

²⁵ EILEEN APPELBAUM & RUTH MILKMAN, LEAVES THAT PAY: EMPLOYER AND WORKER EXPERIENCE WITH PAID FAMILY LEAVE IN CALIFORNIA 8 (2011), <https://cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>.

²⁶ GREER COWAN ET AL., THE CALIFORNIA EXPERIENCE: LESSONS FROM 20 YEARS OF CALIFORNIA'S PAID FAMILY LEAVE PROGRAM 13 (Sept. 2021), http://www.bayareaconomy.org/files/pdf/BACEI_PFL_Sept2021.pdf.

²⁷ Abay Asfaw et al., *Paid Sick Leave and Nonfatal Occupational Injuries*, 102.9 AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PUBLIC HEALTH e59-e64 (2012), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3482022/>.

²⁸ Daniel Kim, *Paid Sick Leave and Risks of All-Cause and Cause-Specific Mortality Among Adult Workers in the USA*. 14.10 INT. J. OF ENV. RESEARCH AND PUB. HEALTH 1247 (2017), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5664748/pdf/ijerph-14-01247.pdf>.

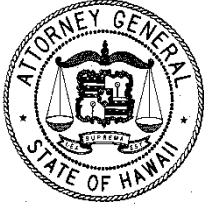
²⁹ T.G. Hollo, *Evaluating family and medical leave insurance for Washington state*, 11 Economic Opportunity Institute (May 2012), <http://www.opportunityinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/family-leave-insurance/EvaluatingFamilyandMedicalLeave-Jan13.pdf>.

³⁰ Michelle M. Arthur & Alison Cook, *Taking Stock of Work-Family Initiatives: How Announcements of "Family-Friendly" Human Resource Decisions Affect Shareholder Value*, 57 INDUSTRIAL & LAB. RELATIONS REV. 608-10 (2004).

³¹ EILEEN APPELBAUM & RUTH MILKMAN, LEAVES THAT PAY: EMPLOYER AND WORKER EXPERIENCE WITH PAID FAMILY LEAVE IN CALIFORNIA 4 (2011), <https://cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>.

³² Sharon Lerner & Eileen Appelbaum, *Business as Usual: New Jersey Employers' Experiences with Family Leave Insurance*, CTR. FOR ECON. & POL'Y RSCH. 24 (2014), <http://www.cepr.net/documents/nj-fl-2014-06.pdf>.





**WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA
THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE, 2024**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

S.B. NO. 2474, S.D. 1, RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE.

BEFORE THE:

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

DATE: Wednesday, February 28, 2024 **TIME:** 10:01 a.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 211 and Videoconference

TESTIFIER(S): **WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY.**

(For more information, contact Chelsea C. Maja,
Deputy Attorney General, at (808) 586-1450)

Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General (Department) provides the comments below.

This bill amends chapter 398, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), Hawaii's family leave law, to require the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) to establish and administer a paid family leave insurance program. The bill also expands family leave from four weeks of benefits, which may be unpaid, to sixteen weeks of paid family leave benefits. The bill further eliminates the threshold of one hundred employees for employers to be subject to the family leave law, making the law apply to employers that employ one or more employees. The bill also appropriates funds to administer the new program.

Although the bill requires DLIR to establish and administer a paid family leave insurance program, the mechanism for administering the program remains unclear. Specifically, the bill provides for two conflicting administrative models: a state-administered trust fund model and a private insurance coverage model.

Proposed section 398-D, at page 6, line 12, through page 7, line 16, establishes the paid family leave insurance trust fund, on page 6, lines 13-14, which, as provided on page 6, lines 18-21 through page 7, line 1, will be mainly funded through employer and employee contributions. At the same time, the proposed section 398-I, HRS on page

10, lines 5-18, provides that employers may deduct and withhold up to one-half of the cost of “providing family leave insurance premiums[.]” Because premiums are generally associated with purchasing insurance, the use of the undefined term “premiums” suggests that employers would select and pay the premiums on insurance plans with benefits separate from those in the paid family leave insurance trust fund administered by DLIR. The inclusion of both the trust fund and the ability of employers to provide insurance in the proposed new section of chapter 398, creates an ambiguity as to whether employers may purchase a private insurance plan to provide paid family leave benefits in lieu of paying into the family leave insurance trust fund administered by DLIR. For this reason, we recommend the bill be amended to clarify the administration of the paid family leave insurance program.

Moreover, the amendments to sections 398-21, 398-23, 398-24, and 398-26, HRS, in sections 6, 7, 8, and 9 from page 18, line 20, through page 20, line 12, create confusion because the amended sections cannot be applied to both administrative models described in this bill. For example, under the state-administered trust fund model, DLIR would determine whether a covered individual is entitled to benefits, and DLIR, not the employer, would pay those benefits. Similarly, under the private coverage model, the insurance company, not the employer, would determine whether an employee is entitled to benefits and would pay those benefits. That said, the amendments to sections 398-21, 398-23, 398-24, and 398-26, HRS, in sections 6, 7, 8, and 9 from page 18, line 20, through page 20, line 12, contemplate complaints for wrongful withholding of benefits by employers rather than by DLIR or the insurance company. Although the new section 398-I, HRS, on page 10, lines 5-18, provides an appeals process under the private coverage model at page 10, lines 15-18, that appeals process references the procedure under part V of chapter 392, HRS, which concerns temporary disability insurance, which could cause confusion. We therefore recommend that the reference to part V of chapter 392 on page 10, line 18, be changed to section 398-24 and that the amendments to sections 398-21, 398-23, 398-24, and 398-26, HRS, in sections 6, 7, 8, and 9 from page 18, line 20, through page 20, line 12 be

amended to address the ambiguity in the administration of the paid family leave insurance program discussed above.

The ambiguity in the administration of the paid family leave insurance program also creates a distinction between a “covered individual” who pursuant to the definition of “covered individual” in the proposed section 398-1 at page 11, line 20, through page 12, line 7, applies to DLIR for family benefits, versus employees who receive family leave benefits through private insurance. The references to “covered individual” in proposed section 398-B on page 5, lines 6, 8, and 15; in proposed section 398-C on page 6, line 3; in the definition of “family member” at page 12, line 11; in the definition of “next of kin” at page 12, line 16; in the definition of “qualifying exigency” at page 13, lines 5 and 6; in the definition of “child” on page 14, line 12; in section 398-3(a) on page 15, line 13 and page 16, lines 1, 5, and 8; in section 398-3(e) on page 16, line 12; and in section 398-4 on page 16, line 18, and page 17, lines 9 and 10; and the references to “employee” in the proposed section 398-B on page 5, lines 11, 12, 14, and 17; and to section 398-C on page 6, lines 4, 8, and 9 may apply to covered individuals, employees, or both, depending on the administrative model. Similarly, the word “employee” is used throughout chapter 398, HRS, including in sections 398-6, 398-7, 398-9, 398-10, 398-25, 398-26, and 398-27, HRS, and it may also apply to employees, covered individuals, or both, depending on the administrative model. We therefore recommend these sections be amended to clarify whether they apply to employees, covered individuals, or both in accordance with the method of administering the paid family leave insurance program.

In addition, the Department suggests the bill be amended as follows:

First, under the proposed section 398-A, at page 3, line 20, through page 5, line 4, DLIR is required to establish a family leave insurance program for “covered individuals” referenced in proposed section 398-A(c) on page 4, line 6. Thus, the use of “employee” in proposed section 398-A(c)(1) on page 4, lines 9-14, is internally inconsistent. We therefore recommend that the bill be amended to replace “employee” with “covered individual” in section 398-A(c)(1) on page 4, lines 9-14 and in section 398-A (c)(3) on page 5, lines 1-4.

Second, the bill provides in proposed section 398-D(b), at page 7, line 1, that “funds collected pursuant to section 398-I” are to be included in the family leave insurance trust fund, but it is unclear how those funds would be placed into the family leave insurance trust fund because premium payments would be paid to the insurance company, not the fund administered by DLIR, when an employer purchases an insurance plan. Therefore, we recommend deleting the wording “funds collected pursuant to section 398-I” on page 7, line 1, if it is the Legislature’s intent that there be two administrative models.

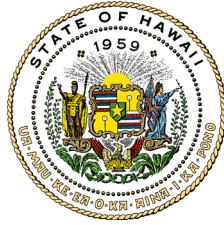
Third, the bill also provides in proposed section 398-D(b), at page 7, lines 1-3, that the “rate of the contribution shall be in accordance with the contribution rate to the temporary disability insurance fund,” but there is no contribution rate to the temporary disability insurance fund. See sections 392-61 and 392-67, HRS. Therefore, we recommend the bill be amended to provide a method of calculating contribution rates.

Fourth, in proposed section 398-D(b), at page 7, line 4, the word “relation” should be “relations.” However, as the term “department” is defined in section 398-1, HRS, to mean “the department of labor and industrial relations,” reference can be made to the “department” instead of “the department of labor and industrial relations.”

Fifth, in proposed section 398-I(b), at page 10, lines 14-15, it is unclear who is “an officer of the department.” We recommend deleting the words “an officer of” so that the sentence reads “The matter shall be determined by the department.”

Sixth, in proposed section 398-I(b), at page 10, line 17, if the appeal is of the department's determination, we recommend the wording be changed from “appeal the petition for redetermination” to “appeal the department's determination.”

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII

KENNETH FINK, MD, MGA, MPH
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON AGING
NO. 1 CAPITOL DISTRICT
250 SOUTH HOTEL STREET, SUITE 406
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-2831

CAROLINE CADIRAO
DIRECTOR
Executive Office on Aging

Telephone
(808) 586-0100

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(808) 586-0185

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB2474 SD1
RELATING to FAMILY LEAVE

SENATOR DONOVAN M. DELA CRUZ, CHAIR
SENATOR SHARON Y. MORIWAKI, VICE CHAIR
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Testimony of Caroline Cadirao
Director, Executive Office on Aging
Attached Agency to the Department of Health

Decision Making: Wednesday, February 28, 2024, 10:01 A.M., Conference Room 211

- 1 **EOA Position:** The Executive Office on Aging (EOA), an attached agency to the Department of
- 2 Health (DOH) supports the intent of SB2474 SD1.
- 3 **Fiscal Implications:** Appropriates funds to the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations
- 4 (DLIR) to administer a family leave insurance program and establish staff positions for the
- 5 development and operations of the program. Exceeds the state general fund expenditure
- 6 ceiling.
- 7 **Purpose and Justification:** Establishes and administers a family leave insurance program.
- 8 Provides family leave insurance benefits and extends the period of family leave to sixteen
- 9 weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees who meet the hourly qualifications.

1 Eliminates the previous threshold of one hundred employees for employers to be subject to the
2 family leave law.

3 According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics most working people in the United States do
4 not have paid family leave through their jobs, including about 75 percent, about 508,000
5 workers, in Hawai'i. Even unpaid leave under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act is
6 inaccessible for 69 percent of Hawai'i residents.

7 Hawai'i's aging population continues to increase. Between 2020 and 2030 the population of
8 those age sixty-five and over is expected to increase significantly by 22.5%. Additionally, AARP
9 reported that there were 154,000 unpaid family caregivers in Hawai'i. Many caregivers struggle
10 to balance full or part-time work with caring for their loved one. A paid family leave program
11 would provide a work/life balance for caregivers.

12 Paid family leave benefits employers as well. Workers with family leave are more likely to
13 return to work after their leave is over. Studies have shown that paid family leave increases
14 worker productivity and retention rates. Thirteen states and the District of Columbia have
15 passed family leave laws. States with family leave have seen significant health, social, and
16 economic benefits. Implementing a state paid family leave program benefits businesses and
17 workers.

18 **Recommendation:** EOA supports this measure and defers to the DLIR for the development and
19 implementation of the program.

20 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



SB2474 SD1
RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

February 28, 2024

10:01 a.m.

Conference Room 211

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) offers **SUPPORT** for **SB2474**, which would require the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program, provide family leave insurance benefits and extend the period of family leave to 16 weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees who meet the hourly qualifications. The measure also eliminates the previous threshold of 100 employees for employers to be subject to the family leave law. This legislation represents **a crucial step towards ensuring the well-being of working families in Hawai'i, including Native Hawaiians and Native Hawaiian businesses.**

'Ohana is a foundational value for the office of Hawaiian Affairs. Thus, OHA recognizes the importance of supporting working families during significant life events such as childbirth, adoption, or caring for a sick family member. The proposed family leave insurance program would provide much-needed financial support to individuals who need to take time off work to attend to their family responsibilities without the fear of losing their income or their job. This initiative aligns with the values of compassion, community and 'ohana that are deeply rooted in Hawaiian culture.

Moreover, extending the period of family leave to sixteen weeks and eliminating the previous threshold of 100 employees would ensure that a broader range of workers and businesses have access to these vital benefits. This expansion would be particularly beneficial to Native Hawaiians, who often face unique challenges and barriers to accessing adequate family leave and support services. **Paid family leave allows Native Hawaiians to fulfill their cultural obligations and responsibilities, including caring for elders, supporting their children, and participating in family events and ceremonies thereby ensuring the preservation and celebration of cultural heritage.**

This assistance can come when families tend to be at their most financially insecure. Families with young keiki are often at the earlier end of their careers and have heavy housing burdens as well as student loan debt. Families using leave to care for kūpuna often face significant costs that far exceed that covered by health insurance plans on top of existing



SB2474 SD1
RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

costs associated with other familial obligations, like caring for keiki. By prioritizing the well-being of Native Hawaiian families and businesses, this legislation would contribute to fostering greater equity and prosperity in our community.

While there may be concerns about the potential costs associated with implementing a family leave insurance program, it is essential to recognize that costs for both employer and employee shares are generally projected to be relatively minimal, with cost shared across the population. Additionally, the long-term benefits far outweigh any short-term expenses. Research has consistently shown that providing paid family leave leads to higher employee morale, increased productivity, and reduced turnover rates, ultimately benefiting businesses and the economy as a whole.¹ Moreover, A study conducted by the Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR)² found that providing paid family leave resulted in higher levels of employee engagement and job performance, leading to greater overall productivity in the workplace³ which would be a benefit to employers of varying sizes. Therefore, investing in family-friendly policies is not only the right thing to do ethically but also makes good economic sense by promoting a healthier and more resilient workforce.

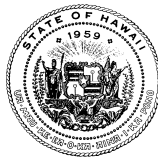
In conclusion, the **Office of Hawaiian Affairs urges the committees to support this critical legislation** for the establishment of a family leave insurance program and the extension of family leave benefits in Hawai‘i. Paid family leave provides financial support during critical life events thereby reducing economic strain on Native Hawaiian families and contributing to overall community well-being. By prioritizing the well-being of working families, Native Hawaiians and Native Hawaiian businesses, we can create a more just and prosperous society for all.

OHA asks that the committees **pass SB2474 SD1**. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important issue.

¹United States Congress, Joint Economic Committee “The Economic Benefits of Paid Leave: Fact Sheet” https://www.jec.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/646d2340-dcd4-4614-ada9-be5b1c3f445c/jec-fact-sheet---economic-benefits-of-paid-leave.pdf

² Center for Economic Policy and Research, <https://cepr.net/> last accessed (February 9, 2024)

³ Leaves that Pay, Eileen Appelbaum and Ruth Milkman (2011) <https://www.cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>,



STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF WELLNESS AND RESILIENCE
KE KE'ENA KŪPA'A MAULI OLA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
415 S.BERETANIA ST. #415
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

Testimony in SUPPORT of S.B.2474 SD1
RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE

Senator Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

February 28, 2024, at 10:01 AM

Room Number: 211

The Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR) in the Governor's Office **SUPPORTS** S.B. No. 2474 SD1, Relating to Family Leave.

Established through Act 291 (Session Laws of Hawai'i 2022) the overall aim of the OWR is to make Hawai'i a trauma-informed state. OWR is focused on breaking down barriers that impact the physical, social, and emotional well-being of Hawai'i's people. OWR explores avenues to increase access and availability to mental, behavioral, social, and emotional health services and support. In this effort, the OWR is dedicated to addressing adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) from keiki to kupuna. Family leave is one of the most concrete supports for families to avoid ACEs. Research shows that states with extended family leave policies were associated with the increase health of the child by the additional time in breastfeeding duration, parental engagement, and parental mental health.¹

Infancy and childhood are extremely important times in contributing to physical health, mental health, learning, and overall well-being in life. When families are provided with an environment where they can nurture their infant without fear of losing their income, they can attend to their children in a stress-free and attentive environment in this crucial time of their child's life. Providing family leave is one of the most concrete supports families can be provided to mitigate trauma and address their well-being.

The OWR is aware that more dialog is warranted for implementation to be effective and efficient and we believe that this measure is a step in the right direction and to help create more resilient families in Hawai'i.

Trauma-informed care (TIC) is an approach to understanding and responding to the widespread impact of trauma. By passing this bill, the State would be upholding the TIC principles which strengthens our pathway towards a trauma-informed state. As such, the OWR supports the purpose of S.B. 2474 SD1.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tia L.R. Hartsock".

Tia L R Hartsock, MSW, MSCJA
Director, Office of Wellness & Resilience
Office of the Governor

¹ Lindsey Rose Bullinger, The Effect of Paid Family Leave on Infant and Parental Health in the United States, Journal of Health Economics, Volume 66, 2019, Pages 101-116, ISSN 0167-6296, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhealeco.2019.05.006>.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



JADE T. BUTAY
DIRECTOR

WILLIAM G. KUNSTMAN
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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

February 28, 2024

LATE

To: The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair,
The Honorable Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair, and
Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Date: Wednesday, February 28, 2024
Time: 10:01 a.m.
Place: Conference Room 211, State Capitol

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

Re: S.B. 2474 RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE

The DLIR appreciates the intent of this measure to establish Paid Family Leave and offers comments. This measure contains significant flaws, its intent would require the establishment and implementation of a program requiring significant staffing & information technology needs. The department notes that establishing and implementing a new benefits program involving collections, accounts, disbursement of funds, etc. would resemble the operations of the Unemployment Insurance Division. The DLIR estimates that approximately 120 staff would be required to implement and administer a new benefits program, which would cost approximately \$15.7M including the fringe benefits. Moreover, the development of an information technology system to implement and administer a new benefits program would require substantial resources and time to develop and implement.

The intent of this measure involves complex facets that would necessitate a correspondingly complex staffing structure and information technology systems to establish and implement. For example, this measure allows coverage by self-employed persons, a three-tiered weekly benefit amount based on claimants' Average Weekly Wage (AWW) relative to the state's AWW, coverage of all employers employing one worker or more instead of 100 or more, additional bases for coverage (qualifying exigency, unemployed persons, broader familial definitions), and leave and benefits in hourly increments, among others.



Testimony of the
Hawai'i State Association of Counties
on
S.B. No. 2474, S.D.1

Relating to Family Leave.

Committee on Ways and Means

Wednesday, February 28, 2024, 10:01 a.m.

The Hawai'i State Association of Counties (HSAC) **supports** S.B. No. 2474, S.D.1, which provides family leave insurance program for employees to care for their families.

S.B. No. 2474, S.D.1, mandates the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family leave insurance program and to pay family leave insurance benefits to eligible employees. It also establishes a family leave insurance fund as a trust fund to provide covered individuals, including self-employed individuals, up to 16 weeks of paid family leave.

S.B. No. 2474, S.D.1 will relieve employees of having to make the difficult choice of leaving their job to provide care for family members. It will improve employee satisfaction, and loyalty, and may become an incentive for the retention of employees.

For these reasons, the Hawai'i State Association of Counties strongly supports S.B. No. 2474, H.D. 1, and requests your favorable consideration of this measure.





CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2474 SD1: RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE

TO: Senate Committees on Ways and Means

FROM: Rob Van Tassell, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawaii

Hearing: **Wednesday, 2/28/24; 10:10 am; via Videoconference or Room 211**

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members, Committees on Ways and Means:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony **in Strong Support of SB 2474, SD1**, which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family leave insurance program. I am Rob Van Tassell with Catholic Charities Hawaii. **This bill provides one step to address the great burden that Hawaii's cost of living places on our workforce.**

Catholic Charities Hawaii (CCH) is a tax exempt, non-profit agency that has been providing social services in Hawaii for over 75 years. CCH has programs serving elders, children, families, homeless and immigrants. Our mission is to provide services and advocacy to the most vulnerable of the people in Hawaii. This bill is one of our economic justice priorities.

Catholic Charities Hawaii strongly urges your support for paid family leave that will help our residents live a life of peace and dignity. This is one step to help ensure a healthier and more productive local workforce. This bill would assist our working families to meet their basic needs in times of family crises.

Middle class, ALICE, and low-income families face severe burdens when they undergo situations when they cannot work but do not have paid family leave. When members of their families suffer from serious illnesses, workers often must take time off to provide them with care. Hawaii's cost of living is so high that sudden and sometimes long-term family crises may result in great stress and even risk of homelessness. Many of the vulnerable in Hawaii are the working poor, people who work hard, but due to our high cost of living struggle to make ends meet. We serve these workers in our programs. They are often barely able to avoid homelessness, working several jobs to juggle the basic expenses of their families and unable to spend time raising their children. These workers are parents who try very hard to provide care and support to their families but have little or no reserves when a crisis strikes.

We urge your support for this bill to give hope to workers when a family crisis hits. If you have any questions, please contact our Legislative Liaison, Betty Lou Larson at (808) 527-4813.





Ave Kwok, Chairman - Jade Dynasty

Andy Huang, Incoming Chair - L&L Hawaiian Barbeque **Tambara Garrick, Secretary** –Hawaii Farm Project

Kahili Soon, Treasurer – Hukilau Marketplace **Ryan Tanaka, Past Chairman** –Giovanni Pastrami

Sheryl Matsuoka, Executive Director **Ginny Wright**, Operations Associate **Holly Kessler**, Director of Membership Relations

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Date: February 24, 2024

To: Sen. Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Sen. Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Committee on Ways a

From: Victor Lim, Legislative Lead

Subj: SB 2474, SD1 Relating to Paid Family Leave

The Hawaii Restaurant Association representing 4,000 Eating and Drinking Place locations in Hawaii stand opposed to SB 2474.

Our Industry has to be one of that was hit the hardest by the Covid Pandemic and up to today, we are still struggling to recover. We continue to be hit by very high inflation, supply chain delays, labor shortage, high medical insurance costs, and super high interest rates. Our minimum wage also just went up \$2 an hour which is one that jump the highest percentage in the country. On the aftermath of Lahaina Fire, we also facing a huge increase in our general and liability insurances. We continue to see business go under today and many more are struggling on very thin margins.

The one message we continue to hear from our membership is that we hope our legislators will not impose any new mandates that will increase our cost of doing business and additional administrative duties. Furthermore, this bill has no cost numbers or what the employer portion and employee portions spelled out for us to also better access.

Our restaurants are hurting and just cannot take on any additional mandates and cost increases.

Thank you giving us this opportunity to share our concerns.



SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2024 9:27:22 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Golojuch Jr	Testifying for Stonewall Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senators,

The Stonewall Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i; Hawai'i's oldest and largest policy and political LGBTQIA+ focused organization fully supports SB 2474 SD 1.

We hope you all will support this important piece of legislation.

Mahalo nui loa,

Michael Golojuch, Jr. (he/him)
Chair and SCC Representative
Stonewall Caucus for the DPH



Board of Directors

Robert Hood

President

Aloha Petroleum LLC

Al Chee

Vice President &

Secretary/Treasurer

Island Energy Services, LLC

Casie Bui

Second Vice President

Aloha Petroleum LLC

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Alec McBarnet

Maui Oil Petroleum, LLC

Annie Marszal

Lahaina Petroleum

Jon Mauer

Island Energy Services, LLC

Paul Oliveira

Maui Oil Company, Inc.

John Peyton

Par Hawaii

Steve Wetter

Hawaii Petroleum, LLC

Testimony of Bob Hood

President of the Hawaii Energy Marketers Association (HEMA)

**OPPOSES SB 2474, SD1
RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE**

Senate Committee on Ways and Means
The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
The Honorable Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 28, 2024 @ 10:01 a.m.
Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

I am Bob Hood, President of the Hawaii Energy Marketers Association (HEMA). HEMA is a nonprofit trade association comprised of members who market motor fuel products and operate convenience stores across the state.

We recognize that some employees may sometimes need to take time off for reasons outside the scope of existing employer policies and programs. However, it is important that companies already implement complex scheduling policies balancing employee and business needs, which include attractive benefits like paid leave programs to attract and retain talent.

Whether it is remote or hybrid work, retirement compensation, or vacation, they are valuable tools to attract and retain employees. The added financial burden of mandated paid family leave will cost employers and small business capital that would prolong economic recovery as businesses reel from competitive workforce, national and local inflation, and increased costs and delays associated with goods and commodities.

While we understand the intent of the measure, **Hawaii employers are already burdened with many employer obligations and further shouldering them with added costs, step up wage increases, mandates, taxes and fees will tip the scale to shutter or risk passing on the costs to customers.**

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in opposition.



February 24, 2024

To: COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

RE: Strong Support of SB2474 SD1 – Relating to Paid Family Leave Bill

Hrg: Wednesday, February 28, 2024 at 10:01am

The Hawai'i Public Health Association (HPHA) is a group of over 450 community members, public health professionals, and organizations statewide dedicated to improving public health. Our mission is to promote public health in Hawai'i through leadership, collaboration, education and advocacy. Additionally, HPHA aims to call attention to issues around social justice and equity in areas that extend beyond the traditional context of health (e.g., education, digital equity, cultural sensitivity), which can have profound impacts on health equity and well-being. Therefore, as stewards of public health, HPHA is also advocating for equity in all policies.

HPHA is in **STRONG SUPPORT** of Paid Family and Medical Leave that provides working 'ohana with paid time off from work to care for and bond with a new keiki or to address caregiving needs for themselves or loved ones. PFML allows people to balance work and family kuleana because workers can time off without sacrificing income.

I humbly ask for your **SUPPORT** of SB2474 SD1 for state funding.

Respectfully submitted,

Holly Kessler
Executive Director



1001 Bishop Street | Suite 625 | Honolulu, HI 96813-2830
1-866-295-7282 | Fax: 808-536-2882
aarp.org/hi | aarphi@aarp.org | twitter.com/AARPHawaii
facebook.com/AARPHawaii

**The State Legislature
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Wednesday, February 28, 2024
Conference Room 211, 10:01 a.m.**

TO: The Honorable Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
FROM: Keali'i Lopez, State Director, AARP Hawaii
RE: Strong Support for S.B. 2474, SD1 -Relating to Family Leave

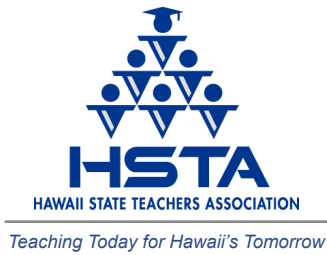
Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, and Members of the Committees:

My name is Keali'i Lopez, and I am the State Director for AARP Hawai'i. AARP is a nonpartisan, social impact organization that advocates for individuals age 50 and older. We have a membership of nearly 38 million nationwide and nearly 140,000 in Hawaii. We advocate at the state and federal level for the issues that matter most to older adults and their families.

AARP strongly supports S.B. 2474 SD1 which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family leave insurance program which provides insurance benefits that will allow workers receive paid leave to care for a loved one at home.

An estimated 154,000 family caregivers in Hawai'i provide \$2.6 billion of unpaid care. These unpaid heroes manage medications, prepare meals, help with bathing, feeding & dressing, providing transportation to medical appointments, and managing financial & legal matters to care for loved ones and keep them out of costly nursing homes. Many juggle work and caregiving. Others must balance child-care, work, and adult dependent care. Many family caregivers must cut back their work hours or even leave the workforce to care for loved ones, which can create a huge loss in income on top of any existing financial challenges related to caregiving expenses. It also puts their career advancement and retirement savings at risk.

Establishing a paid family leave program in Hawaii would allow workers to take time off and still receive part of their income when they need to care for their own serious health needs or those of a loved one, or to bond with a new child. It is noted that families who have access to paid leave – especially working women – are healthier, more economically secure, more likely to stay in the workforce, and less likely to need public benefits should they be forced to quit their jobs and lose their health benefits and income. No one should have to choose between their loved ones and their paycheck. Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify in strong support **S.B. 2474, SD1.**



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Osa Tui, Jr.
President

Logan Okita
Vice President

Lisa Thompson
Secretary-Treasurer

Ann Mahi
Executive Director

TESTIMONY TO THE HAWAII SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Item: **SB2474 SD1 - Relating to family leave**
Position: **Support**
Hearing: **February 28, 2024, 10:01 a.m., Conference Room 211**
Submitter: **Osa Tui, Jr. – President, Hawai'i State Teachers Association**

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the committee,

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association **supports** SB2474 SD1 which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program, provide family leave insurance benefits and extend the period of family leave to sixteen weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees who meet the hourly qualifications, and eliminates the previous threshold of one hundred employees for employers to be subject to the family leave law.

Workers who have access to family leave benefits are more likely to return to work after their leave is over. In a 10-year study of the California family leave insurance program, businesses reported that family leave had a positive or neutral effect on their business. Small businesses were less likely than large businesses to report any negative effects.

This bill is also for workers. The majority of our workforce in Hawai'i cannot afford to take unpaid leave to care for a new child or assist a family member with a serious health condition. Hawai'i law only provides a four-week extension of unpaid leave to employees of large employers with more than one hundred employees. All workers deserve access to family leave.

A public insurance model that includes all eligible workers in the state is affordable. The Institute for Women's Policy Research studied the use and cost of family leave insurance for our state and found that the annual cost to cover sixteen weeks of leave for a worker making \$48,000 would be roughly \$58 - a small price to pay for the financial security guaranteed by sixteen weeks of paid family leave.

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** this bill.



**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Wednesday, February 28, 2024, at 10:01AM
Conference Room 211**

RE: SB2474 SD1 RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii (“The Chamber”) **respectfully opposes SB2474 HD1**, which requires the department of labor and industrial relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program in order to provide family leave insurance benefits that extend the period of family leave to 16 weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees meeting the hourly qualifications while eliminating the previous threshold of 100 employees for employers to be subject to the family leave law. This proposal contains some significant flaws, as emphasized below.

Albeit the Chamber’s appreciation and understanding of the intent of this bill to allow for paid family leave in the workplace, we have serious concerns that this measure is not a reasonable, manageable nor an affordable approach in addressing those needs.

First, Hawaii employers already pay Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) premiums based on payroll up to the allowable wage base. Expanding TDI benefits to now include family leave will not only increase administrative compliance, but, more importantly, employers will likely shoulder the burden of increases in TDI premium rates to the proposed extended coverage to family leave.

It is important to note that many businesses already offer paid time off and paid leave programs as a means of attracting and retaining their workforce, especially with the employment environment not yet recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, employers are already facing increased financial burdens from high inflation rates and the recent minimum wage increase. Additionally, businesses are expecting increased insurance rates as a result of the Maui wildfires.

The proposed bill does not provide leave minimums and applies to very small employers. This unlimited leave mandate could ultimately force local businesses to shut down operations or close permanently. With the way the pandemic has affected the economy, we need policies that will provide flexibility for businesses so they can help create more jobs for our economy. We need to be encouraging businesses to adopt their own innovative paid leave programs, rather than placing yet another mandate on employers and businesses.

Furthermore, the recent Paid Family Leave Program Impact Study¹ released in November 2019, brought concerns on what exactly a possible paid family leave program in Hawaii would look like and cost. Recognizing the challenges employers face in coordinating multiple paid leave laws, the report recommended the state consider numerous issues, including the following, when deciding how to implement paid family leave in Hawaii:

- Clear regulation
- Allowing for at least two, but ideally three years, to implement the new program
- Straightforward administration
- Comprehensive education
- Permitting paid family/medical leave to run concurrently with unpaid FMLA
- Considering a simplified benefit formula
- Avoiding Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) status
- Advocating for return to work within the law, but excluding job protection (as it is accounted for elsewhere)
- Providing gender neutral covered relationships and leave lengths
- Sunsetting existing unpaid leave laws (to start fresh with any new law)

Given the lack of substantiated data on the adverse impact of mandatory paid family leave on Hawaii employees, the Chamber asks that the committee hold this bill and review the findings of the Paid Family Leave Program Impact Study before enacting a one-size-fits-all policy that would require DLIR an undefined amount of additional staffing as well as other information technology implementations the department asserts they are not equipped with in order to carry out the program

In closing, while we appreciate the Legislature indicating their intention to address the issue of family leave, we have concerns about the impacts this will have to small businesses that are still struggling to recover from the pandemic. The Chamber respectfully asks the committee to refrain from advancing this bill. We look forward to contributing positively to the development of sound public policy and continuing to serve as a resource to the legislature on matters related to labor and employment laws.

The Chamber is Hawaii's leading statewide business advocacy organization, representing about 2,000+ businesses. Approximately 80% of our members are small businesses with less than 20 employees. As the "Voice of Business" in Hawaii, the organization works on behalf of members and the entire business community to improve the state's economic climate and to foster positive action on issues of common concern.

On behalf of The Chamber, thank you for this opportunity to testify.

¹ Paid Family Leave Program Impact Study in Accordance with Act 109, SLH 2018
https://lrb.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019_PaidFamilyLeaveProgramImpactStudy.pdf



P.O. Box 4270 Kaneohe, HI 96744
www.breastfeedinghawaii.org

TO: Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair, Senator Sharon Moriwaki, Vice Chair and Members of the Ways and Means Committee

FROM: Patricia Bilyk, RN, MPH, MSN, IBCLC (Retired)
Maternal Infant Clinical Nurse Specialist
Breastfeeding Hawaii Board Member

RE: SB2474 SD1 Relating to Paid Family Leave

DATE: Wednesday, February 28, 2024 10am

Good Morning Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, I am Patricia Bilyk and I am representing Breastfeeding Hawaii . We are in **SUPPORT of SB 2474 SD1** which would require the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance payment of benefits.

Breastfeeding Hawaii is a 501c3 non profit organization whose mission is to protect, promote and support breastfeeding in the State of Hawaii, by providing education and advocacy to families, businesses, professionals and other community individuals.

Each day the Breastfeeding Hawaii Board Members work with breastfeeding families who are grappling with

- 1) establishing a relationship and caring for an infant, integrating a child into the family,
- 2) establishing and maintaining a milk supply for the infant
- 3) planning to return to work 2 weeks to 3 months post delivery
- 4) the inability to take more time with their newborn because they need a paycheck and
- 5) the worry of not being able to return to the job they had prior to delivery if they need to take more time off.

We feel having paid family leave would significantly help our families with the above issues.

We further feel a Paid Family Leave Insurance Program should have the following components:

- 1) all businesses and employees covered
- 2) 16 weeks of paid leave
- 3) workers restored to the same position
- 4) progressive wage replacement

Some additional points I would like to make are:

- 1) 13 states and the District of Columbia, and those federal workers in our State have



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www.breastfeedinghawaii.org

paid family leave laws.

- 2) Paid family leave is good for business-employees become more productive and loyal when they feel the company supports their family needs.
- 3) States with paid family leave have seen significant health, social and economic benefits.

Some further points I'd like to make post Testimony by the Department of Labor are:

- 1) a recent study done by the Legislative Reference Bureau estimated that we'd need about 22 new staff at a cost of about \$2.6million per year and
- 2) an additional study estimated that we'd need between 14 and 24 new staff, at a cost of \$5.4 million spread out over 5 years.

The Testimony of the Department of Labor states to operate this program would take at least 100 new staff at \$16 million! Very interesting math presented by the Department!

We feel it is time and **Pono-the right thing to do**, to provide a Paid Family Leave Insurance Program for Hawaii's working families!

We encourage this Committee to approve this bill and pass it out of Committee.Mahalo.

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 2:53:48 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Golojuch	Testifying for Rainbow Family 808	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Rainbow Family 808 supports SB2474. Please pass this bill.

Mike Golojuch, Sr., Secretary/Board Member



Testimony to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Wednesday, February 28, 2024
10:01 a. m.
State Capitol Conference Room 211 and via videoconference

Re: SB 2474 SD 1 Relating to Family Leave

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

I am Gary Simon, a member of the board of the Hawai'i Family Caregiver Coalition, whose mission is to improve the quality of life of those who give and receive care by increasing community awareness of caregiver issues through continuing advocacy, education, and training. I am offering testimony on behalf of the Hawai'i Family Caregiver Coalition.

The Hawai'i Family Caregiver Coalition strongly supports SB 2474 SD 1, which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program; provides family leave insurance benefits and extends the period of family leave to sixteen weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees who meet the hourly qualifications; eliminates the previous threshold of one hundred employees for employers to be subject to the family leave law; and appropriates funds.

Up to 40 percent of people in the workforce are not eligible for leave under the Family Medical Leave Act — and many cannot afford to take unpaid leave. Lack of paid family leave can lead to financial strain and negative workplace impacts for caregivers. Paid leave programs result in better health outcomes and lower overall health care system costs.

We urge you to support family leave and SB 2474 SD 1, and we urge you to recommend its passage.

Mahalo for seriously considering the bill.

Very sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Simon".

Gary Simon



Email gsimon@aarp.org



Cade Watanabe, Financial Secretary-Treasurer

Gemma G. Weinstein, President

Eric W. Gill, Senior Vice-President

February 25, 2024

Committee On Ways And Means
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Testimony in Support of SB2474

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committees,

UNITE HERE Local 5 represents 10,000 working people in the hotel, food service and health care industries across Hawaii.

SB2474 will give Hawaii's working families security, peace of mind and opportunity. Local families now are dealing with runaway rent, inflation and medical cost increases. The ability to take time off and not worry about lost income when illness strikes or family needs arise is critical to the pursuit of happiness in life.

Without this type of social safety net, families are disincentivized to take care of themselves or each other, all because of the implied economic threat to income or job security. This is an appalling economic threat to live under, and one that lawmakers can eradicate with this simple solution.

Enacting paid family and medical leave as public policy will improve Hawaii's quality of life forever. Other states have passed this type of policy, Hawaii should too.

We urge you to pass SB2474. Thank you for your consideration.



Hawai'i

Committee: Ways and Means
Hearing Date/Time: Wednesday, February 28, 2024 at 10:01am
Place: Conference Room 211 & Via Videoconference
Re: **Testimony of the ACLU of Hawai'i in SUPPORT of SB2474 SD1 Relating to Family Leave**

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Committee:

The ACLU of Hawai'i **supports SB2474 SD Relating to Family Leave**, which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program that provides leave insurance benefits and extends the period of leave to 16 weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees. We are pleased to see the elimination of the 100 employee threshold to be subject to the program.

ACLU National and ACLU of Hawai'i have a longstanding commitment to redressing the adverse effects of racism and sexism and other forms of invidious discrimination. That includes decades long commitments to affirmative action in employment and paid leave reflected in our organization's policies. It includes commitments to defend essential health care coverage to address "harsh economic and social disparities that threaten our country's democratic foundation and the cohesion of our society."

In the past seven years, the State has conducted at least two comprehensive studies on the efficacy and implementation of a paid family leave program for Hawai'i. The first was **completed in 2017 by the Commission on the Status of Women (HSCSW)¹ with a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor**. The second was conducted by the **Legislative Reference Bureau² in response to ACT 109 (2018)**.

We don't need any more studies on a paid family leave program in Hawai'i.

The U.S. is the only developed country in the entire world that does not provide by law paid family leave to workers. The federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) only provides unpaid leave. And only for a little more than half of all U.S. employees.³

For workers living paycheck to paycheck, this is not an option. When a loved one is sick, their only options are to leave them unattended, or lose income and risk missing utility bill payments, not buying food, or worse, risk becoming houseless. This is unacceptable.

¹ https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/CommitteeFiles/senate/LBR/LBRfiles/DOL_Hawaii-State-Paid-Family-Leave-Analysis-Grant-Report.pdf

² https://lrb.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019_PaidFamilyLeaveProgramImpactStudy.pdf

³ https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OASP/evaluation/pdf/WHF_FMLA2018SurveyResults_Appendices_Aug2020.pdf

Providing robust family leave for every worker is a principle of equality.

Nationally, a mere 17% of workers have access to paid family leave.⁴ **That 17%, however, is nearly universally higher-paid workers who are more likely to be white.** During the COVID pandemic, those were the same workers who able to work safely from the comfort of their own homes.

The COVID-19 pandemic showed us just how vulnerable our workers and families are to virulent disease. Not only would a public paid family leave program provide much needed assistance to Hawai'i's "essential workers" who live paycheck to paycheck and are predominantly women and people of color, it could also prove useful in protecting customers and coworkers from catching and spreading contagious illnesses.

A robust public paid family leave insurance program would provide workers up to 16 weeks of paid leave. And because a public insurance program would cover all workers in the state, it would cost just \$58 a year for each worker.⁵ **When split with the employer, that amounts to just \$0.56 a week.**

- Of note, the lack of public paid family leave insurance exacerbates sex and gender inequality:
 - A gender wage gap emerges after a child, known as the Motherhood Penalty.
 - Wage gaps mean significantly lower earning potential over the course of someone's career.

13 states and the District of Columbia have implemented paid family leave programs. It's time for Hawai'i to join them.

Sincerely,

Josh Frost

Josh Frost
Policy Assistant
ACLU of Hawai'i
jfrost@acluhawaii.org

The mission of the ACLU of Hawai'i is to protect the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the U.S. and State Constitutions. The ACLU of Hawai'i fulfills this through legislative, litigation, and public education programs statewide. The ACLU of Hawai'i is a non-partisan and private non-profit organization that provides its services at no cost to the public and does not accept government funds. The ACLU of Hawai'i has been serving Hawai'i for over 50 years.

⁴ <https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/2020/08/31/lack-paternity-leave-problem-moms-and-dads-study-finds/5662562002/>

⁵ https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/CommitteeFiles/senate/LBR/LBRfiles/DOL_Hawaii-State-Paid-Family-Leave-Analysis-Grant-Report.pdf



HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION
AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

RANDY PERREIRA, Executive Director • Tel: 808.543.0011 • Fax: 808.528.0922

The Thirty-Second Legislature, State of Hawaii
The Senate
Committee on Ways and Means

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association

February 28, 2024

S.B. 2474, S.D. 1 — RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO opposes S.B. 2474, S.D. 1 which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish and administer a family and medical leave insurance program.

While the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act allows employees up to 12 weeks of unpaid family leave each year, many employees cannot afford to survive without compensation for that long and are forced with a hard choice: take much needed time to care for yourself, your child or family member, or return to work. Paid Family and Medical Leave is a twenty-first century workforce benefit that employers can provide which can allow the employee personal and professional flexibility.

It is our strong position that Paid Family and Medical Leave must be a 100% employer paid program and benefit. Times are financially stringent for many families here in Hawaii. On May 15, 2023, the Star Advertiser wrote that a family of four 'household survival budget' (cost to cover the necessities – housing, food, health care) is \$104,052 and 41% of Hawaii families had income that fell below the ALICE threshold. To break it down even further, 30% were ALICE families and 11% were living below the federal poverty level. We can confidently say that our members and workers in general cannot afford another mandatory payroll reduction. For families, those monies could be better spent providing childcare and education, food, housing, etc. etc. An employee-employer paid program may be a luxury that many working families cannot afford.

Furthermore, our members are already subject to hefty payroll deductions from the Employer-Union Health Trust Fund and the Employee Retirement System, among others. Adding an additional payroll deduction may cause financial constraint for our members and we cannot justify that for a program that all members may not take advantage of. Therefore, we cannot support, in good conscious, any program that is employer-employee paid for our members.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition of S.B. 2474. S.D. 1.

Respectfully submitted,


Randy Perreira
Executive Director



745 Fort St. Mall
17th Floor
Honolulu, HI 96815

808-521-9500
NFIB.com

February 28, 2024

TO: Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Ways
and Means

FR: Michael Iosua, State Director
NFIB, Hawaii Chapter

RE: **OPPOSITION** TO SB 2474 – RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE
Hearing date – February 28, 2024, at 10:01 AM

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and members of the committee,

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of NFIB's Hawaii Chapter in **OPPOSITION** to SB 2474 – RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE. NFIB is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, and member-driven organization exclusively dedicated to small and independent businesses. With members in all four counties, NFIB's Hawaii chapter advocates on issues that affect Hawaii's small and independent business owners.

NFIB opposes the proposed extension of the family leave period in Hawaii for an additional 12 weeks. While I understand the importance of supporting families and promoting work-life balance, I believe that such an extension would have detrimental effects on businesses and the overall economy.

Firstly, extending the family leave period may place an undue burden on small and medium-sized businesses, particularly those with limited resources. Small businesses are the backbone of our economy, providing employment opportunities and contributing significantly to local communities. Mandating an extended family leave period could lead to increased financial strain on these businesses, potentially resulting in job losses and hindered economic growth.

Moreover, the proposed extension may lead to workforce management challenges for employers. Balancing the needs of the business with an extended family leave period may require companies to hire temporary replacements or restructure their teams, causing

disruptions in productivity and efficiency. This could be especially problematic for industries with tight deadlines or projects that require consistent and reliable manpower.

Additionally, the financial impact of an extended family leave period is not limited to employers. Employees themselves may face financial repercussions, as some employers may be unable to provide full compensation during extended leaves. This could result in economic hardships for families, potentially negating the intended benefits of the extended leave period.

Furthermore, the current family leave provisions already provide a reasonable balance between supporting families and ensuring the sustainability of businesses. A more measured approach, such as offering incentives for businesses to voluntarily provide extended family leave or exploring alternative solutions, such as allowing private insurers to offer paid family leave insurance, as opposed to creating a new division at DLIR, could be considered to address the needs of families without imposing undue burdens on employers.

For these reasons, I strongly urge the committee to defer this measure. Mahalo for your consideration.

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 9:15:54 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Raymond Catania	Testifying for Hawaii Workers Center Kauai rep	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello Committee Chair and members,

I fully support SB2474 SD1. As a former state worker and public union member I have used paid family leave 4 times. Twice when my 2 daughters were born and when they also both got seriously ill. My wife did not have paid family leave from her employment. My leave benefit helped my family greatly because I continued to have an income to support them. Every Hawaii family needs to have this as a basic right no matter where they work. In Hawaii family means everything and those less fortunate should get the help they need.

Mahalo, Ray Catania, Lihue- Hawaii Workers Center Kauai rep



COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

BILL SB2474 SD1

POSITION: SUPPORT

Hearing Date: February 28, 2024

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Committee Members:

Aloha United Way supports SB2474 SD1, which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program. This measure provides family leave insurance benefits and extends the period of family leave to sixteen weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees who meet the hourly qualifications.

Hawaii has the highest cost of living in the nation and imposes one of the highest tax burdens on low-income households. By providing family leave insurance benefits and extending the period of family leave SB2474 SD1 not only supports employees during times of personal or family-related medical needs but also fosters a more inclusive and supportive work environment. It acknowledges the diverse needs of Hawaii's working families and provides much-needed flexibility for individuals to care for themselves and their loved ones without sacrificing their financial security or risking their job stability. Furthermore, the appropriation of funds to support the implementation of this program is a vital investment in the well-being of our workforce and the overall prosperity of our state. It demonstrates a commitment to prioritizing the needs of families and ensuring that no individual is forced to choose between their job and their family responsibilities.

Aloha United Way and agencies in the ALICE initiative support this bill to create a state system on paid family leave, which will increase income and employment opportunity for ALICE families. ALICE stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed, and refers to households who are employed but whose incomes are not enough to meet their basic living costs. AUW's 2022 ALICE report found that **44% of Hawaii's households are ALICE** and showed an alarming 50% increase in ALICE households falling into poverty.

Many of Hawaii's `ohana must work to make ends meet, are multi-generational, and care for their loved ones at home. On behalf of our families and caregivers we respectfully ask that the legislature put working families first.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your action to support ALICE families and pass SB2474 SD1.

Sincerely,



Kayla Keehu- Alexander
Vice President, Community Impact
Aloha United Way



Suzanne Skjold
Chief Operating Officer
Aloha United Way



2024 Network Members

City and County of Honolulu
County of Hawai'i
Department of Agriculture
Hawai'i Appleseed
Hawai'i Children's Action Network
Hawai'i Food Bank
Hawai'i Good Food Alliance
Hawai'i Public Health Institute
Kōkua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Health Center
Lanakila Pacific
Mālama Kaua'i
Maui Nui Food Alliance
Parents and Children Together
Supersistence
The Food Basket Inc.,
Hawai'i Island's Food Bank
The Pantry, by Feeding Hawai'i Together
UH Center for Indigenous Innovation/ Health Equity
Wai'anae Coast Comprehensive Health Center

Hawaiihungeraction.org

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

RE: Support for SB 2474 – Relating to Family Leave

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the committee,

The Hawai'i Hunger Action Network, a coalition of more than twenty local organizations with the mission to advocate for food security for Hawai'i households, appreciates the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT of SB 2474**. This bill would establish a family leave program within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations.

Our network members understand that Hawai'i's rising rates of food insecurity are fundamentally rooted in economic inequality. Workers earning low wages struggle to meet their basic needs, and for this reason cannot afford to take time off of work in order to take care of a new baby, elderly parent, or sick family member. Working mothers have more difficulty breastfeeding, and working parents often do not have time to grocery shop or prepare meals for their children. Alternatively, if they forego pay, they may be forced to cut their grocery budget, skip meals, or rely on cheaper, empty calories to survive.

The impact of passing this bill would be truly profound, especially in Hawai'i, where nearly a third of children live in a household with just one parent, and two-thirds live in households where both parents work. Paid family leave is a proven tool—used in every developed country in the world except for the U.S—to ease the economic burden on working families and single mothers. In fact, thirteen states now have paid family leave programs in order to fill in this gap.

Mahalo for your consideration of this bill. Paid family leave will be a significant boost for Hawai'i's working families, bringing us one step closer to a more equitable economic future for all who call these islands home.



**TESTIMONY OF TINA YAMAKI, PRESIDENT
RETAIL MERCHANTS OF HAWAII
FEBRUARY 27, 2024
SB 2474 SD1 RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE.**

Good morning, Chair Dela Cruz and members of the Senate Committee on Ways & Means. I am Tina Yamaki, President of the Retail Merchants of Hawaii and I appreciate this opportunity to testify.

The Retail Merchants of Hawaii was founded in 1901 and is a statewide, not for profit trade organization committed to supporting the growth and development of the retail industry in Hawaii. Our membership includes small mom & pop stores, large box stores, resellers, luxury retail, department stores, shopping malls, on-line sellers, local, national, and international retailers, chains, and everyone in between.

We respectfully oppose SB 2474 SD1. This measure requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program; provides family leave insurance benefits and extends the period of family leave to sixteen weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees who meet the hourly qualifications; eliminates the previous threshold of one hundred employees for employers to be subject to the family leave law; declares that the general fund expenditure ceiling is exceeded; appropriates funds; and takes effect 7/1/2050.

It is our understanding that Family Leave is used when the Employee needs to take care of someone else who is a family member; and Sick Leave and TDI are used when the employee themselves are sick or injured.

Employers want to take care of their employees, but there must also be a balance to what businesses can afford. Many employers already offer benefits that include significant paid time off to those employees who have earned it in addition to the mandated family leave for employees to care for their family who are ill and ensure that their jobs are secure when they return to work.

We would like to point out that TDI is calculated based on payroll and wage base. **By including family leave in the TDI calculations, the employer's premium rates would significantly increase.** Not to mention that the administrative process will also add an additional burden and increase the cost to the businesses. **It is important to note that in addition to the "family leave" compensation the employer would have to pay to the individual taking sick leave, the employer must pay another employee "filling in" for this individual.**

We want to point out that Hawaii is the only state in the entire nation that mandates medical insurance coverage for employees' healthcare. This is an added benefit to employees while being an increasing cost to employers every year with rate hikes in healthcare. **For a small business, the cost for individual health insurance could be anywhere from \$900 per month or more per employee depending on the program they have.**

While we understand the intent of a Family Leave Insurance Program, now is not the time to implement this program. Retailers are already operating on a very thin margin. **Many are not able to afford these kinds of costly operational increases, especially with the recent raises in the minimum wage.** Retailers have still not recovered. Many are still barely hanging on to keep their doors open and their employees employed. Many still carry a large debt from being shut down and the lack of customers – especially since the Japanese visitors have not returned. The rising cost for employee health care benefits, products and goods, services, and shipping continue to have a substantial effect on our operations since the pandemic ensued. Furthermore, numerous businesses are still trying to recover from the Maui Fires last year. Some of our local retailers lost multiple stores in the fires – this not only includes Maui based stores but also business from the neighboring islands who have expanded to Maui. We are also seeing streamlined and pivoted business with shortened hours of operations and freeze in employee hiring for certain positions. We continue to see local and national retailers quietly closing their doors in Hawaii. Measures like this will encourage more businesses to close their doors as they can no longer afford to operate in Hawaii and thus more of our friends, family and neighbors will be unemployed.

Retailers often are not able to absorb all the costs associated with these types of government mandates and must pass the cost on to the customer by raising prices of goods and services. This means groceries, clothing, supplies, appliances... will be even more expensive than they are now. This helps Hawaii to continue to be one of the most expensive states in the nation to live.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.



UNITED PUBLIC WORKERS

AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO

THE SENATE KA 'AHA KENEKOA THE THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION OF 2024

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 28, 2024, 10:01 AM
Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

Re: Testimony on SB2474, SD1 – RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

The United Public Workers, AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO (“UPW”) is the exclusive bargaining representative for approximately 14,000 public employees, which includes blue collar, non-supervisory employees in Bargaining Unit 1 and institutional, health, and correctional employees in Bargaining Unit 10, in the State of Hawaii and various counties.

UPW **opposes** SB2474, SD1, which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program. This bill provides family leave insurance benefits and extends the period of family leave to 16 weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees who meet the hourly qualifications. Furthermore, this measure eliminates the previous threshold of 100 employees for employers to be subject to the family leave law.

We strongly believe that paid family and medical leave is a benefit that employers can and should provide to their workforce to remain in step with evolving trends in the labor market. Hawaii’s public employees are currently saddled with substantial payroll deductions for health plans offered by the Employer-Union Health Trust Fund as well as mandatory contributions to the Employees’ Retirement System. An additional, yet to be determined payroll deduction for a benefit that our members may not utilize could prove to be a significant financial burden for those who are lower income earners. As a result, what is intended to serve as an employee benefit may prove to serve as a deterrent to employment in the public sector. UPW appreciates that intention of this bill, but we simply cannot support legislation that would result in additional financial burden for our membership. This is a benefit that should be fully paid by the employer.

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Toll Free - Molokai/Lanai only

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kalani Werner", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kalani Werner
State Director

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Nana I Ka Pono Na Ma

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Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 28, 2024, 10:01 AM, Conference Room 211 and Videoconference

RE: SB 2474 – RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE
Position: SUPPORT

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

Papa Ola Lokahi testifies **in support** of SB 2474, which establishes a family leave insurance fund and benefits for employed and covered individuals. The ability for local families to remain in Hawai‘i can be strengthened through a number of vehicles, including this one, and we appreciate the Legislature’s commitment to build and strengthen programs that serve the public.

Reports from various federal, state, and local resources find that Native Hawaiians are [likely to live in multi-generational households](#) and have a [strong representation in the tourism/hospitality industry](#), which often puts them at the crux of balancing familial care needs with providing stable income. In addition, Native Hawaiians are one of the ethnicities found to be more likely as Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) or under the federal poverty line in Hawai‘i according to a [2022 Aloha United Way report](#). However, the evidence can clearly be interpreted to realize that building ways for our people to continue caring for themselves and each other creates positive impact in both quantifiable outcomes as well as in many ways that we cannot measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT** of this critical legislation.

Papa Ola Lōkahi, the Native Hawaiian Health Board, authorized by the federal Native Hawaiian Health Care Improvement Act, is charged with raising the health status of Native Hawaiians to the highest possible level, which we achieve through strategic partnerships, programs, and public policy.



aloha@pacificbirthcollective.org
pacificbirthcollective.org

‘Aloha ‘Āina Center
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Ha‘ikū, Hawai‘i 96708

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Becky Lind
Director of Finance

Mariah Strong
Director of Programs

Ki‘i Kaho‘ohanohano
*Director of Advocacy &
Cultural Programs*

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

In Support of SB2474 SD1, Relating to Family Leave

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members,

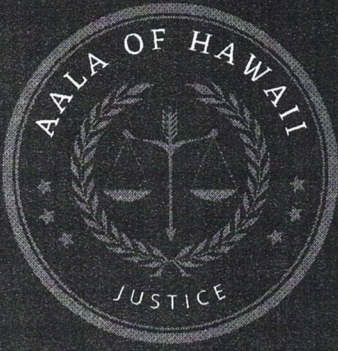
On behalf of our organization Pacific Birth Collective and the women and families we serve across Hawai‘i we write in SUPPORT of SB2474 SD1 Relating to Family Leave.

Pacific Birth Collective is dedicated to education, support and advocacy for women and families during their childbearing years including through the postpartum period. Paid family leave is one of the most concrete economic supports that can be provided to families to improve outcomes for women during this sensitive period of adjustment after the birth of a baby.

Additionally the evidence supporting the physical health and well being benefits of infants and mothers being able to stay together at least through the first six months of life are significant. We strongly support this program as a trickle down that will improve the health of families in our communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.

Sincerely,
Kiana Rowley, BS RN
Director of Leadership and
Operations
Pacific Birth Collective
EIN 84-2562504



African American Lawyers of
Association of Hawai'i
1188 Bishop Street, Suite 1908
Honolulu, HI 96813

February 28, 2024

To: Senator Donovan M. Dela Crus, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
SENATE COMMITTEE ON Ways and Means

From: Elizabeth Jubin Fujiwara, African American Lawyers Association of Hawai'i ("AALA")

Re: **S.B. 2474, SD 1 Relating to Paid Family Leave—STRONGLY SUPPORT**

Hearing: Wednesday, February 28, 2024, 10:01 a.m., Room 221

The African American Lawyers Association of Hawai'i ("AALA") submits testimony in **strong support of S.B. 2474, SD 1** which, among other things, **establishes Paid Family Leave in Hawai'i that will support both our economy and family well-being.**

The mission of AALA is to promote the advancement of human rights and justice, and to increase the role of Black Americans in the legal community. AALA's core mission is to encourage Black lawyers in Hawai'i and to focus on the issues that affect the Black community. AALA does this work to promote the advancement of human rights and justice.

We strongly support Paid Family Leave for several reasons. Paid family leave allows workers to take time off and still receive part of their income when they need to care for their own serious health needs or those of a loved one, or to bond with a new child. This particular bill requires the department of labor and industrial relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program. It provides family leave insurance benefits and extends the period of family leave to 16 weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees who meet the hourly qualifications. It eliminates the previous threshold of 100 employees for employers to be subject to the family leave law.

Paid leave includes:

- Bonding leave – for all types of parents to bond with a new child.
- Caring leave – to care for a seriously ill family member.
- Active-duty leave – to manage arrangements for military service.
- Medical leave – to recover from one's own serious illness or injury.
- Safe leave – to deal with domestic violence.

The United States is the only developed country without national paid family leave. To fill that gap, 13 states plus DC have passed paid family leave laws.

Hawai'i should join them. Why? Only 1 in 4 private sector workers have access to paid family leave. The federal FMLA and the Hawai'i Family Leave Law provide only unpaid leave. Most workers either don't qualify for them and/or simply can't afford to take unpaid leave. As importantly only working mothers can get TDI to recover from childbirth. Hawai'i has 154,000 unpaid caregivers, providing 144 million hours of unpaid care per year.

No one should have to choose between their loved ones and their paycheck. Paid family leave helps children by helping their parents Families with paid family leave – especially working moms – are
Healthier.
More economically secure.
More likely to stay in the workforce.
Less likely to need public benefits.

Paid family leave not only helps families but helps businesses:
Employees with paid family leave become--
More productive, which helps increase profits.
More loyal, which lowers turnover costs.

Statewide paid family leave **even helps the playing field for small businesses by helping them compete for the best workers.**

The administration as well as this legislature have been genuinely concerned about **Hawai'i residents no longer being able to afford "Paradise"**. One clear solution: **Paid family leave would help prevent working families from leaving Hawai'i.**

Paid Family Leave works this way: 1. A state-run benefit program, like Social Security or Medicare. 2. Small payroll deductions that go into a state fund to which workers apply. 3. **Employers do not need to pay workers while they are on leave and then they can hire and pay temporary workers.**

The Hawai'i Family Leave Insurance Grant Analysis Report of the Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women and the Hawai'i Children's Action Network (2017) found that paid family leave in Hawai'i is:
Feasible
Not expensive
Supported by 94% of Hawai'i workers.

For all these cogent reasons we respectfully request that the Committee **pass** S.B. 2474, SD 1. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this measure.



February 28, 2024

Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

Chair Donovan M. Dela Cruz

Vice Sharon Y. Moriwaki

Sen. Henry J.C. Aquino

Sen. Lynn DeCoite

Sen. Troy N. Hashimoto

Sen. Lorraine R. Inouye

Sen. Dru Mamo Kanuha

Sen. Michelle N. Kidani

Sen. Donna Mercado Kim

Sen. Chris Lee

Sen. Maile S.L. Shimabukuro

Sen. Glenn Wakai

Sen. Kurt Fevella

Re: SB2474 SD1 Relating to Family Leave

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

The Hawai'i State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (HSCADV) addresses the social, political, and economic impacts of domestic violence on individuals, families, and communities. We are a statewide partnership of domestic violence programs and shelters.

On behalf of HSCADV and our 27 member programs statewide, I respectfully submit testimony in strong support of SB2474 SD1, which would implement paid family and medical leave in Hawai'i. We respectfully request an amendment that would allow survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking safe leave to *§398-E Eligibility for payment of benefits* and recommend the language used in HB2757 as indicated below.

Page 8, starting line 9 (:

(D) Is a victim of domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking who needs leave for medical attention; mental health care or other counseling; victim services, including legal services; court appearances; or relocation for themselves or a family member; or

~~(D)~~(E) Has a qualifying exigency.

This critical policy is not only beneficial for caregivers and families throughout our islands but also to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking (all forms of intimate partner violence, IPV) who need to take time off to receive victim services, make court appearances, seek medical services, or relocate themselves and family. Currently, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Oregon, Colorado, Minnesota, and Maine include safe leave in their paid family leave laws.



Survivors of domestic violence face many challenges when making decisions about their safety. One of the most crucial factors is their finances. The ability to provide for themselves and their families is a key economic consideration for survivors when deciding to leave an abusive partner. It's also important to recognize the impact that financial abuse can have on survivors making it almost impossible to take unpaid time off to address their medical, emotional, and/ or legal needs without extensive time off. We must support them in every way possible.

According to the CDC, approximately 75% of female intimate partner violence survivors and 48% of male domestic violence survivors experience some form of injury related to intimate partner violence. Negative health outcomes that are associated with intimate partner violence include conditions affecting the heart, muscles and bones, and digestive, reproductive, and nervous systems, many of which are chronic. Survivors can experience mental health problems such as depression and PTSD symptoms.¹

The lifetime per-victim cost is \$103,767 for women and \$23,414 for men. This economic cost estimate includes almost 32 million women and 12 million men who are victims of intimate partner violence during their lives in the US. The lifetime economic cost to the U.S. population is \$3.6 trillion for medical services for IPV-related injuries, lost productivity from paid work, criminal justice, and other costs.²

Finally, at the first hearing for this measure, the Department of Labor testified that they would need at least 100 new staff, so the [prior committee's report](#) requested that the WAM Committee add nearly \$16 million for 122 new positions, making this bill very expensive. That is many times higher than what two comprehensive analyses of implementing paid family leave in Hawai'i found:

- One study estimated that we'd need between 14 and 24 new staff, at \$5.4 million spread out over 5 years ([see p. 31 here](#))
- The other study (prepared for the Legislative Reference Bureau) estimated that we'd need about 22 new staff at a cost of about \$2.6 million per year ([see p. 84 here](#))
- ***ALL of those costs would be paid back to the state by the payroll deductions***

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.

Sincerely,
Angelina Mercado, Executive Director

¹ Intimate partner violence: Consequences. *U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*. (2018). Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/fastfact.html>

² Ibid.



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of Hawai‘i Appleseed in **support of SB 2474**, which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family leave insurance program in Hawai‘i.

Over the last seven years, our state legislature has extensively discussed the possibility of a paid family leave policy for the state—assessing the cost, eligibility criteria, and potential economic impacts of this program. Hawai‘i already has substantial data validating the necessity for such a program, and the demand among working families continues to grow.

The absence of paid family leave in the United States highlights the urgency for comprehensive action at the state level. Existing provisions, such as the federal Family and Medical Leave Act and the Hawai‘i Family Leave Law, are inadequate, leaving a considerable portion of our workforce vulnerable.

Low-wage workers, who often require paid leave the most, face significant barriers to access. Although some companies offer this benefit, it predominantly benefits higher-income employees. Merely 6 percent of low-wage workers in the US have access to paid family leave, placing a financial strain on those who are most in need.

The consequences of this are profound, particularly in Hawai‘i, where a substantial number of children reside in households where both parents are employed. To foster the well-being of our communities and ensure the sustainability of our workforce, it is imperative for the state to establish a robust safety net for families dealing with caregiving responsibilities.

To bridge this gap, **SB 2474** proposes a family leave insurance program modeled after successful initiatives in 11 states and the District of Columbia. Experts across the political spectrum concur that a social insurance model, akin to programs like Social Security and Medicare, is highly effective in reducing costs, administrative overhead, and mitigating discrimination against workers who take leave. This kind of system keeps workers, particularly women, engaged in the workforce while reducing their reliance on public assistance.

Research indicates that job-protected paid family leave improves workforce reentry rates. In California, where a similar program has been in effect for over 15 years, mothers with access to family leave exhibited increased work hours and higher average incomes post-implementation of the law. Studies have also demonstrated the positive impact of paid leave on reducing reliance on public assistance and SNAP benefits, with recipients being significantly less inclined to depend on these services.

SB 2474 proposes offering up to 16 weeks of leave for child or dependent care, as well as medical and other caregiving purposes. This coverage ensures that workers in need of leave can avail themselves of it. Furthermore, this leave comes with partial wage replacement, which supports their health and well-being while alleviating the strain on the healthcare system and public assistance programs.

Public sentiment overwhelmingly favors the implementation of paid family leave, as evidenced by a statewide survey in Hawai'i with 94 percent of respondents in support. Nearly 60 percent of respondents expressed willingness to contribute to a monthly paid leave program, with an average comfortable contribution of just over \$41.

In conclusion, **SB 2474** represents a significant stride toward enhancing the welfare of Hawai'i's working families, affording them the time they require to adapt to significant life changes.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

To: Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Re: **SB 2474 SD1 – Relating to Family Leave**
Hawai'i State Capitol & Via Videoconference
February 28, 2024, 10:01 AM

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in **STRONG SUPPORT of SB 2474 SD1**. This bill requires the department of labor and industrial relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program, provides family leave insurance benefits and extends the period of family leave to 16 weeks. It also eliminates the previous threshold of one hundred employees for employers to be subject to the Hawai'i Family Leave Law, which provides *unpaid* leave.

Paid family leave allows workers to take time off and still receive part of their income when they need to care for their own serious health needs or those of a loved one, or to bond with a new child. **The United States is the only developed country without national paid family leave.** The average amount of paid family leave in OECD nations is about one year. The second-worst nation after the United States (which has zero weeks of leave) is Mexico, which has 12 weeks of leave.¹

To fill that gap, thirteen states plus the District of Columbia have passed paid family leave laws.² California was the first state to pass paid family leave, about 20 years ago. This program is not a new idea and works in other states. Hawai'i should join them.

A statewide paid family leave program would be financed by small payroll deductions that go into a state fund, which workers would apply to when they need leave. **Since employees would be paid from the state fund while taking leave, employers would not need to pay them while they are on leave.**

At the LBT/HHS hearing for SB2474, the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) said that they would need at least 100 new staff to implement this program, so the committee report³ requests that you add nearly \$16 million for 122 new positions. However, this is many times higher than what two comprehensive analyses found:

- The 187-page *Hawai'i Family Leave Insurance Grant Analysis Report*, commissioned by the Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women, estimates that DLIR would need between 14 and 24 new staff, at a cost of \$5.4 million spread out over 5 years.⁴

¹ <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/explainer/paid-family-leave-across-oecd-countries/>

² <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/explainer/state-paid-family-leave-laws-across-the-u-s/>

³ https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/sessions/session2024/CommReports/SB2474_SD1_SSCR2713_.htm

⁴ See page 31 of

https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/goodbeginnings/pages/196/attachments/original/1521088022/Hawaii_Family_Leave_Insurance_Analysis_Report.pdf?1521088022

- The 155-page *Paid Family Leave Program Impact Study*, prepared in accordance with Act 109, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2018, for the Legislative Reference Bureau, estimates that DLIR would need about 22 new staff at a cost of about \$2.6 million per year.⁵

Most importantly, all of those costs would be paid back to the state by the payroll deductions. In the states with paid family leave programs, they usually took a loan from the state for start-up costs. After the program started collecting payroll deductions, they paid the loan back. Ongoing costs, including personnel, are also covered by the payroll deductions.

Paid family leave is good for business. In states with paid family leave,⁶ employees are more productive, which increases profits, and loyal, which lowers turnover costs. In addition, statewide **paid family leave helps small businesses compete for the best workers.** Currently, most small businesses cannot afford to offer adequate paid family leave to their employees, which puts them at a disadvantage when it comes to attracting and retaining the best workers.

Similarly, as Hawaii struggles to keep our working-age families from moving away, we are competing with states that have paid family leave – including the entire West Coast – for the best workers. **In 2021, 34,898 residents of Hawai'i moved to states that passed paid leave laws.**⁷ When young couples are deciding where to start a family, paid family leave may be an important deciding factor for them.

Paid leave helps children by helping their parents. Research has found that states with paid family leave have seen significant **health, social and economic benefits.**⁸ Families who have access to paid leave – especially working women – are healthier, more economically secure, more likely to stay in the workforce, and **less likely to need public benefits.**

We respectfully request that you consider adding language from HB2757 HD1 to create a more comprehensive paid family leave program. This new language would add:

- **Safe leave,**⁹ to deal with domestic violence, such as seeking a restraining order or moving house
- **Medical leave,** for a worker to recover from their own serious illness or injury. With the addition of medical leave, **employers also would no longer need to purchase and administer private Temporary Disability Insurance** for their employees, saving them time and money.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide this testimony. Please pass this bill.

Thank you,
Nicole Woo, Director of Research and Economic Policy

⁵ See p. 84 of https://lrb.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019_PaidFamilyLeaveProgramImpactStudy.pdf

⁶ https://www.abetterbalance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/PFML_Business-Case_Fact-Sheet_5.10.22.pdf

⁷ <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/geographic-mobility/state-to-state-migration.html>

⁸ https://www.abetterbalance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/PFML_Health-Case_Fact-Sheet_11.30.21.pdf

⁹ <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/the-state-of-paid-family-and-medical-leave-in-the-u-s-in-2023/>



OUR MISSION

Our mission is to build the capacity of low- and moderate-income communities to achieve and sustain economic self-sufficiency with a particular focus on Native Hawaiians.

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HawaiianCommunity.net

To the Honorable Members of the Senate Ways & Means Committee,

Subject: Strong Support for SB2474 SD1 – Establishing a Paid Family Leave Program in Hawaii

Aloha Esteemed Committee Members,

I am writing to you on behalf of Hawaiian Community Assets, a committed organization dedicated to improving the financial well-being and stability of Hawaii's residents. Our mission is to build the capacity of low- and moderate-income communities to achieve and sustain economic self-sufficiency, with a focused commitment to serving our keiki to kupuna. Annually, we have the privilege of serving close to 8,000 individuals across our beautiful state, providing them with essential financial education, housing counseling, and asset-building services.

Through our direct work with thousands of families, we have witnessed firsthand the devastating impact that a lack of paid family leave can have on the financial stability and health of our community members. Too often, we see families, particularly those hovering at the ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) threshold, spiral into homelessness following a single illness or emergency. This is a stark reality that can no longer be overlooked.

SB2474 SD1 represents a critical step forward in addressing this urgent issue. The establishment of a Paid Family Leave program in Hawaii is not just a matter of social justice; it is a necessity for the economic stability and health of our communities. The benefits of such a program are manifold, extending beyond the individual to benefit small businesses and the broader economy:



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- Economic Stability: Paid family leave ensures workers do not have to choose between a paycheck and caring for their loved ones, thereby preventing many from falling into poverty or homelessness due to unforeseen health crises.

- Support for Caregivers: Women, who are often primary caregivers, would be particularly supported, helping to address gender disparities in the workplace and promote equality.

- Business Benefits: Contrary to common misconceptions, paid family leave programs can be structured in a way that is affordable and even beneficial for small businesses, reducing turnover costs and increasing employee loyalty and productivity.

- Health and Well-being: Regions with robust family leave policies, like Vienna, report higher quality of life, reduced mental health issues, and fewer physical health problems. This translates to a happier, healthier workforce and reduced healthcare costs over time.

Hawaii stands at a crossroads, with an aging population and a workforce in dire need of support. By passing SB2474 SD1, we have an opportunity to lead by example, showing that it is possible to care for our keiki and kupuna without sacrificing financial security. The evidence is clear: paid family leave is not only feasible but essential for the well-being of our state and its people.

As an organization that works tirelessly to uplift Hawaii's families, Hawaiian Community Assets strongly supports SB2474 SD1. We urge the committee to pass this bill, making paid family leave a reality for all of Hawaii's workers. Together, we can ensure that no one is forced to choose between caring for their loved ones and their livelihood.

Mahalo for your consideration and for your commitment to the well-being of Hawaii's families.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chelsie Evans Enos', is written over the typed name. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Chelsie Evans Enos
Executive Director

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HawaiianCommunity.net

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 8:09:34 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joseph Kohn MD	Testifying for We Are One, Inc. - www.WeAreOne.cc - WAO	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONGLY SUPPORT PAID FAMILY LEAVE

Multiple studies have shown that family leave programs can be established in a manner that is affordable for small businesses and our state. When medical emergencies arise, no one should be forced to choose between caring for their loved ones or earning a paycheck.

[#PaidFamilyLeave](#) [#WorkingFamilies](#) [#CostOfLiving](#) [#OhanaFirst](#) [#PeopleFirst](#)

www.WeAreOne.cc

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 8:21:52 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brooke Hallett	Testifying for American Academy of Pediatrics - Hawaii Chapter	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

The Hawaii Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics represents over 250 board certified pediatricians. We strongly support SB2474 relating to family leave. Paid family leave benefits children and their families and provides a big step forward in addressing health and economic disparities. Paid family leave helps support a stable family environment in which children experience less stress and have a strong foundation for positive learning, health and behavior. Having paid time away from work for caregivers to be present during major life events such as welcoming a new child, personal illness, or caring for sick family members helps support not only the health and well-being of the individual family, but also the economic well-being of families and the state.

Health

Paid family leave improves health outcomes. Children are more likely to attend well-child medical visits and receive all necessary immunizations. Breastfeeding rates and maternal mental health improve. There is a reduction in infant mortality. One study found mothers living in states with the most generous paid family leave had a 32% greater likelihood of breastfeeding at six months and 15% lower likelihood of having postpartum depression.[\[1\]](#)

Economics

Paid family leave improves the economy. This is particularly true for working mothers. They are more likely to return to the workforce, be healthier, more economically secure, and less likely to need public benefits. Mothers with paid leave are 39% less likely to receive public assistance after the birth of a child.[\[2\]](#) If women in Hawaii participated in the labor force at the same rate as women in countries with paid leave, we would have 18,000 more workers in Hawaii and over \$650 million more wages earned.[\[3\]](#) Paid leave

also helps businesses retain employees with firm specific knowledge, including the healthcare workforce. According to the Department of Labor, turnover is very costly, taking approximately 21% of the employees salary and benefits to recruit and train a replacement worker. Paid leave would also help level the playing field for small businesses including private practitioners. Small business owners cannot afford to offer adequate paid leave which puts them at a disadvantage to attracting and retaining the best workers.

Equity

Paid family leave helps address equity. Lower-income workers in Hawaii are the least likely to have paid family and medical leave. These are the families who need the most financial support. It is very expensive to raise a family in our state and many parents have more than one job. If a woman in Hawaii takes 4 weeks of unpaid leave, on average, the household will lose \$3,700 of income. In addition, infant mortality rates are disproportionately higher in low-income populations. This includes the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander population. The rates are 9.4 infant deaths per 1,000 live births for Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders, and up to 22 for people from the Marshall Islands and Federated States of Micronesia. This is compared to the state average of 4.67 infant deaths per 1,000.^[4] Paid family leave can greatly reduce existing health and economic disparities.

The United States is the only developed country without national paid family leave. Globally, 186 countries provide paid leave. Eight states plus the District of Columbia have passed paid family leave laws. These places have seen significant health, social and economic benefits. A small payroll tax can cover the costs of this bill. SB2474 provides a very important investment in the health and economic well-being of Hawaii families and keiki. We, the pediatricians of the Hawaii AAP, want to make our support very clear. Mahalo for your consideration.

^[1] Perry, et al. *Obstetrics & Gynecology* 143(1):p14-22, January 2024.

^[2] Heather Boushey and Sarah Jane Glynn, “The Effects of Paid Family and Medical Leave on Employment Stability and Economic Security” (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2012)

^[3] U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2022). *Local Area Unemployment Statistics, Expanded State Employment Status Demographic Data (2021 Annual Averages)*. Retrieved 13 December 2022, from <https://www.bls.gov/lau/ex14tables.htm>; U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, 2021 (Table B20017)*. Retrieved 6

December 2022, from data.census.gov. For methodology, see Novello, A. (2021, July). **The Cost of Inaction: How a Lack of Family Care Policies Burdens the U.S. Economy and Families.** Retrieved 6 December 2022 from National Partnership for Women & Families website:

[4] Infant Mortality and Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders. US Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health. <https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/infant-mortality-and-native-hawaiianspacific-islanders>

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 12:11:01 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Pride at Work - Hawaii	Testifying for Pride at Work - Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Representatives,

Pride at Work – Hawai'i is an official chapter of Pride at Work which is a national nonprofit organization that represents LGBTQIA+ union members and their allies. P@W-HI fully supports SB 2474 SD 1.

We ask that you support this needed piece of legislation.

Mahalo,

Pride at Work – Hawai'i



TESTIMONY FROM THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAII

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

FEBRUARY 28, 2024

SB 2474, SD1, RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Democratic Party of Hawaii **supports** for SB 2474, SD1, relating to family leave. In 2018, delegates to the Democratic Party of Hawaii's State Convention adopted resolution HHS: 2018-02, which "urges the Hawaii State Legislature to enact a paid family leave plan."

It is time to *finally* establish a paid family leave program for Hawaii's workers that provides paid time off to address family emergencies, including care for newborn keiki and kūpuna care. Once effectuated, family leave insurance should also provide progressive wage replacement, allowing low-income workers to receive a higher percentage of their weekly wages (ideally, up to 90 percent) to make the benefit accessible to everyone.

Hawaii's workers need this benefit. In a 2017 public poll, 62 percent of Hawaii respondents reported that they had wanted to take leave in the past in order to care for a new child or family member. Currently, though, only one in four private sector workers has access to paid family and medical leave. Lower-income workers in Hawaii, who are more likely to be Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, are the least likely to have paid family and medical leave, while they need that financial support the most.

The federal Family Medical Leave Act (which leaves out 40 percent of the state's workforce) provides for only *unpaid* leave with up to 12 weeks for employers with 50 or more employees. The Hawai'i Family Leave Law (HFLL) only applies to employers with 100 or more employees and only provides up to four weeks of *unpaid* leave to workers.

Hawai'i has the fastest growing aging population in the nation. Our senior (age 65+) population is expected to grow 81 percent by 2030. Our state currently has 154,000 unpaid caregivers providing care to kūpuna or seriously ill adult relatives, which can lead to financial and emotional strain. Hawai'i caregivers provide 144 million hours of unpaid care a year, worth \$2.6 billion annually. Notably, 34,898 residents of Hawai'i moved to states that passed paid leave laws in 2021, further showing our population's desire for family leave support.

This program would help Hawai'i's businesses. Family leave insurance increases worker retention and loyalty. Workers who have access to family leave benefits are more likely to return to work after their leave is over. In a 10-year study of the California family leave insurance program, businesses reported that family leave had either a positive or a neutral effect on their business. Small businesses were less likely than large businesses to report any negative effects.

Statewide paid family and medical leave also helps even the playing field for small businesses. Most small businesses cannot afford to offer adequate paid family and medical leave to their employees, which puts them at a disadvantage when it comes to attracting and retaining the best workers. Under a statewide paid family and medical leave program, however, small payroll deductions would go into a state fund, which workers would apply to when they need to take leave.

Since employees would be paid from the state fund while taking family or medical leave, employers would not need to pay them while they are on leave. Enabling small businesses to provide paid family and medical leave through a state-managed program would help them compete for workers and deliver adequate care for their employees. A survey conducted by the small business advocacy organization Small Business Majority revealed that two-thirds of small business owners support paid family and medical leave.

Providing paid time off for family caregiving strongly promotes gender equity. Women are often disproportionately impacted by the lack of paid leave, as they are the primary caregivers of infants, children, and aging parents. The lack of paid family leave exacerbates the gender wage gap for women and adversely impacts the economic stability of both male and female caregivers. Most working mothers who give birth can get partial pay through Hawai'i Temporary Disability

Insurance (TDI) to recover from childbirth, but TDI cannot be used by non-birth parents or to care for other family members.

We know this can work in Hawai'i. Top experts on family leave have studied the usage, cost, and feasibility of implementing a family leave insurance program for the islands. Multiple studies have been performed about the establishment of family leave for Hawai'i, all of which have found that paid family leave is a cost-effective way for workers to take adequate time off to care for their families without facing financial ruin or jeopardizing their careers, and that a statewide program can be implemented without significant cost to the state.

It's a stark reality when employees face the dire choice of caring for newborn or sick children, spouses, or parents, or working to sustain their family's income. We must offer a smart, affordable solution that empowers workers to care for their families, while preserving their incomes.

Mahalo nui loa,

Kris Coffield

Co-Chair, Legislative Committee
(808) 679-7454
kriscoffield@gmail.com

Abby Simmons

Co-Chair, Legislative Committee
(808) 352-6818
abbyalana808@gmail.com



SB 2474, SD1, RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE

FEBRUARY 28, 2024 · WAM HEARING

POSITION: Support.

RATIONALE: Imua Alliance supports SB 2474, SD1, relating to family leave, which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program; provides family leave insurance benefits and extends the period of family leave to 16 weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees who meet the hourly qualifications; and eliminates the previous threshold of 100 employees for employers to be subject to the family leave law.

It is time to *finally* establish a paid family leave program for Hawai'i's workers that provides paid time off to address family emergencies, including care for newborn keiki and kūpuna care. Once effectuated, family leave insurance should also provide progressive wage replacement, allowing low-income workers to receive a higher percentage of their weekly wages (ideally, up to 90 percent) to make the benefit accessible to everyone.

Hawai'i's workers need this benefit. In a 2017 public poll, 62 percent of Hawai'i respondents reported that they had wanted to take leave in the past in order to care for a new child or family member. Currently, though, only one in four private sector workers has access to paid family and medical leave. Lower-income workers in Hawai'i, who are more likely to be Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, are the least likely to have paid family and medical leave, while they need that financial support the most.

The federal Family Medical Leave Act (which leaves out 40 percent of the state's workforce) provides for only *unpaid* leave with up to 12 weeks for employers with 50 or more employees. The Hawai'i Family Leave Law (HFLL) only applies to employers with 100 or more employees and only provides up to four weeks of *unpaid* leave to workers.

Hawai'i has the fastest growing aging population in the nation. Our senior (age 65+) population is expected to grow 81 percent by 2030. Our state currently has 154,000 unpaid caregivers providing care to kūpuna or seriously ill adult relatives, which can lead to financial and emotional strain. Hawai'i caregivers provide 144 million hours of unpaid care a year, worth \$2.6 billion annually. Notably, 34,898 residents of Hawai'i moved to states that passed paid leave laws in 2021, further showing our population's desire for family leave support.

This program would help Hawai'i's businesses. Family leave insurance increases worker retention and loyalty. Workers who have access to family leave benefits are more likely to return to work after their leave is over. In a 10-year study of the California family leave insurance program, businesses reported that family leave had either a positive or a neutral effect on their business. Small businesses were less likely than large businesses to report any negative effects.

Statewide paid family and medical leave also helps even the playing field for small businesses. Most small businesses cannot afford to offer adequate paid family and medical leave to their employees, which puts them at a disadvantage in attracting and retaining the best workers. Under a statewide paid family and medical leave program, however, small payroll deductions would go into a state fund, which workers would apply to when they need to take leave.

Since employees would be paid from the state fund while taking family or medical leave, employers would not need to pay them while they are on leave. Enabling small businesses to provide paid family and medical leave through a state-managed program would help them compete for workers and deliver adequate care for their employees. A survey conducted by the small business advocacy organization Small Business Majority revealed that two-thirds of small business owners support paid family and medical leave.

Providing paid time off for family caregiving strongly promotes gender equity. Women are often disproportionately impacted by the lack of paid leave, as they are the primary caregivers of infants, children, and aging parents. The lack of paid family leave exacerbates the gender wage gap for women and adversely impacts the economic stability of both male and female caregivers. Most working mothers who give birth can get partial pay through Hawai'i Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) to recover from childbirth, but TDI cannot be used by non-birth parents or to care for other family members.

We know this can work in Hawai'i. Top experts on family leave have studied the usage, cost, and feasibility of implementing a family leave insurance program for the islands. Multiple studies have been performed about the establishment of family leave for Hawai'i, all of which have found that paid family leave is a cost-effective way for workers to take adequate time off to care for their families without facing financial ruin or jeopardizing their careers, and that a statewide program can be implemented without significant cost to the state.

It's a stark reality when employees face the dire choice of caring for newborn or sick children, spouses, or parents, or working to sustain their family's income. We must offer a smart, affordable solution that empowers workers to care for their families, while preserving their incomes.

Kris Coffield · Executive Director, Imua Alliance · (808) 679-7454 · kris@imuaalliance.org



SENATE BILL 2474, SD1, RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE

FEBRUARY 28, 2024 · WAM HEARING

POSITION: Support.

RATIONALE: The Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus **supports** SB 2474, SD1, relating to family leave, which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program; provides family leave insurance benefits and extends the period of family leave to 16 weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees who meet the hourly qualifications; and eliminates the previous threshold of 100 employees for employers to be subject to the family leave law.

It is time to *finally* establish a paid family leave program for Hawai'i's workers that provides paid time off to address family emergencies, including care for newborn keiki and kūpuna care. Once effectuated, family leave insurance should also provide progressive wage replacement, allowing low-income workers to receive a higher percentage of their weekly wages (ideally, up to 90 percent) to make the benefit accessible to everyone.

Hawai'i's workers need this benefit. In a 2017 public poll, 62 percent of Hawai'i respondents reported that they had wanted to take leave in the past in order to care for a new child or family member. Currently, though, only one in four private sector workers has access to paid family and medical leave. Lower-income workers in Hawai'i, who are more likely to be Native Hawaiian or

Pacific Islander, are the least likely to have paid family and medical leave, while they need that financial support the most.

The federal Family Medical Leave Act (which leaves out 40 percent of the state's workforce) provides for only *unpaid* leave with up to 12 weeks for employers with 50 or more employees. The Hawai'i Family Leave Law (HFLL) only applies to employers with 100 or more employees and only provides up to four weeks of *unpaid* leave to workers.

Hawai'i has the fastest growing aging population in the nation. Our senior (age 65+) population is expected to grow 81 percent by 2030. Our state currently has 154,000 unpaid caregivers providing care to kūpuna or seriously ill adult relatives, which can lead to financial and emotional strain. Hawai'i caregivers provide 144 million hours of unpaid care a year, worth \$2.6 billion annually. Notably, 34,898 residents of Hawai'i moved to states that passed paid leave laws in 2021, further showing our population's desire for family leave support.

This program would help Hawai'i's businesses. Family leave insurance increases worker retention and loyalty. Workers who have access to family leave benefits are more likely to return to work after their leave is over. In a 10-year study of the California family leave insurance program, businesses reported that family leave had either a positive or a neutral effect on their business. Small businesses were less likely than large businesses to report any negative effects.

Statewide paid family and medical leave also helps even the playing field for small businesses. Most small businesses cannot afford to offer adequate paid family and medical leave to their employees, which puts them at a disadvantage when it comes to attracting and retaining the best workers. Under a statewide paid family and medical leave program, however, small payroll deductions would go into a state fund, which workers would apply to when they need to take leave.

Since employees would be paid from the state fund while taking family or medical leave, employers would not need to pay them while they are on leave. Enabling small businesses to provide paid family and medical leave through a state-managed program would help them compete for workers and deliver adequate care for their employees. A survey conducted by the

small business advocacy organization Small Business Majority revealed that two-thirds of small business owners support paid family and medical leave.

Providing paid time off for family caregiving strongly promotes gender equity. Women are often disproportionately impacted by the lack of paid leave, as they are the primary caregivers of infants, children, and aging parents. The lack of paid family leave exacerbates the gender wage gap for women and adversely impacts the economic stability of both male and female caregivers. Most working mothers who give birth can get partial pay through Hawai'i Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) to recover from childbirth, but TDI cannot be used by non-birth parents or to care for other family members.

We know this can work in Hawai'i. Top experts on family leave have studied the usage, cost, and feasibility of implementing a family leave insurance program for the islands. Multiple studies have been performed about the establishment of family leave for Hawai'i, all of which have found that paid family leave is a cost-effective way for workers to take adequate time off to care for their families without facing financial ruin or jeopardizing their careers, and that a statewide program can be implemented without significant cost to the state.

It's a stark reality when employees face the dire choice of caring for newborn or sick children, spouses, or parents, or working to sustain their family's income. We must offer a smart, affordable solution that empowers workers to care for their families, while preserving their incomes.

Kris Coffield · Chairperson, DPH Education Caucus · (808) 679-7454 · kriscoffield@gmail.com



TESTIMONY FROM THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAII LABOR CAUCUS

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS · FEBRUARY 28, 2024

SB 2474, SD1, RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i Labor Caucus **supports** SB 2474, SD1, relating to family leave, which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program; provides family leave insurance benefits and extends the period of family leave to 16 weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees who meet the hourly qualifications; and eliminates the previous threshold of 100 employees for employers to be subject to the family leave law.

It is time to *finally* establish a paid family leave program for Hawai'i's workers that provides paid time off to address family emergencies, including care for newborn keiki and kūpuna care. Once effectuated, family leave insurance should also provide progressive wage replacement, allowing low-income workers to receive a higher percentage of their weekly wages (ideally, up to 90 percent) to make the benefit accessible to everyone.

Hawai'i's workers need this benefit. In a 2017 public poll, 62 percent of Hawai'i respondents reported that they had wanted to take leave in the past in order to care for a new child or family member. Currently, though, only one in four private sector workers has access to paid family and medical leave. Lower-income workers in Hawai'i, who are more likely to be Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, are the least likely to have paid family and medical leave, while they need that financial support the most.

The federal Family Medical Leave Act (which leaves out 40 percent of the state's workforce) provides for only *unpaid* leave with up to 12 weeks for employers with 50 or more employees. The Hawai'i Family Leave Law (HFLL) only applies to employers with 100 or more employees and only provides up to four weeks of *unpaid* leave to workers.

Hawai'i has the fastest growing aging population in the nation. Our senior (age 65+) population is expected to grow 81 percent by 2030. Our state currently has 154,000 unpaid caregivers providing care to kūpuna or seriously ill adult relatives, which can lead to financial and emotional strain. Hawai'i caregivers provide 144 million hours of unpaid care a year, worth \$2.6 billion annually. Notably, 34,898 residents of Hawai'i moved to states that passed paid leave laws in 2021, further showing our population's desire for family leave support.

This program would help Hawai'i's businesses. Family leave insurance increases worker retention and loyalty. Workers who have access to family leave benefits are more likely to return to work after their leave is over. In a 10-year study of the California family leave insurance program, businesses reported that family leave had either a positive or a neutral effect on their business. Small businesses were less likely than large businesses to report any negative effects.

Statewide paid family and medical leave also helps even the playing field for small businesses. Most small businesses cannot afford to offer adequate paid family and medical leave to their employees, which puts them at a disadvantage when it comes to attracting and retaining the best workers. Under a statewide paid family and medical leave program, however, small payroll deductions would go into a state fund, which workers would apply to when they need to take leave.

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Insurance (TDI) to recover from childbirth, but TDI cannot be used by non-birth parents or to care for other family members.

We know this can work in Hawai'i. Top experts on family leave have studied the usage, cost, and feasibility of implementing a family leave insurance program for the islands. Multiple studies have been performed about the establishment of family leave for Hawai'i, all of which have found that paid family leave is a cost-effective way for workers to take adequate time off to care for their families without facing financial ruin or jeopardizing their careers, and that a statewide program can be implemented without significant cost to the state.

It's a stark reality when employees face the dire choice of caring for newborn or sick children, spouses, or parents, or working to sustain their family's income. We must offer a smart, affordable solution that empowers workers to care for their families, while preserving their incomes.

Mahalo,

Jason Bradshaw

Chairperson, Democratic Party of Hawai'i Labor Caucus

Feb. 28, 2024, 10:01 a.m.

Hawaii State Capitol

Conference Room 211 and Videoconference

To: Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Sen. Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair

Sen. Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice-Chair

From: Ted Kefalas, Director of Strategic Campaigns

Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

RE: COMMENTS ON SB2474 SD1 — RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Moriwaki and Committee Members,

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii would like to offer its comments on [SB2474 SD1](#), which would establish a family leave insurance program funded by employer and employee contributions.

It also would eliminate the exemption from the family leave law for employers with fewer than 100 employees.

The idea of being able to take paid leave from work to care for a family member is certainly appealing, but decades of data demonstrate that such programs rarely live up to their promise and may even harm those they intend to help.

It is often assumed that family leave policies will be especially helpful to female workers, as women are expected to benefit more from paid leave. However, research demonstrates that family leave programs show no benefit to female workforce participation, and may even have a negative effect.

A recent study of the long-term effects of California's Paid Family Leave Act found that it did not help narrow the pay gap, and was instead associated with reduced employment and earnings for first-time mothers.¹

¹ Martha J. Bailey, Tanya S. Byker, Elena Patel, et al., "[The Long-Run Effects of California's Paid Family Leave Act on Women's Careers and Childbearing: New Evidence from a Regression Discontinuity Design and U.S. Tax Data](#)," National Bureau of Economic Research, October 2019.

A different study of maternity leave reform in the United Kingdom found that among highly educated workers, paid-leave programs tend to increase gender inequality, with fewer women holding management and promotion-track jobs, while lower-educated female workers were 10 percentage points less likely to receive a promotion than they were before the reforms were enacted.²

Nor are the benefits of paid-leave programs evenly distributed. Low-income workers are significantly less likely to take advantage of paid leave, making it little more than a government-subsidized leave program for well-paid workers.

In 2020, 18 million California workers paid into the state’s family leave program and were eligible to take advantage of its benefits. However, only 14% of workers earning less than \$20,000 took paid leave, while workers earning \$80,000 to \$99,999 had a utilization rate four times higher than the lowest earners. Those making \$100,000 or more a year utilized paid leave three times as much as low income workers.³

Family leave policies in San Francisco⁴ and New Jersey⁵ have seen similar results, with low-income families far less likely to utilize leave policies than high-income earners.

Paid-leave programs also struggle with problems of cost. It is nearly impossible to properly evaluate the financial viability of the program proposed in this bill, as the contribution requirements are left to a later determination. However, there is a real risk of underestimating the full cost of the program, which could create a burden for the state budget and taxpayers.

The AEI-Brookings Working Group on Paid Family Leave analyzed the proposed federal FAMILY Act — which also relies on payroll contributions — and argued that the authors of the bill had severely underestimated the costs of the paid-leave program. Depending on take-up rates, the funding mechanism might have only covered half the program’s costs.⁶

² Jenna Stearns, [“The Long-Run Effects of Wage Replacement and Job Protection: Evidence from Two Maternity Leave Reforms in Great Britain.”](#) SSRN, May 7, 2018.

³ Kristin Schumacher, [“Paid Family Leave Payments Don’t Add Up for California Workers.”](#) California Budget and Policy Center, February 2022.

⁴ Julia M. Goodman, William H. Dow and Holly Elser, [“Evaluating the San Francisco Paid Parental Leave Ordinance: Employer Perspectives.”](#) University of California at Berkeley, February 2019.

⁵ Amy Dunford, [“Boosting Families, Boosting the Economy: How to Improve New Jersey’s Paid Family Leave Program.”](#) New Jersey Policy Perspective, April 2017.

⁶ [“Paid Family and Medical Leave: An Issue Whose Time Has Come.”](#) AEI-Brookings Working Group on Paid Family Leave, May 2017.

Before embarking on an ambitious paid-leave program such as the one proposed by SB2474 SD1, lawmakers should demand a strict analysis of its financial impact on the state budget and the economy as a whole to ensure that the program would not become a fiscal nightmare.

Finally, we must consider the effect that enacting this bill would have on Hawaii's business climate.

Because the proposed program is very broad, including even businesses with only a handful of employees, it would add to the cost of doing business in our state. Employers would have to compensate for the increased costs associated with the program, which could mean fewer jobs or stagnant wages.

Support for family leave probably would go down if workers knew it would equate to higher taxes or require them to forego a raise or promotion.

As attractive as the idea of paid leave might be, the negative tradeoffs that accompany family leave programs cannot be ignored.

Given the many questions raised by this bill, it seems clear that more analysis is needed of the effects and fiscal impact of paid family leave in Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our comments.

Sincerely,

Ted Kefalas
Director of Strategic Campaigns
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii



**Parents And
Children Together**

**BUILDING THE RELATIONSHIPS
THAT MATTER MOST**

ParentsAndChildrenTogether.org

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2474 RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE

TO: Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Moriwaki, & Members,
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
FROM: Ryan Kusumoto, President & CEO
DATE: February 28, 2024 at 10:01 AM

Parents and Children Together (PACT) offers testimony in support of SB 2474 SD1 Relating to Family Leave, which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program.

The United States is the only developed country without national paid family leave. Thirteen states and the District of Columbia have passed paid family leave laws, and the states with paid family leave have seen significant health, social and economic benefits. Many of Hawaii's working families are not afforded adequate amounts of paid leave causing financial hardship and increased dependency on public assistance during times of illness or caregiving. Low-wage workers are the least likely to have access to paid leave forcing them to choose between maintaining employment or caring for their families. A family leave insurance program could enable workers to retain employment while caring for family and help businesses retain key employees and remain competitive.

Founded in 1968, PACT is a statewide community-based organization providing a wide array of innovative and educational social services to families in need. Assisting more than 15,000 people across the state annually, we help identify, address, and successfully resolve challenges through our 20 programs. Among our services are early education programs, domestic violence prevention and intervention programs, child abuse prevention and intervention programs, childhood sexual abuse supportive group services, child and adolescent behavioral health programs, sex trafficking intervention, poverty prevention and community building programs.

Paid Family Leave supports family well-being and the economy. It increases health equity among different racial and socioeconomic groups AND helps to increase worker retention and loyalty.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Please contact me at (808) 847-3285 or rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org if you have any questions.

Helping Hawai'i Live Well

**Friday, February 28th, 2024, 10:
Videoconference
SB2474, Relating to Family Leave**

ADVISORY BOARD

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Jerry Rauckhorst
Roy Sakuma
Jeffrey Watanabe

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Morikawi, and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means.

We write in strong support of SB2474 which would require the department of labor to establish a paid family and medical leave program in Hawai'i.

Mental Health America of Hawai'i (MHAH), an affiliate of the renowned national organization, is a highly regarded 501(c)(3) non-profit organization serving the State of Hawai'i. For nearly 80 years, MHAH has been fulfilling its mission "to promote mental health & wellness through education, advocacy, service, and access to care" through its vision of 'mental wellness for all.' We endeavor to reduce the shame and stigma of mental illness and improve the overall care, treatment, and empowerment of those with or at risk for mental health challenges across all stages of life in Hawai'i.

PRO BONO LEGAL COUNSEL

Paul Alston

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Considering the lingering impacts of the global pandemic, the ongoing youth mental health crisis, and the unknown long term physical and mental health impacts of the Maui fires, establishing paid family leave is a critical step towards ensuring sustainable families and improved health, economic, and social outcomes.

We strongly urge you to pass this legislation, and we are grateful for the opportunity to submit written testimony.

Respectfully,



Bryan L. Talisayan
Executive Director



Senate Committee on Ways & Means

Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Supports: SB2474

Wednesday, February 28, 2024 10:01 a.m Conference Room 211

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members,

HAPA supports SB2474. No one should have to sacrifice their financial well-being to care for their keiki or kupuna. The majority of Hawai'i's workforce cannot afford to take unpaid leave to care for a new child or assist a family member with a serious health condition. Hawai'i law only provides a four-week extension of unpaid leave to employees of large employers with more than one hundred employees.

In 2018, only 17 percent of workers in the United States had access to paid family leave through their employers. Women, who are often the primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents, are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family leave.

Hawai'i has one of the fastest growing populations over the age of 65 in the nation. From 2020 to 2030, the percentage of people aged 65 and over is expected to increase to 22.5 percent of the state's population. Nearly one-third of workers who do not have access to family leave will need time off to care for an ill spouse or elderly parent.

Multiple studies have shown that family leave programs can be established in a manner that is affordable for small businesses and our state. When medical emergencies arise, no one should be forced to choose between caring for their loved ones or earning a paycheck.

At the first hearing for SB2474, the Department of Labor testified that they would need at least 100 new staff, so [the prior committee's report](#) requested that the WAM Committee add nearly \$16 million for 122 new positions, making this bill very expensive.

That is many times higher than what two comprehensive analyses of implementing paid family leave in Hawai'i found:

- One study estimated that we'd need between 14 and 24 new staff, at a cost of \$5.4 million spread out over 5 years ([see p. 31 here](#))
- The other study (prepared for the Legislative Reference Bureau) estimated that we'd need about 22 new staff at a cost of about \$2.6 million per year ([see p. 84 here](#))

A key point here is that ALL of those costs would be paid back to the state by the payroll deductions.

Please support HB2757 HD1.

Mahalo for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Frederick', is positioned above the typed name.

Anne Frederick, Executive Director

To: The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
The Honorable Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

From: Paula Arcena, External Affairs Vice President
Mike Nguyen, Public Policy Manager

Hearing: Wednesday, February 28, 2024, 10:01 AM, Conference Room 211

RE: **SB2474, SD1 Relating to Family Leave**

AlohaCare appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **support** of **SB2474, SD1**. This measure requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program; provides family leave insurance benefits and extends the period of family leave to 16 weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees who meet the hourly qualifications; eliminates the previous threshold of 100 employees for employers to be subject to the family leave law; and appropriates funds.

Founded in 1994 by Hawai'i's community health centers, AlohaCare is a community-rooted, non-profit health plan serving over 84,000 Medicaid and dual-eligible health plan members on all islands. Approximately 40 percent of our members are keiki. We are Hawai'i's only health plan exclusively dedicated to serving Medicaid and Medicaid-Medicare dually-eligible beneficiaries. Our mission is to serve individuals and communities in the true spirit of aloha by ensuring and advocating for access to quality, whole-person care for all.

AlohaCare's commitment to whole-person care and health equity includes addressing social determinants of health, including housing, nutrition, and economic stability. Evidence of the health and economic benefits of paid family and medical leave are well established. Workers need to be able to take time off to attend to their own health, the health of family members, and other caregiving responsibilities without losing their wages or jobs.

Paid family leave is beneficial for family health and well-being outcomes, in terms of infant and maternal health and overall financial stability, especially in low-income families.¹ For example, research shows that providing new parents with paid time off to care for their newborn or recently adopted children contributes to healthy growth and development for infants and toddlers, research shows.² Rigorous U.S.

¹ <https://news.stanford.edu/2022/03/09/real-benefits-paid-family-leave/>

² <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hpb20190301.484936/full/>

and international studies find that adequate periods of paid leave have significant, positive effects on maternal physical and mental health, an increase in breastfeeding, which has health benefits for mother and child, and a reduction in maternal stress and intimate partner violence.³

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in **support of SB2474, SD1.**

³ <https://www.newamerica.org/better-life-lab/reports/paid-family-leave-how-much-time-enough/maternal-health-and-wellbeing/>

TESTIMONY OF THE AMERICAN COUNCIL OF LIFE INSURERS COMMENTING
ON SB 2474, SD 1, RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE

February 28, 2024

Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Honorable Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Committee on Ways and Means
State Senate
Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 211 and Videoconference
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Committee:

Our firm represents the American Council of Life Insurers (“ACLI”). The American Council of Life Insurers (ACLI) is the leading trade association driving public policy and advocacy on behalf of the life insurance industry. Ninety million American families rely on the life insurance industry for financial protection and retirement security. ACLI’s member companies are dedicated to protecting consumers’ financial wellbeing through life insurance, annuities, retirement plans, long-term care insurance, disability income insurance, reinsurance, and dental, vision and other supplemental benefits. ACLI’s 275 member companies represent 93 percent of industry assets in the United States.

Two hundred sixteen (216) ACLI member companies currently do business in the State of Hawaii representing 95% of the life insurance premiums and 99% of the annuity considerations in this State. A subset of ACLI member companies underwrite Hawaii temporary disability insurance (TDI) policies that provide income replacement benefits to employees when they require time away from work to address their own medical conditions.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on Senate Bill 2474 relating to the creation of a family leave insurance (FLI) program to be administered by the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DOL).

ACLI supports sustainable paid family leave laws that allow for private administration of benefits. The framework for private administration of state mandated benefits currently exists in Hawaii in the TDI program. Under the current TDI model, employers can purchase insurance from a list of authorized carriers or self-insure TDI benefits.

While the DOL oversees the TDI program and manages appeals, the administration of TDI claims is managed by private claims administrators based in Hawaii. This cooperative public/private partnership model has worked successfully for decades to ensure access to these important benefits without the expense to the state of administering the claims. In its February 12, 2024, testimony submitted at the prior joint hearing of the bill by the Senate Committee on Labor and Technology and Health and Human Services, the DOL estimated that it would need an additional 100 full time employees and a technology investment of \$60 million over the next five years to build a platform to administer claims. By adding FLI to the current TDI framework, a

significant portion of expected DOL expenses could be saved because the capacity to administer these benefits currently exists through Hawaii based claims administrators.

Additionally, the lack of coordinated administration between the TDI and FLI programs will lead to a potentially confusing process for Hawaii employees, especially pregnancy claims that will have a TDI component and a FLI component. These two benefit programs should be administered under the TDI framework to provide a seamless administrative process for employees.

As drafted, therefore, ACLI does not support this measure.

ACLI strongly recommends that Senate Bill 2474 be amended to add FLI benefits to the existing TDI statutory structure.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment on SB 2474, SD1, relating to Family Leave

LAW OFFICES OF
OREN T. CHIKAMOTO
A Limited Liability Law Company

Oren T. Chikamoto
P. O. Box 4277
Honolulu, Hawaii 96812
Telephone: (808) 531-1500
E mail: otc@chikamotolaw.com



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Evaluation

Community Health
Worker Initiatives

COVID-19 Response

Environmental Health

Hawai'i Drug & Alcohol-Free
Coalitions

Hawai'i Farm to School Hui

Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition

Hawai'i Public Health Training Hui

Healthy Eating + Active Living

Kūpuna Collective/Healthy Aging
& Community Living

Public Health Workforce
Development

Date: February 8, 2024

To: Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Re: Strong Support for SB2474 SD1, Relating to Paid Family Leave

Mtg: Wednesday, February 28, 2024 at 10:01 AM

The Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) Coalition, convened by the Hawai'i Public Health Instituteⁱ, **strongly supports SB2474 SD1**. This bill would provide employees up to 16 weeks of paid family leave by establishing a family and medical leave insurance program within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, which would be funded through payroll contributions.

It is time for Hawai'i to pass a strong family leave insurance program. Employees need paid time off of work to care for a newborn, newly adopted or foster child, ill family member, and other unexpected health emergencies. Paid family leave guarantees that employees can cover basic living costs while also providing care to family members when they need it most. Thirteen states and Washington, DCⁱⁱ, have passed similar legislation providing partial wage replacement for family and medical leave purposes.

Paid time off for families to care for a newborn also helps to establish a foundation for breastfeeding. Infant feeding practices can significantly affect later growth and development and can protect against obesityⁱⁱⁱ. The American Academy of Pediatrics and the World Health Organization recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life and continued breastfeeding with the addition of other foods until a child is at least twelve months of age^{iv}.

“A robust body of evidence suggests that breastfeeding has multiple health benefits for infants, and that paid family leave (and other forms of maternity leave) significantly increases the length of time that mothers breastfeed. In a review and analysis of studies of breastfeeding in developed countries, the U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality found that full-term infants fed formula are at substantially greater risk than breastfed infants for acute ear infection, eczema, gastrointestinal infection, hospitalization for lower respiratory tract diseases in the first year of life, asthma, childhood obesity, Type 2 diabetes, leukemia, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).”^v

Furthermore, when people can take time away from work to care for themselves and their families, there are many health benefits. People are able to better manage chronic conditions, it improves health for mothers and fathers; it allows families to care for their kūpuna; and it has been shown to increase health equity.

For all of these reasons, we **strongly support SB2474 SD1**, and thank this committee for considering this important policy.

Mahalo,



Peggy Mierzwa
Policy & Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Public Health Institute

ⁱ Created by the legislature in 2012, **Healthy Eating + Active Living Coalition**, formerly the Obesity Prevention Task Force is comprised of over 60 statewide organizations, and works to make recommendations to reshape Hawai'i's school, work, community, and health care environments, making healthier lifestyles obtainable for all Hawai'i residents.

ⁱⁱ <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/the-state-of-paid-family-and-medical-leave-in-the-u-s-in-2023/>

ⁱⁱⁱ S. Arenz et al., Breast-feeding and childhood obesity - a systematic review, 28(10) *International Journal of Obesity and Related Metabolic Disorders* 1247-56 (2004).

^{iv} American Academy of Pediatrics, AAP Reaffirms Breastfeeding Guidelines, <https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/pages/AAP-Reaffirms-Breastfeeding-Guidelines.aspx> (last updated February 27, 2012).

^v http://www.nccp.org/publications/pdf/text_1059.pdf



TO: Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

DATE: Wednesday, February 28, 2024

FROM: AF3IRM Hawai'i

RE: SB 2474 SD1 RELATING TO RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE
Position: SUPPORT

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Committee on Ways and Means,

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on SB2474 SD1. AF3IRM Hawai'i **STRONGLY SUPPORTS this measure.** Hawai'i has 154,000 unpaid family caregivers, providing 144 million hours of care worth \$2.6 billion per year, **and those numbers will continue to increase as our population ages.** Our membership is made up of Native, Black, and immigrant women, and we know intimately how women bear the disproportionate burden for caring for family members, from young children to elder care. This unpaid labor comes at the unjust expense. We must value caregiving and find a way to support those who take on this kūleana.

Paid family leave can help alleviate some burden during life moments when care and support is needed. When the gift of new life comes, new parents ought to be able to have the time and support to bond with their child. The baby may create a secure attachment to their caregivers that will have a life-long effect. When medical emergencies arise, no one should be forced to choose between caring for their loved ones or earning a paycheck. This bill also provides 16 weeks of paid leave for employees that have been victims/their family members have been victims of domestic violence, sexual violence, and stalking. This can be beneficial for survivors in their healing and also seeking a restraining order or relocating to safety.

Fund systems of care and it will have lasting impacts – from the person, their family, and overall community. Many states and numerous municipalities have passed and implemented paid family leave programs. A family leave program would honor balance work and family responsibilities without negatively impacting productivity, engagement, and wellness. It will also ensure that Hawai'i's working families receive appropriate caregiving while maintaining the ability to return to work after an absence.

Pass SB 2474 SD1. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this measure..



COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

BILL SB2474 SD1

POSITION: SUPPORT

Hearing Date: February 28, 2024, 10am, room CR211

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Committee Members:

Aloha United Way supports SB2474 SD1, which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program, to provide family leave insurance benefits and extend family leave to sixteen weeks for qualified businesses and employees.

Aloha United Way and its partners in the ALICE initiative strongly support this bill to create a state system on paid family leave, and the ALICE reports and work of the AUW agencies who serve the needs of thousands of local families when they need to take unpaid time from work or decide to leave a job because of family caregiving needs. AUW's 2022 ALICE report found that **44% of Hawaii's households are ALICE** and showed an alarming 50% increase in ALICE households falling into poverty. ALICE stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed, and refers to households who are employed but whose incomes are not enough to meet their basic living costs.

This bill will help to reverse this trend, and will increase income and employment opportunity for ALICE families, strengthen our workforce and economic security and may **mean the difference between a family deciding to leave Hawaii or stay as part of our workforce** and community.

In addition, by using the framework and cost structure of a program like Unemployment Insurance, this type of support for families in the workforce can be made available without undue burden on small business or employers and help to balance the needs of family caregivers and employers. The appropriation of funds to support the implementation of this program is a vital investment in the well-being and strength of our workforce and long-term prosperity of our state.

On behalf of ALICE families across the state, we ask for your action to pass SB2474 SD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Handwritten signature of Suzanne Skjold in blue ink.

Suzanne Skjold
Chief Operating Officer
Aloha United Way

Handwritten signature of Kayla Keehu-Alexander in blue ink.

Kayla Keehu- Alexander
Vice President, Community Impact
Aloha United Way



**Senate Ways and Means Committee
Chair, Senator Donovan M Dela Cruz
Vice Chair, Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki
Wednesday, February 28, 2024, 10:01 AM**

RE: SB 2474 Relating to Paid Family Leave

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

The Society of Human Resource Management – Hawaii (“SHRM”)¹ respectfully opposes SB 2474 Relating to Paid Family Leave.

While the intention behind this bill is commendable, evidence from other states that have implemented similar programs suggests that it may not be the most effective solution to address this issue.

For instance, in states like California and Vermont where paid sick leave mandates have been enacted, there has been little evidence to suggest a significant improvement in overall public health outcomes or employee well-being. Studies have shown that the costs associated with implementing and enforcing these programs have often outweighed the benefits, resulting in undue burdens on businesses, especially small and medium-sized enterprises.

Moreover, the lack of flexibility in many paid sick leave mandates has led to instances of abuse and misuse, where employees take advantage of the system for purposes other than genuine illness. This not only undermines the legitimacy of the program but also creates additional challenges for employers in managing employee absences.

¹ SHRM Hawaii serves and represents nearly 600 members and employers’ statewide and human resource management is a critical component to the success and survival of the many businesses that make up our local economy. HR professionals are responsible for evaluating and balancing the needs of both the employers and employees and caring for businesses’ most valuable asset: the working people of our state.



The bill proposes to provide up to 16 weeks of protected leave for employees or other qualified individuals for all employers who employ one or more people. This period would put Hawaii at the uppermost end of the minority of jurisdictions that provide paid family leave and can be expected to have an adverse effect on Hawaii's employers, especially smaller employers.

We believe there the proposed bill could result in unintended consequences. The measure would create several classes of protected leave insofar as HRS section 398-C requires that the individual be reinstated to the prior position at the end of the leave or an equivalent position if the former position is unavailable. It also does not require that the employee who has been on the leave be fully qualified for that equivalent position. The bill further provides that the employer may not retaliate against the employee who has taken the leave. The bill extends not only to situations of the employee's own illness or that of a relative, but also possibly to situations where the employee or relative needs credit or other counselling other than that provided by a healthcare provider [13, lines 14-17]. Thus, the bill becomes not simply a matter of providing for pay during a time of leave but becomes one of creating a protected category of employee for a period of four months. This can be expected to adversely affect employers, especially smaller employers.

The bill could detrimentally affect those receiving child support and spousal support since HRS section 398-4(c) mandates that the payment received under this bill is not subject to levy, garnishment, or any other debt collection activities. In fact, even the employee receiving the payment under this section is unable to waive this requirement. Therefore, this payment will be immune from both spousal and child support orders which might be in effect. Clearly, this would result in an adverse effect on spouses or children who rely on these payments.

This bill could also potentially provide a disincentive for employers to hire relatives of service members as it provides payment for a "qualifying exigency" [page 16, line 9], which is defined as the covered individual or the covered individual's family member. This allows a relative to spend up to five days "with a service member for each instance of short-term, temporary rest, and recuperation ('R&R') leave during a period of deployment" [page 13, lines 18-20]. However, there is no requirement that the service member be ill or in need of any care. It is well known that the term "R & R" is often a euphemism for the equivalent of a service member's vacation time. While we at SHRM appreciate the sacrifices and efforts that our service members and their families undergo during deployment, this provision could result in the unintended consequences of disincentivizing employers from hiring service members or their family members.

We encourage the state to consider offering more flexible and targeted solutions for families. The state could create programs that reward employers that accommodate employees with childcare or caregiving demands or offer tax incentives for employers that voluntarily offer leave benefits or permit flexible scheduling and remote work.



We look forward to contributing positively to the development of sound public policy and continuing to serve as a resource to the legislature on matters related to labor and employment laws.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.

Erin Kogen and Rosanne
M.Nolan

Co-chairs, SHRM Legislative Affairs Committee



SHRM Hawaii, P. O. Box 3175, Honolulu, Hawaii (808) 447-1840

LATE

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 1:00:05 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Regina Blanchard-Walker	Testifying for Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is an important and much needed bill in supporting workers who need to take leave from work.

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2474, SD 1

TO: Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, & WAM Committee Members

FROM: Nikos Leverenz
Grants & Advancement Manager

DATE: February 28, 2024 (10:01 AM)

Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHRC) **strongly supports** SB 2474, SD 1. This bill requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program.

The percentage of people in Hawai'i over the age of 65 will increase to 22.5 percent of the population by 2030. This demographic reality means that many of their children, mostly women, will be disproportionately impacted by the lack of paid family leave. Right now unpaid leave to care for an aging parent (or a new child) is an option available only to those who work for large companies. Unpaid leave forces people to choose between their continued employment and the needs of their families.

[Only 27% of workers nationwide have access to paid family leave](#), per the Bureau of Labor Statistics. As with employer-provided health insurance under the Prepaid Health Care Act in 1974, Hawai'i should endeavor to demonstrate that a commitment to essential family needs should be a part of this state's economic baseline.

HHRC's mission is to reduce harm, promote health, create wellness, and fight stigma in Hawai'i and the Pacific. We work with many individuals who are impacted by poverty, housing instability, and other social determinants of health. Many have behavioral health problems, including those relating to substance use and underlying mental health conditions. Many of our clients and participants have been deeply impacted by trauma, including histories of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



MAUI
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
VOICE OF BUSINESS

LATE

**HEARING BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, SENATE CONFERENCE ROOM 211
Wednesday, February 28, 2024, 10:01 A.M.**

To The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
The Honorable Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Members of the committee on Ways and Means

OPPOSE SB2474 SD1 RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE

The Maui Chamber of Commerce **OPPOSES SB2474 SD1.**

While the Chamber understands the intent of this measure, we cannot continue to hit small businesses with increased regulations and costs on all fronts. There have been numerous requirements that have been placed on small businesses that they are accumulating to the point where it is less costly and more beneficial for a small business to close its doors. We see numerous small businesses, sometimes long-time local businesses, close their doors since COVID-19 due to the ever-rising costs of doing business.

We object to the requirement of allowing up to 16 weeks of family leave when the state currently requires only 4 weeks. Small businesses are having a very hard time finding employees as it is, to require them to try to find a temporary employee for up to 16 weeks would not help them at all. And this is just one of many issues we have with this bill.

As the state looks at more economic development, we have to ensure we have a business-friendly environment to attract new industries. Additionally, we also see bills to expand the definition of family in family leave laws that increases costs on multiple fronts.

Small businesses are the life blood of Hawaii's economy and to pile yet another requirement on them is approaching (or passed) the last straw.

For this reason, we **OPPOSE SB2474 SD1** and respectfully ask that it be deferred.

Sincerely,

Pamela Tumpap
President

To advance and promote a healthy economic environment for business, advocating for a responsive government and quality education, while preserving Maui's unique community characteristics.

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2024 11:18:01 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patrick Karjala	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee on Ways and Means,

I am writing in SUPPORT of SB 2474 SD 1 with the following comments:

At the first hearing for SB2474, the Department of Labor testified that they would need at least 100 new staff, so the prior committee's report requests that the WAM Committee add nearly \$16 million for 122 new positions, making this bill very expensive.

That is many times higher than what two comprehensive analyses of implementing paid family leave in Hawaii found:

- One study estimated that we'd need between 14 and 24 new staff, at a cost of \$5.4 million spread out over 5 years (see p. 31 at https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/goodbeginnings/pages/196/attachments/original/1521088022/Hawaii_Family_Leave_Insurance_Analysis_Report.pdf?1521088022)
- The other study (prepared for the Legislative Reference Bureau) estimated that we'd need about 22 new staff at a cost of about \$2.6 million per year (see p. 84 at https://lrb.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019_PaidFamilyLeaveProgramImpactStudy.pdf)

Key point: ALL of those costs would be paid back to the state by the payroll deductions

There's another important improvement that I'd like to suggest for this bill:

Add safe leave, for survivors to deal with domestic violence, such as seeking a restraining order or relocating to safety

Please bring Hawaii forward into the modern age with better family leave!

Sincerely,

Patrick Karjala
Mililani, HI

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2024 11:37:34 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessie L Gonsalves	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments: Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members, I am testifying in strong support of bill SB2474 related to paid leave. Paid leave is important to me, because it would have helped so much when I was pregnant with my daughter and not have to go back to work a month couple weeks after she was born. Also when my father was hospitalized and sent to Oahu. Short term disability and FMLA is what I get to use. BUT PAID FAMILY LEAVE IS WHAT IS NEEDED. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify!

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2024 12:21:10 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marilyn Mick	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members,

I am testifying in **strong support** of SB2474 related to paid leave. Paid leave is important to all Hawaii families

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify!

Marilyn Mick, Honolulu

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2024 1:44:34 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John Bickel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The USA Is th only major industrialized country without a paid family leave insurance program. Without movement at the federal level, we need to provide it at the state level. These programs lead to better adult citizens and basically pay for themselves in the long run.

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2024 1:53:55 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Terri Yoshinaga	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I SUPPORT THIS BILL!

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2024 6:22:43 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ruth Robison	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

2/24/2024

To: Senate Ways and Means Committee

Chair: Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz

Vice Chair: Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki

RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2474

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Committee.

My name is Ruth Robison and I live in Hilo. I am in strong support of SB 2474

I am proud that the state of Hawaii has passed sensible, progressive laws over the years since we became a state. SB2474 continues in that tradition by requiring the department of labor and industrial relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program. The program extends family leave to 16 weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees. Mothers who gave birth would be able to take paid family leave in addition to temporary disability insurance (TDI). SB2474 would eliminate the previous threshold of 100 employees for employers to be subject to the family leave law.

The United States is the only developed country without national paid family leave. Thirteen states and the District of Columbia have passed paid family leave laws, and the states with paid family leave have seen significant health, social and economic benefits. Paid family leave is good for business—employees become more productive and loyal when they have it.

Paid family leave allows workers to take time off and still receive part of their income when they need to care for their own serious health needs or those of a loved one, or to bond with a new child.

Thank you for your service and for considering my testimony.

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2024 6:50:33 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christy MacPherson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of SB2474 SD1. It is time that **ALL** workers, particularly low-wage workers, are provided with the same *humane* working conditions that other workers are afforded. Being able to stay home when you are sick or when your young children are sick and not lose your pay (that is unfortunately never enough to begin with) is a benefit that all employers should be providing for their employees. This also obviously reduces the spread of viruses that could have serious health impacts for co-workers.

I can't even begin to count the number of times I have seen friends and families whom I worked with having to *drag* themselves to work when they are feeling their absolute worst because they have to pay their bills. I've witnessed single, homeless parents having to call in sick in order to take care of their babies or toddlers because no one else could care for them. That meant money taken out of the paychecks they depended on in order to move out of our shelter and into housing. These are just a few examples of what our low-wage workers are going through out there.

Mahalo nui to our legislators who introduced and support this critical piece of legislation.

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 8:37:54 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Courtney Velazquez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members,

I am testifying in **strong support** of bill **SB2474** related to paid leave. Paid leave is important to me because our families need time to care for ourselves and loved ones without worrying about losing income.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify!

Hearing Date: Thursday, February 28, 2024, 10:01 am, Conference Rm. 211

To: Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Chair, Senator, Donovan M Dela Cruz
Vice Chair, Sharon Y Moriwaki

Re: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2474, SD1 RELATING TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

From: Jean Evans, (Individual)

Re: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2474, SD1 Relating to Paid Family Leave

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of Committees,

My name is Jean Evans and **I am Strong support of SD 2472, SD1 Relating to Paid Family Leave**

It is shocking to know that the United States is the **ONLY** developed country in the world that does not provide paid family leave. Currently 13 states and the District of Columbia do have such laws and all reports show they help to retain talented productive employees while increasing family well-being.

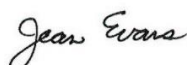
The proposed bill for family and medical leave is based on the successful insurance model which includes a large pool of companies and employees to make it affordable. The leave may be taken to care for a new child, a family member with a serious health condition, or a qualifying service member who is individual's next of kin. This leave may also be taken for self-care for victims of domestic abuse, sexual assault. In addition, an employee may take this leave if they are injured, sick or disabled and cannot perform their duties.

As well as benefiting employees and their families, paid family leave is good for businesses. Many companies are having significant difficulty recruiting employees who often initially choose to apply to a potential employer based their benefit package and, in particular, how they are seen to value and care for their staff. This benefit also has been shown to increase employee retention and loyalty.

Without paid family leave, it's been demonstrated that, workers and working families are relocating to areas that allow families to take paid time leave. This is true here in Hawaii where the cost of living is so high that workers cannot survive if they take unpaid leave or have to quit their job due to a family medical/health issue.

Please pass SB 2474, SD1 for the sake of working families in Hawaii.

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony today and I encourage you to pass this important measure.



Jean Evans

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 5:16:50 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
BLYTH KOZUKI	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony on Senate Bill No. 2474, SD1
RELATING TO Family Leave
Feb. 28, 2024, 10:01 a.m.
Conference Room 211 & Videoconference
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee:

My name is Blyth Kozuki and I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of SB 2474, SD1.

There are no arguments that caring for our vulnerable kupunas and children is the right thing to do but caregivers need support. Not only is it difficult in so many ways to be a caregiver, it is especially difficult because of the high costs and limited options (e.g. jobs) of living in Hawaii. Some in our community opposing SB2474 SD1 have the opinion that it is unaffordable given the numerous issues facing us. Certainly the Maui disaster has the immediate focus and needs to be addressed. But if our community is waiting for a day when there are no crises or believing there will be a better time to support caregivers, I believe we are creating another crisis. Imagine if our caregivers give up caregiving because they can't afford to keep doing it, won't we have more kupuna relying on state or city & county services to help them? It will cost at that point also and at greater costs to the community. If we have people leaving their jobs to care for their children won't that contribute to the labor shortage or less retirement for their future? This bill will reinforce a structure already in place. We need to get beyond the "short-term" thinking and forestall a brewing crisis. Our caregivers need support!

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 5:43:05 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kelly Cogo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

"I Strongly Support this Bill" SB2474 SDI

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 6:18:46 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Doris Matsunaga	Testifying for Save Medicaid Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Save Medicaid Hawaii supports SB 2474

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 10:21:11 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara Barry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members,

I am testifying in **strong support** of bill **SB2474** related to paid leave. Paid leave is important to everyone who has keiki, kupuna or health issues. It will make the difference for people to decide if they can afford to stay here or move to a state that protects their workers.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify!

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 10:47:11 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Krystal Baba	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 10:49:09 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ryan Samonte	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I **strongly support** this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony!

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 11:04:41 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dawn Morais Webster Ph.D.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please note that prior testimony by the Department of Labor vastly exaggerated the number of additional staff needed to make this policy work.

TWO comprehensive analyses of implementing paid family leave in Hawaii revealed the following:

- One study estimated that we'd need just between 14 and 24 new staff, at a cost of \$5.4 million spread out over 5 years
- The other study (prepared for the Legislative Reference Bureau) estimated that we'd need about 22 new staff at a cost of about \$2.6 million per year
- ***ALL of those costs would be paid back to the state by the payroll deductions***
- The Department of Labor's request for 122 new positions is thus very unrealistic and outlandishly expensive.

PLEASE ALSO:

- Add safe leave, for survivors to deal with domestic violence, such as seeking a restraining order or relocating to safety
- Mahalo for making this essential public policy a reality for the health and well-being of our community.

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 11:58:44 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Allison Mikuni	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members,

I am testifying in **strong support** of bill **SB2474** related to paid leave. Paid leave is important for workers who do not have any sick leave or vacation leave in their current job, which happens for many reasons; such as a new employee who is in a new job, or a longtime employee who has exhausted their sick leave and vacation leave. Thousands of families across the state are caring for young children and/or elderly parents. Workers who are in this predicament need financial stability during this crucial moment in their lives, for the good of their families, and the betterment of our communities. Employers benefit by having employees who are grateful and dedicated to the company, with reduced turnover, which provides stability in the workplace long after the family crisis has ended.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Allison Mikuni

Palolo, Oahu, Hawaii

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 8:18:43 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jinan Banna	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

PFML improves the health of our community and allows for important care of family members. It has been shown to increase health equity. As a caretaker for my mother, I can attest to what an impact this would have on our family's wellbeing.

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 8:32:00 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello,

My name is Nanea Lo. I'm born and raised in the Hawaiian Kingdom. I live in Mō'ili'ili. I'm writing in Support of SB2474 SD1.

me ke aloha 'āina,

Nanea Lo, Mō'ili'ili, O'ahu

Testimony on SB 2474
RELATING TO Family Leave

Feb. 28, 2024, 10:01 a.m.

Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee:

My name is Dolores Foley and I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of SB 2474, SD1. The bill provides paid family leave for working caregivers who need some time to care for a loved one at home.

Family caregivers are the backbone of Hawaii's long term care system. They provide countless hours of care that range from bathing, preparing meals and escorting loved ones for medical visits. They lovingly perform these daily tasks so that their family member can remain in their homes and age in place. However, many are still working and struggling to juggle work and caregiving responsibilities. With Hawaii's high cost of living, few can afford to quit their jobs. They shouldn't have to choose between their own financial security and caring for a loved one. Please support these unsung heroes by passing SB 2474, SD1. They deserve this help.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify!

Dolores Foley
Kailua HI
dolores@hawaii.edu

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 8:45:29 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dan Gardner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Ways and Means Committee:

My name is Dan Gardner, and my wife Deborah and I are in very **STRONG SUPPORT** of SB 2474 SD1. The bill provides paid family leave for working caregivers who need some time to care for a loved one at home. Caregivers are the backbone of Hawai'i's long term care system. They provide countless hours of care to loved ones - from bathing, preparing meals and escorting them for medical visits. They lovingly perform these daily tasks so that their family member can remain in their homes and age in place. Many caregivers have to quit or retire from their jobs prematurely to provide the needed care, often sacrificing their own source of income and financial security. Caregivers should not have to choose between their jobs and caring for their family. Please support these unsung heroes by passing S.B. 2474 SD1.

Sincerely, Dan Gardner

Honolulu, HI

daniel.dano.gardner@gmail.com

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 8:45:42 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nate Hix	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We all believe that people should be able to take care of their family members when it's needed. Hawai'i has a great opportunity to give its residents this ability by passing this bill and joining almost all of the other developed nations who already have paid family leave policies in place. Please pass this bill.

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 9:58:46 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Axel Beers	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I am writing in strong support of SB2474, requiring the establishment of a paid family leave program for Hawai`i. Paid family leave has proven benefits, including decreased infant mortality rates, lessened burdens on senior care homes and care workers, and increased health equity across racial and socioeconomic groups.

According to the Aloha United Way, about half of the households in Maui County make below the household survival budget. We are asset limited, income constrained, and employed. In the event that a member of the household gets a serious illness, or an elder requires senior care, our families would be in severe crisis and unable to make the income required for survival.

The United States is the only modernized country which does not mandate paid family leave, and a number have states have enacted this legislation. In Hawai`i, where we value so closely our family, we should also have this legislation.

My only feedback at this time is to examine funding mechanisms to ensure that the burden to pay for this program does not fall on median income earners and below. Please fund this program through methods that raise revenue from high income earners.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Axel Beers

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 10:03:33 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Suzanne Fields	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawaii Families NEED SUPPORT!

In Hawai‘i, where many families are living paycheck to paycheck, it is critical that our state implement programs so that families are able to thrive, not just survive.

Currently, only one in four private sector workers has access to paid family leave.

Paid Family & Medical Leave has health benefits:

- It allows people to better manage their chronic disease by creating time they can get treatment.
- PFML improves health for both mothers and fathers.
- When mothers can stay with their children, breastfeeding is increased, which leads to life-long health benefits for babies.
- It allows families to provide care for their kūpuna.
- It has been shown to increase health equity.

PFML is:

- Insurance, funded by small deductions from paychecks, that is used to pay employees when they need:
- Parental leave – for parents, including fathers and adoptive and foster parents, to bond with a new child
- Medical leave – for a worker to recover from their own serious illness or injury
- Caregiving leave – for a worker to care for a family member with a serious health condition--

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 10:34:24 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristin Mills	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong support of SB2474, Paid Family Leave. Our ohana need to be able to take paid leave to support, care for, and bond with new keiki, to care for kupuna, and to address caregiving needs for themselves or loved ones.

Please support SB2474!

Mahalo,

Kristin Mills

Maui resident, parent, and health educator

THE SENATE
KA 'AHA KENEKOA

THE THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2024

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

NOTICE OF DECISION MAKING
DATE: Wednesday, February 28, 2024
TIME: 10:01 AM

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Committee on Ways and Means. My name is Carol Wakayama and I wish to submit this testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of S.B. 2474, SD. 1 (“Relating to Family Leave”).

S.B. 2474, S.B. 1 would provide ‘family leave benefits’ to individuals working in small businesses and/or to those who cannot work from home. By providing the capacity to take ‘family leave,’ S.B. 2474, S.B. 1 could provide life-improving (or saving) changes/benefits to: 1) young families with a child who needs specialized care; 2) families providing assistance to elderly family members; and 3) any other person who needs help caring for someone precious, who may have a serious medical condition.

Without having a ‘family leave’ type benefit, employees could be placed into a position where they are forced to choose between their jobs or caring for a family member. Because so many people live paycheck-to-paycheck, losing ones job or source of income - simply because the employer doesn’t provide this type of benefit - could not only harm the family, but, also the community at large.

S.B. 2474, S.B. 1 might also be a ‘life saver to the community’ when another pandemic or public health crisis strikes. Perhaps the number of fatalities could be reduced if employees (who previously did not have any type of family leave benefits) - felt they could take ‘covered time off’ to rest and heal - without fearing that they will lose their jobs/source of income. I humbly request your support of S.B. 2474, S.B. 1. Thank you for this opportunity to provide my testimony.

Sincerely,

Carol Wakayama
Honolulu, Hawaii

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 10:41:31 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jordan Kapono Nakamura	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha my name is Jordan Kapono Nakamura and I'm a kama'aina worker and I'd like to voice my support for SB2474 which helps secure paid family and medical leave for workers in Hawai'i. All working families deserve time off to care for their loved ones, and this bill will help create a much overdue program for this purpose, which is already a workers' right guaranteed in California and other states, in addition to other nations such as Cuba with exponentially higher guarantees for paid family and medical leave. Hawai'i's current policy of zero weeks is woefully behind in adqueate provision of this basic quality working condition. Though I am a single worker, I have witnessed the need for my co-workers in California and Hawai'i and the difference it makes when paid family leave needs are met. The quality of life and the health of not just the workers but the entire staff is noticably beneficial when these basic provisions are ensured and it's time Hawai'i goes from lacking in providing paid family and health leave to being a leader and example in quality working conditions for its people. Mahalo.

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 11:12:15 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Aimee Grace	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Aimee Malia Grace, MD, MPH, FAAP, and I am a pediatrician and public health/health policy professional writing in my individual capacity.

As a Mom myself, with a new baby last year, I faced almost four months of my maternity leave with no paid leave. This contributed to financial stress for our family and took away attention from the special relationships and needs with our newborn during this time.

This policy is long overdue for Hawaii and critical for our ALICE families and all of our residents.

Please do your part and pass this bill.

Mahalo,

Aimee

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 11:33:04 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
RoAnn Viloría	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to lend my full support to the proposed Paid Family Leave legislation in Hawai'i. As a resident deeply invested in the welfare of our community, I believe implementing paid family leave is imperative for the well-being of families across our state. By providing financial assistance during pivotal life events such as childbirth, adoption, or caring for ailing family members, this legislation ensures that families can prioritize their loved ones' needs without facing undue financial strain.

Paid family leave is not just a matter of compassion; it's a fundamental aspect of fostering a healthy, resilient workforce and promoting gender equality. This policy encourages workforce participation by alleviating the fear of economic instability when employees need time off for family responsibilities. Furthermore, it challenges traditional gender roles by providing equal opportunities for men and women to participate in caregiving, thus advancing equity in both the workplace and the home. By enacting this legislation, Hawai'i can lead the way in prioritizing the welfare of its families and creating a more inclusive and prosperous society for all.

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 11:55:02 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anne Leake	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members,

My name is Anne Leake and I am a retired nurse living in Kaneohe. I am testifying in **strong support** of bill **SB2474** related to paid leave. Paid leave is important to me because low wage earners should not have to fear losing their jobs when they have to care for family members who are ill.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify!

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 12:37:17 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Thomas Brandt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support!

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 12:44:09 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Molly Mamaril	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

I hope you are well. I am writing in strong support of SB2474 SD1. It is clear that Hawai‘i families need paid family leave as many families are living paycheck to paycheck. It is critical that our state implement programs so that families are able to thrive, not just survive. Currently, only one in four private sector workers has access to paid family leave.

Paid Family & Medical Leave also has many health benefits:

- It allows people to better manage their chronic disease by creating time they can get treatment.
- It improves health for both mothers and fathers.
- When mothers can stay with their children, breastfeeding is increased, which leads to life-long health benefits for babies.
- It allows families to provide care for their kūpuna.
- It has been shown to increase health equity.

Paid Family Medical Leave is insurance, funded by small deductions from paychecks, that is used to pay employees when they need: 1) parental leave – for parents, including fathers and adoptive and foster parents, to bond with a new child, 2) medical leave – for a worker to recover from their own serious illness or injury or 3) caregiving leave – for a worker to care for a family member with a serious health condition.

Mahalo for your consideration of this bill.

Molly Mamaril (Kaimuki resident)

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 12:50:03 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carrie Anne Tilley Alexander	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support paid family and medical leave. It's something that is overdue and would greatly benefit the ohana in Hawaii.

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 1:15:32 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kanani Horito	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

I am writing in support of sb2474 because I believe that passing this bill would increase the health equity of Hawaii families that extends to our communities at large. The PFML insurance that helps pay for parental leave, medical leave and care giving leave is vital in allowing family members to care for their keiki and kupuna's needs without overbearing financial emotional hardship. I believe that protecting the family unit is key to ensuring a safe, healthy and productive community. Without strong family units, our communities will suffer degradation that eventually lead to broken societies. Please carefully consider the consequences of sb2474.

Mahalo

Kanani Horito

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 1:15:35 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Desiree Caminos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in full support of this bill. I am a site manager at a homeless shelter and I truly believe it will help families to maintain their income and stabilize their housing situations. It will help to keep families from entering into homelessness.

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 1:22:28 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Will Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

No one should have to sacrifice their financial well-being to care for their keiki or kupuna. The majority of Hawai'i's workforce cannot afford to take unpaid leave to care for a new child or assist a family member with a serious health condition. Hawai'i law only provides a four-week extension of unpaid leave to employees of large employers with more than one hundred employees.

In 2018, only 17 percent of workers in the United States had access to paid family leave through their employers. Women, who are often the primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents, are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family leave.

Hawai'i has one of the fastest growing populations over the age of 65 in the nation. From 2020 to 2030, the percentage of people aged 65 and over is expected to increase to 22.5 percent of the state's population. Nearly one-third of workers who do not have access to family leave will need time off to care for an ill spouse or elderly parent.

Multiple studies have shown that family leave programs can be established in a manner that is affordable for small businesses and our state. When medical emergencies arise, no one should be forced to choose between caring for their loved ones or earning a paycheck.

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 1:23:26 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Renee Rabb	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB2474 by Senator Moriwaki which establishes a family leave insurance program. The ability of workers to take time off when their families most need them strengthens the fabric of a compassionate society. Much like unemployment insurance, when a worker needs this assistance the right thing to do is have it available.

Mahalo,

Renee Rabb

Hawaiian Paradise Park

Keaau, HI 96749

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 1:27:56 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bethany Albrecht	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawai'i families need paid family leave:

- In Hawai'i, where many families are living paycheck to paycheck, it is critical that our state implement programs so that families are able to thrive, not just survive.
- Currently, only one in four private sector workers has access to paid family leave.
- Paid Family & Medical Leave has health benefits:
 - It allows people to better manage their chronic disease by creating time they can get treatment.
 - PFML improves health for both mothers and fathers.
 - When mothers can stay with their children, breastfeeding is increased, which leads to life-long health benefits for babies.
 - It allows families to provide care for their kūpuna.
 - It has been shown to increase health equity.

PFML:

- Is insurance, funded by small deductions from paychecks, that is used to pay employees when they need:
 - Parental leave – for parents, including fathers and adoptive and foster parents, to bond with a new child
 - Medical leave – for a worker to recover from their own serious illness or injury
 - Caregiving leave – for a worker to care for a family member with a serious health condition

We need paid family leave!

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 1:33:43 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephanie Austin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this important bill!

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 1:43:59 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lawrence S Franco	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the provision of family leave to all employees. When there is illness in the family, parents are now in the position of losing their job because they need to stay home to care for an ill child or parent or leaving a sick family member alone without care. We in Hawaii believe in the concept of ohana - we take care of our family members - young or old. I ask that you pass SB2474. Thanks.

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 2:03:12 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nellieshy mamuad	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

this PFML will be vital to help sustain working families, espceially single parents like myself. i am in full support of SB2474.

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 2:06:16 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jill Meinecke	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the committee,

I am writing in strong support of SB2474 SD1 which would establish paid family leave program for Hawaii.

In a place where family remains a top priority for almost everybody, Hawaii is in dire need of a paid family leave program. Establishing one will increase worker satisfaction, ensure our most vulnerable populations (keiki and kupuna) are looked after with care, and help ease the burden on folks who are working to make ends meet in Hawaii.

Please do the right thing and help working families out by creating a Paid Family Leave Program!

Mahalo for your consideration,

Jill Meinecke

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 2:06:42 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Azelski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support of SB2474 SD1. Thank you.



January 26, 2024

To: Senate Committee on Ways and Means

From: Jenni K. Guillen, Instructor of Biology, University of Hawai'i at Hilo

Re: SB2474

Greetings Senate Committee,

I am writing to you today to share my personal testimony and advocate for the urgent implementation of paid family leave policies. As a working parent who has experienced firsthand the overwhelming challenges of navigating childbirth and early childcare without adequate support, I believe it is imperative that we address the pressing need for paid leave to ensure the well-being of families across our community.

My journey into motherhood was a whirlwind of joy and stress, marked by the birth of my beautiful child and the immediate return to work just a week later. The financial strain of a \$6,000 hospital bill loomed over our heads, leaving me with no choice but to hastily resume my responsibilities at work, despite the physical and emotional toll of childbirth still weighing heavily upon me.

In the weeks that followed, the struggle to secure suitable childcare for my newborn became a daunting task. The limited availability of providers willing to care for an infant, coupled with exorbitant costs, left me feeling overwhelmed and desperate. Even when we finally found a childcare solution, the financial burden persisted, with childcare expenses consuming a significant portion of our income.

The absence of paid leave not only placed immense strain on our finances but also took a toll on my mental and emotional well-being. The inability to take time off to bond with my newborn and adjust to the demands of motherhood left me feeling isolated and overwhelmed. I watched helplessly as the precious moments with my child slipped away, overshadowed by the relentless demands of work and financial obligations.

My story is not unique, as countless working parents across our nation are forced to navigate the challenging landscape of childbirth and early childcare without the support of paid leave. It is time for us to prioritize the well-being of families by enacting policies that provide adequate paid leave to support parents during these critical stages of life.

By investing in paid family leave, we not only support the health and happiness of parents and children but also foster stronger, more resilient communities. I urge you to consider the profound impact that paid leave can have on the lives of working families and take decisive action to enact policies that reflect our shared commitment to supporting the well-being of all members of our society.

Please feel free to contact me if I can answer any questions you may have. Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jenni Guillen'.

Jenni Guillen, PhD
Instructor of Biology
University of Hawai'i, Hilo
808-932-7514

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 2:27:24 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
B Puni Kekauoha	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB2474 related to Family Medical Leave. This bill will help to support caregivers caring for their kupuna and parents caring for keiki. Please support SB2474.

Mahalo,

Puni Kekauoha

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 2:41:24 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cristina Bacchilega	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Decision Makers,

i have written more than once in support of paid family leave in Hawai‘i, and it is because i know from personal experience what difference it can make. In my case, even though my husband and i were tenured faculty members at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, there was no sick leave or family leave available when i had my daughter in 1988--and as parents we really really struggled to care for our sweet child and continue to teach classes and do our work responsibly. We had reasonably paid jobs, and we could not afford to take unpaid leave. Imagine people who are already struggling financially in the eveyday--and then they face the additional challenge of becoming caretakers!

No one should have to sacrifice their financial wellbeing to care for their keiki or kupuna. The majority of Hawai‘i's workforce **cannot** afford to take unpaid leave to care for a new child or assist a family member with a serious health condition. Current Hawai‘i law only provides a four-week extension of unpaid leave to employees of large employers with more than one hundred employees--aue!

We know that Hawai‘i has one of the fastest growing populations over the age of 65 in the nation. From 2020 to 2030, the percentage of people aged 65 and over is expected to increase to 22.5 percent of the state's population. Nearly one-third of workers who do not have access to family leave will need time off to care for an ill spouse or elderly parent. Let’s be legislatively proactive.

Hawai‘i is still a place where family matters, and i urge you to vote in favor of SB2474 SD1 because having a paid family leave here shows that you care about family as a value and the wellbeing of families here. Wellbeing includes physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing *and* financial wellbeing--having to choose between these is no wellbeing, especially when others in the family are facing health challenges.

Sincerely,

Cristina Bacchilega

To: Hawaii State Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Hearing Date/Time: Wednesday February 28, 2024, 10:01am
Place: Hawaii State Capitol, CR 211 & Videoconference
Re: Judith Ann Armstrong supports SB2474 SD1 Relating to Family Leave

Dear Chair Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki and members of the Committee on Ways and Means.

I, Judith Ann Armstrong, support SB2474 SD1 Relating to Family Leave.

The United States is the only developed country without national paid family leave. Thirteen states and the District of Columbia have passed paid family leave laws, and the states with paid family leave have seen significant health, social and economic benefits. Paid family leave is good for business—employees become more productive and loyal when they have it.

Paid family leave allows workers to take time off and still receive part of their income when they need to care for their own serious health needs or those of a loved one, or to bond with a new child.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB2474 SD1.

Sincerely,

Judith Ann Armstrong

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 3:28:22 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Diliaur Tellei	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I write in support of this measure. I am happy to see it moving forward and urge the committee to pass it to the next stage.

People shouldn't have to be making the choice between providing care for their families and putting food on the table or making rent. I hear so many people talking about how Hawai'i is not the same it used to be, and I think it's because so many people have to turn inward and keep their nose to the grindstone just to survive. If everyone is just surviving, how in the world are we supposed to build a community? Having assurance of paid family leave for the times when it's needed--which are already trying without the thought of making ends meet--would go toward building that community instead of leaving it to degrade further. Let's protect our people and our families by passing this bill. Thank you!

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 3:30:26 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shay Chan Hodges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawai‘i families need paid family leave:

- In Hawai‘i, where many families are living paycheck to paycheck, it is critical that our state implement programs so that families are able to thrive, not just survive.
- Currently, only one in four private sector workers has access to paid family leave.
- Paid Family & Medical Leave has health benefits:
 - It allows people to better manage their chronic disease by creating time they can get treatment.
 - PFML improves health for both mothers and fathers.
 - When mothers can stay with their children, breastfeeding is increased, which leads to life-long health benefits for babies.
 - It allows families to provide care for their kūpuna.
 - It has been shown to increase health equity.

PFML:

- Is insurance, funded by small deductions from paychecks, that is used to pay employees when they need:
 - Parental leave – for parents, including fathers and adoptive and foster parents, to bond with a new child
 - Medical leave – for a worker to recover from their own serious illness or injury
 - Caregiving leave – for a worker to care for a family member with a serious health condition

Date: 2/26/24

To: Hawaii State Senate Ways and Means Committee
Chair: Senator Donovan M Dela Cruz
Vice Chair: Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki

From: Nancy Rustad

Hearing Date/Time/Room: Wednesday, February 28, 2024, 10:00 am, Room 211 and Videoconference

RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB2474 SD1

Dear Chair, Vice Chair and members of the Committee. My name is Nancy Rustad and I am in support of SB2474 SD1.

The United States is the only developed country without national paid family leave. Thirteen states and the District of Columbia have passed paid family leave laws, and the states with paid family leave have seen significant health, social and economic benefits. Paid family leave is good for both business owners and their employees.

Paid family leave allows workers to take time off and still receive part of their income when they need to care for their own serious health needs or those of a loved one, or to bond with a new child. Employees become more productive and loyal when paid family leave is available to them.

SB2474 would require the department of labor and industrial relations to establish and administer a **family leave insurance program**. The program extends family leave to 16 weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees. Mothers who gave birth would be able to take paid family leave in addition to temporary disability insurance (TDI). SB2474 would eliminate the previous threshold of 100 employees for employers to be subject to the family leave law.

Women, as primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents, are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family and medical leave. According to AARP Hawaii, there are approximately 157,000 unpaid family caregivers in the State. According to AAUW, moms working full-time, year-round are paid 74 cents for every dollar paid to dads. This is known as the motherhood penalty.

I encourage you to act on behalf of the best interests of our Hawaii businesses and workforce by supporting SB2474. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 3:38:00 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Diane Ware	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair and Committee members,

No one should have to sacrifice their financial well-being to care for their keiki or kupuna. The majority of Hawai'i's workforce cannot afford to take unpaid leave to care for a new child or assist a family member with a serious health condition. Hawai'i law only provides a four-week extension of unpaid leave to employees of large employers with more than one hundred employees.

In 2018, only 17 percent of workers in the United States had access to paid family leave through their employers. Women, who are often the primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents, are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family leave.

Hawai'i has one of the fastest growing populations over the age of 65 in the nation. From 2020 to 2030, the percentage of people aged 65 and over is expected to increase to 22.5 percent of the state's population. Nearly one-third of workers who do not have access to family leave will need time off to care for an ill spouse or elderly parent.

Multiple studies have shown that family leave programs can be established in a manner that is affordable for small businesses and our state. When medical emergencies arise, no one should be forced to choose between caring for their loved ones or earning a paycheck.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment,

Diane Ware Volcano 96785

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 4:34:04 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Greg Crawford	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

No one should have to sacrifice their financial well-being to care for their keiki or kupuna. The majority of Hawai'i's workforce cannot afford to take unpaid leave to care for a new child or assist a family member with a serious health condition. Hawai'i law only provides a four-week extension of unpaid leave to employees of large employers with more than one hundred employees.

In 2018, only 17 percent of workers in the United States had access to paid family leave through their employers. Women, who are often the primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents, are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family leave.

Hawai'i has one of the fastest growing populations over the age of 65 in the nation. From 2020 to 2030, the percentage of people aged 65 and over is expected to increase to 22.5 percent of the state's population. Nearly one-third of workers who do not have access to family leave will need time off to care for an ill spouse or elderly parent.

Multiple studies have shown that family leave programs can be established in a manner that is affordable for small businesses and our state. When medical emergencies arise, no one should be forced to choose between caring for their loved ones or earning a paycheck.

Mahalo.

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 4:36:48 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michele Nihipali	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawai'i families need paid family leave:

- In Hawai'i, where many families are living paycheck to paycheck, it is critical that our state implement programs so that families are able to thrive, not just survive.
- Currently, only one in four private sector workers has access to paid family leave.
- Paid Family & Medical Leave has health benefits:
 - It allows people to better manage their chronic disease by creating time they can get treatment.
 - PFML improves health for both mothers and fathers.
 - When mothers can stay with their children, breastfeeding is increased, which leads to life-long health benefits for babies.
 - It allows families to provide care for their kūpuna.
 - It has been shown to increase health equity.
- Hawaii needs paid family leave.

Thank you for your consideration,

Michele Nihipali

54-074 A Kam Hwy.

Hauula, HI 96717

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 5:55:13 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessica dos Santos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Respected Legislators,

I am writing to express my strong support for S.B. NO. 2474, S.D. 1, which aims to establish a comprehensive family leave insurance program in Hawaii. This legislation is crucial for addressing the needs of Hawaii's working families during times of caregiving and illness.

The current state of affairs in Hawaii, as highlighted in the findings of the bill, indicates a pressing need for a robust family leave policy. With 42% of families in Hawaii living paycheck to paycheck, many workers cannot afford to take unpaid leave to care for a new child or attend to the needs of a family member with a serious health condition. Moreover, the existing Hawaii law only offers a modest four weeks of unpaid leave, which is available only to employees of large employers with more than one hundred employees. This leaves a significant portion of the workforce without adequate support during times of family caregiving.

Paid family leave has been proven to have numerous benefits, including reducing infant mortality, promoting health equity among different racial and socioeconomic groups, and increasing worker retention and loyalty. It is essential for ensuring the well-being of both employees and their families.

Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the importance of having provisions for family leave, as it has led to increased caregiving responsibilities for many individuals. Enacting a comprehensive family leave program will allow employees to provide adequate care for their loved ones during times of crisis.

I urge you to support S.B. NO. 2474, S.D. 1, and to take action to ensure its passage. This legislation will make a significant difference in the lives of Hawaii's working families and contribute to building a more equitable and compassionate society.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this important bill.

Sincerely,

Jessica dos Santos

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

AMENDED NOTICE OF DECISION MAKING

DATE: Wednesday, February 28, 2024

TIME: 10:01 AM

RE: SB 2474 SD1 RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committees:

My name is Linda Dorset, and I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of SB2474 SD1. The bill establishes a family leave insurance program that provides insurance benefits for working caregivers who need some paid time off to care for a loved one at home.

Family caregivers are the backbone of Hawaii's long term care system. They provide countless hours of care that range from bathing, preparing meals and escorting loved ones for medical visits. They lovingly perform these daily tasks so that the family member can remain in the home and age in place; but they sacrifice income, job security, and savings. Family caregivers often pay as much as \$7,200/Year out of their own pockets for needed supplies such as incontinent supplies, medications, and additional in-home assistance. It is estimated that there are 154,000 Caregivers giving 144 Million Care Hours/Year which amounts to \$2.6 Billion of Unpaid Labor/Year. Many must also balance work and caregiving or leave the workforce altogether. With Hawaii's high cost of living, few can afford to quit their jobs. They shouldn't have to choose between their own financial security and caring for a loved one.

Please support SB2474 SD1. Caregivers deserve this help. We know probably all of us will be needing this help.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify!

Linda Dorset
Wailuku, Maui

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 6:04:28 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John Fitzpatrick	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

No one should have to sacrifice their financial well-being to care for their keiki or kupuna. The majority of Hawai'i's workforce cannot afford to take unpaid leave to care for a new child or assist a family member with a serious health condition. Hawai'i law only provides a four-week extension of unpaid leave to employees of large employers with more than one hundred employees.

In 2018, only 17 percent of workers in the United States had access to paid family leave through their employers. Women, who are often the primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents, are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family leave.

Hawai'i has one of the fastest growing populations over the age of 65 in the nation. From 2020 to 2030, the percentage of people aged 65 and over is expected to increase to 22.5 percent of the state's population. Nearly one-third of workers who do not have access to family leave will need time off to care for an ill spouse or elderly parent.

Multiple studies have shown that family leave programs can be established in a manner that is affordable for small businesses and our state. When medical emergencies arise, no one should be forced to choose between caring for their loved ones or earning a paycheck.

As a teacher, we are constantly asked to share our sick leave so another teacher can care for their kupuna or a new born baby. We should pass this and allow our society to take care of our new borns and our kupuna.

Mahalo,
Fitz

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 6:09:03 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cheryl Ho	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, Chair Delacruz and Committee Members!

Over several months, I was assisting a friend from church, to arrange for and travel to Fresno, for a critically-needed surgery. It was expected that she would need 2 weeks for the trip, including travel, actual surgery, hospital recuperation, and travel back to Honolulu.

This friend is a single parent with shared legal custody of an 11-year old son. Grandparents in this case are either deceased, or living overseas. So there were no close relations or trusted friends who could be called upon to care for the child.

The boy's mother works night shift in a care facility, and needs to sleep during the day (except on certain weekend days). Leading up to the trip, it became a huge, conflict-ridden issue of how the son would be cared for. She knew that if she had to take time off to care for her son, she would lose up to two weeks of pay.

Two (2) weeks is a long time to expect anyone to take leave without pay, to care for a child. If PAID FAMILY LEAVE is enacted, children who depend on parents for their physical, emotional, and social health will be assured of that care. Their caregiving parent will be able to take leave from work without the worry and financial stress of loss of income.

Multiple studies have shown that family leave programs can be established in a manner that is affordable for small businesses and our state.

I strongly urge you to pass this bill, to begin the administrative processes that will bring Paid Family Leave into a reality.

Mahalo for your action!

Cheryl Ho, Nu'uano

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 6:28:45 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathy Shimata	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

No one should have to sacrifice their financial well-being to care for their keiki or kupuna. The majority of Hawai'i's workforce cannot afford to take unpaid leave to care for a new child or assist a family member with a serious health condition. Hawai'i law only provides a four-week extension of unpaid leave to employees of large employers with more than one hundred employees.

In 2018, only 17 percent of workers in the United States had access to paid family leave through their employers. Women, who are often the primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents, are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family leave.

Hawai'i has one of the fastest growing populations over the age of 65 in the nation. From 2020 to 2030, the percentage of people aged 65 and over is expected to increase to 22.5 percent of the state's population. Nearly one-third of workers who do not have access to family leave will need time off to care for an ill spouse or elderly parent.

Multiple studies have shown that family leave programs can be established in a manner that is affordable for small businesses and our state. When medical emergencies arise, no one should be forced to choose between caring for their loved ones or earning a paycheck.

Mahalo,

Kathy Shimata

3453 Pawaina St

Honolulu. 96822

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 7:52:45 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lillian Coltin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support working families to have a balance between their work obligations and family needs

Chair Donovan Dela Cruz
Vice Chair Sharon Moriwaki

Senate Committee on Ways & Means

Wednesday, February 28, 2024
10:01 AM

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB2474 SD1 WITH AMENDMENTS RELATING TO
FAMILY LEAVE**

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Members of the Senate Committee Ways & Means,

My name is Jun Shin. I am a union service worker as well as a labor and social justice activist, testifying as an individual in **SUPPORT** of **SB2474 SD1 WITH AMENDMENTS**, Relating to Family Leave. As you may already know and as other testifiers will attest, there is no federal law guaranteeing paid family and medical leave for private sector workers. Hawai'i law provides only a four-week extension of unpaid leave to workers in workplaces with more than 100 employees.

Working people should not be asked/forced to choose between caring for a family member or taking care of themselves and getting paid. The vast majority of our people are struggling to survive in Hawai'i with our high cost of living and the general affordability crisis. It might be a bit of a cliché at this point, but a cliché is a cliché for a reason. This is especially the case for workplaces/industries with low wages and/or little to no benefits. Making sure that workers are able to at least receive a portion of their lost wages will go a long way in making sure they and their families are able to maintain a sense of stability during difficult times.

Contrary to the testimony of the Department of Labor & Industrial Relations and the previous committee report, paid family leave will not require hundreds of new personnel. Whether you look at the study done by the Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women (14-24 personnel at a cost of \$5.4 million spread out over 5 years) or the Legislative Reference Bureau (22 new staff at a cost of about \$2.6 million per year), it would cost far less. Also, in the long run, the state would be paid back for this cost through payroll deductions!

Suggested Amendment: Add safe leave so that domestic violence survivors can have a safety net while seeking a restraining order or relocating to safety.

Please **PASS Senate Bill 2474 SD1** out of your committee with **AMENDMENTS**. Give working people a break, literally!

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Jun Shin,

State House District 23 | State Senate District 12

Cell: 808-255-6663

Email: junshinbusiness729@gmail.com

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 9:07:38 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carolyn Eaton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and members of the Committee,

My name is Carolyn Eaton and I support this bill wholeheartedly. Because Hawaii has many multi-generational families, whose traditions include taking care of kupuna whenever possible, and because this measure would make this inter-generational caregiving less stressful, I hope you will support SB 2474 SD1. Because making a life in Hawaii requires many to live nearly paycheck to paycheck, and any of us will regularly become ill and the community as a whole would benefit if the wage earner stays home while contagious, I hope you will support SB2474 SD1. Because not every family has a caregiver to stay with a newborn or with a sick child who should be at home, Hawaii needs Paid Family and Medical Leave.

Mahalo for doing the work of bettering our lives, and for consideration of these ideas.

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 9:37:54 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Antonia Papica	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Paid family and medical leave should be standard for all. The bills do not stop when you have a baby or have an injury that keeps you from working.

Most developed nations already have these systems in place; sadly, the U.S. is not among these nations.

Going back to work too soon after giving birth is devastating for mothers and babies. The mental health of the mother is adversely affected when she is forced to spend long periods away from her baby. The baby is also affected and breastfeeding is also disrupted mothers often feel like they have to stop breastfeeding because of work pressures or feel their milk has dried up when in reality it is the lack of demand for milk that their body is adjusting to from being away from their newborn. The bonding and healing for both mother and child are necessary and the status quo is devastating at this critical time in the child's development. Honestly, it feels inhumane.

Providing paid leave for mothers would improve the health and well-being of mothers and babies by taking the pressure off of them to return to work quickly because their income has stopped. The benefits are infinite and passing this bill will help Hawaii families immensely.

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 10:46:23 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tony Radmilovich	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

No one should have to sacrifice their financial well-being to care for their keiki or kupuna. The majority of Hawai'i's workforce cannot afford to take unpaid leave to care for a new child or assist a family member with a serious health condition. Hawai'i law only provides a four-week extension of unpaid leave to employees of large employers with more than one hundred employees.

In 2018, only 17 percent of workers in the United States had access to paid family leave through their employers. Women, who are often the primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents, are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family leave.

Hawai'i has one of the fastest growing populations over the age of 65 in the nation. From 2020 to 2030, the percentage of people aged 65 and over is expected to increase to 22.5 percent of the state's population. Nearly one-third of workers who do not have access to family leave will need time off to care for an ill spouse or elderly parent.

Multiple studies have shown that family leave programs can be established in a manner that is affordable for small businesses and our state. When medical emergencies arise, no one should be forced to choose between caring for their loved ones or earning a paycheck.

February 26, 2024

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Morikawa, and WAM committee members including Aquino, DeCoite, Hashimoto, Inouye, Kanuha, Kidani, Kim, Lee, Shimabukuro, Wakai, and Fevella:

Re: SB 2474 Relating to Family Leave WAM Committee Hearing on February 28, 2024

Thank you for allowing me to submit this testimony. I strongly support Senate Bill # 2474 for creating and establishing family leave insurance programs relating to Paid Family Leave Benefits for all Hawaii community working members who are looking to the legislature for support when they need to take care of family emergencies at home. Hopefully this bill will find its way to the Finance committee and to the Governor's desk because both individuals and businesses need urgent support and relief for this important business issue.

By eliminating the 100-employee threshold, you are supporting small business employees who may be needing this family leave relief more than others. This measure helps diverse groups and prevents racism, sexism, and individual discrimination of all types. As a strong supporter of affirmative action in all cases of employment, paid leave will reflect our community's commitment to the ideals of aloha, civil rights, and fairness for all. Health coverage for all is something I also support, and I believe that Family Leave Insurance Benefits will provide a way for persons with illnesses to immediately address their own health care needs, and will also aid and encourage fairness for their elderly relatives who need additional support at home and worker's minor children who often need health care and time at home to heal from a disease and/or medical procedure. Minors need their parents or guardians to be with them in a medical crisis.

From what I have read about Family Leave, the United States is the only developed country in the world that does not provide by law paid family leave to their workers. The current federal law only provides leave without pay or support. Since the cost of living is extremely high in Hawaii, this makes family leave a non-option for most of our employees due to their living paycheck to paycheck. When someone in your family is ill, it is important to be able to be at home with them and supporting them with daily care and attention. Workers in Hawaii do not want to lose their only family income or risk not paying for their rent or mortgage, and thereby becoming houseless. That type of self-sacrifice is unthinkable. We need to pass this bill to establish this insurance program immediately so that workers and employers are guaranteed a program that will support employees and also support employers by allowing them to keep their jobs instead of forcing them to quit working whenever there is a family crisis.

Personally, I have worked with employees in need of family care and I know of their stress and their concerns. This is a common issue that should be part of Hawaii's legislation reassurance to our citizens. Thank you for hearing my testimony in strong support for SB 2657 concerning the establishment of Family Leave Insurance programs.

Mahalo,

Bevin Parker-Evans

songaid2@yahoo.com 808-651-6793

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 6:14:50 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Kunitake	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee on Ways and Means,

My name is Caroline and I am in support of SB 2474 SD1.

I support SB 2474 SD1.

I have played an active role in providing direct care and coordinating care for my aging family members. The cost of non-medical in home care starts at about \$35 per hour. At this price point, most people cannot afford to pay for a caregiver or a registered nurse (which costs more than \$35 per hour). The reality is that we do not have enough workers to care for our aging population. Then the responsibility of caring for our elderly will fall upon family members who often are still working full time jobs.

The United States is the only developed country without national paid family leave. Thirteen states and the District of Columbia have passed paid family leave laws, and the states with paid family leave have seen significant health, social and economic benefits. Paid family leave is good for business—employees become more productive and loyal when they have it.

Paid family leave allows workers to take time off and still receive part of their income when they need to care for their own serious health needs or those of a loved one, or to bond with a new child.

Women, as primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents, are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family and medical leave. According to AARP Hawai‘i, there are approximately 157,000 unpaid family caregivers in the State.

Please support this legislation. Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. I appreciate the opportunity to provide this testimony in support of SB 2474 SD1.

Mahalo,

Caroline Kunitake

Kevin L. Johnson, Ko Olina, Hawai'i

Hawai'i Legislature
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Wednesday, February 28, 2024, Conference Room 211, 10:01 a.m.

TO: The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
RE: Support for SB 2474 SD 1, Relating to Family Leave

I would like to take this opportunity to express my **strong support of SB 2474 SD 1, Relating to Family Leave.**

I recently had the experience of caring for my spouse for several weeks after surgery. While I am retired, it certainly opened my eyes to the challenges this would pose to folks still in the workforce. My previous employer would NOT have allowed me paid time off for this task and hiring it done would have been beyond my means.

The hundreds of thousands of Hawaii citizens providing this care would likely have to enter the ranks of unemployed with no guarantee of returning to their jobs, when the situation changes. Investing in family caregivers serves to benefit both the overall health of Hawaii and decrease the burden these folks may place on the Social Service programs (through no fault of their own).

Your forward thinking **support SB 2474 SB 1** is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Kevin L. Johnson

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 8:37:04 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Beverly M. Munson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony STRONGLY SUPPORTING SB 2474

Please accept my testimony **strongly supporting the passage of SB 2474**, which will provide Paid Family & Medical Leave to Hawaii workers.

Before moving to Hawaii, I was the Chief Human Resources Officer for two Northern California hospitals. I also taught Wage & Hour Law at Santa Rosa Junior (Community) College. During this period of my career California passed a bill very similar to SB 2474. Through my work I was intimately familiar with paid leave laws. I saw firsthand that Paid Family & Medical Leave:

- Had no financial impact on employers since it was funded through employee payroll tax.
- Was easy to administer as it was part of the State Disability Insurance (SDI) program.
- Provided a financial safety net to those who could not work due to their own or family incapacitation.

In more than one instance, Paid Family & Medical Leave benefits made the difference between being able to afford medication and medical treatment or not. I saw workers recover faster and return to work healthier than when workers had to get back to work ASAP due to lack of income.

Having income during illness or following childbirth also diminished the stress of such situations. While California's Paid Family & Leave benefits was only a percentage of actual wages, that percentage made all the difference in the world for California families. **Hawaii's workers NEED Paid Family & Leave** for their own health whether the leave is due to welcoming a new child to the family, recovering from their own illness/injury, or caring for a family member. Healthier workers benefit the great good.

It is time for Hawaii to join California and other enlightened states by providing Paid Family & Medical Leave. Our community works hard, and in time of need deserves the support that helps them return to work with full recovery and focus. **Paid Family & Medical Leave is good for Hawaii families; it is good for Hawaii business.**

Thank you for considering my testimony on this matter.

With Aloha,

Beverly (Bev) Munson

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 8:44:50 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ashley Galacgac	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass SB 2474. This would allow people to be there for their loved ones for a major life moment, like welcoming a child, caring for their loved one, or taking care of their own wellness. I also want to uplift how this bill also provides safe leave for survivors of domestic violence, sexual violence, and stalking to relocate and secure a restraining order.

This bill is life changing. A few years ago, my mother had a serious health diagnosis. With all the doctor appointments to understand her diagnosis and finding specialists to create a treatment plan, I was lucky to have an employer that allowed me to flex my hours to be there for my Mom and get through that difficult time. After surgery, I was able to be present 24/7 during her recovery.

Many others take on caregiving of loved ones and are forced to leave their jobs. No one in Hawai'i should ever have to choose between their loved ones and their paycheck. It's time for paid family leave in Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my testimony in support of SB 2474. Mahalo!

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 9:11:36 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Regina Gregory	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

support

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 9:30:57 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patti Hatzistavrakis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Patti Hatzistavrakis, support bill 2474 SB (SD1) RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE, which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program. Paid Family & Medical Leave (PFML) provides working ‘ohana with paid time off from work to care for and bond with a new Keiki or to address caregiving needs for themselves or loved ones. PFML is insurance that is funded by small deductions from paychecks, that can be used to pay employees when they need Parental, Medical, or Caregiving leave.

In Hawai‘i, where many families are living paycheck to paycheck, our state must implement programs so that families can thrive, not just survive. PFML has health benefits such as allowing people to better manage their chronic disease by creating time they can get treatment. PFML improves health for both mothers and fathers and when mothers can stay with their children, breastfeeding is increased, which leads to life-long health benefits for babies. It allows families to provide care for their kūpuna and has been shown to increase health equity.

I firmly support bill 2474 SB (SD1) RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE and urge the Ways and Means Committee, led by Sen. Dela Cruz and Sen. Moriwaki, to pass it so that ‘ohana in the State of Hawai‘i can truly thrive in times of need.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of Paid Family & Medical Leave and the Committee's consideration. Thank you!

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 9:35:53 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nathan Abril	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members, my name is Nathan Abril.

I am testifying in support of bill SB2474 SD1, which would create a paid family and medical leave program in Hawaii. Right now we have 0 weeks of paid leave, but families, such as myself, who have access to paid leave are healthier, more economically secure, more likely to stay in the workforce, and less likely to need public benefits. Paid leave is also good for businesses and the economy. Everyone benefits in a state with paid family and medical leave, especially our ohana.

This bill is important to me, because when I worked for a local construction company, I became deeply ill. I had contracted a severe cold, which forced me to miss almost a week of work. Despite being a loyal employee, I was not paid for the time I missed. I don't think I need to explain how missing a week's worth of work is harmful to a single individual's finances.

In addition, because of fear of losing more work days, I forced myself to work; despite not being fully recovered. This impacted not only my recovery, but my efficiency as a worker. My muscles were sore, and I was constantly coughing all over the jobsite. It also put my other coworkers at risk of getting sick, because I was not fully recovered. Unfortunately, when a worker has to decide between earning money or making a full recovery... the financial choice often outweighs the healthier one.

In another situation, last year, when my great-grandmother passed away, I had to leave work immediately to attend her funeral. During this time, despite working for a local law firm, I was not paid for the days I missed at work. While I was thankful my employer gave me the time I needed to be with my family, I lost valuable hours and pay I needed to support myself. Thankfully, I was in a better financial position than most workers at the time, so I could afford to miss those day. Many workers that do not have that same privilege as me. My heart goes out to them.

No worker should have to choose between being with their family in times of emergency or their job. Please consider supporting this bill. It is not only good for working-class families, but their employers as a whole.

Sincerely,
Nathan Abril

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 9:43:27 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cassandra Park	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai kākou,

I am writing in support of SB2474 related to paid family and medical leave. I am a Master of Public Health student at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. I am also the the eldest daughter of my ‘ohana which often leaves wondering how I will care for our kūpuna as they get older. I observed how my mother took care of my grandmother after her stroke. She was bedridden and needed daily care which she nor my ‘ohana could afford. My mom did her best in caring for my grandmother but was still burdened by the fact she still had bills to pay.

Medical leave is so important for our Hawai‘i families because it allows us the support we need to take care of our family in a way that is culturally appropriate and builds bonds between family members. Additionally it would help ease the burden of our financial responsibilities to live in Hawai‘i where so many of us have lived over multiple generations.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony on this important measure.

Aloha no,

Cassandra

LATE

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 10:50:29 AM
Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ally Trest	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

[SB2474 SD1](#)

Hearing Date: 2/28/24, 10:01 am

Committee: WAM

As a community member that works directly with survivors of domestic violence/ stalking, I respectfully submit testimony in strong support of SB2474 SD1, which would implement paid family and medical leave in Hawai'i. I echo HSCADV's respectful request to include an amendment that would allow survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking safe leave to §398-E Eligibility for payment of benefits and recommend the language used in HB2757 as indicated below.

Page 8, staring line 9:

(D) Is a victim of domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking who needs leave for medical attention; mental health care or other counseling; victim services, including legal services; court appearances; or relocation for themselves or a family member; or

(~~D~~)(E) Has a qualifying exigency.

This critical policy is not only beneficial for caregivers and families throughout our islands but also to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking (all forms of intimate partner violence, IPV) who need to take time off to receive victim services, make court appearances, seek medical services, or relocate themselves and family. Currently, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Oregon, Colorado, Minnesota, and Maine include safe leave in their paid family leave laws.

Survivors of domestic violence face many challenges when making decisions about their safety. One of the most crucial factors is their finances. The ability to provide for themselves and their families is a key economic consideration for survivors when deciding to leave an abusive partner. It's also important to recognize the impact that financial abuse can have on survivors making it almost impossible to take unpaid time off to address their medical, emotional, and/ or legal needs without extensive time off. We must support them in every way possible.

According to the CDC, approximately 75% of female intimate partner violence survivors and 48% of male domestic violence survivors experience some form of injury related to intimate partner violence. Negative health outcomes that are associated with intimate partner violence include conditions affecting the heart, muscles and bones, and digestive, reproductive, and nervous systems, many of which are chronic. Survivors can experience mental health problems such as depression and PTSD symptoms.

The lifetime per-victim cost is \$103,767 for women and \$23,414 for men. This economic cost estimate includes almost 32 million women and 12 million men who are victims of intimate partner violence during their lives in the US. The lifetime economic cost to the U.S. population is \$3.6 trillion for medical services for IPV-related injuries, lost productivity from paid work, criminal justice, and other costs.

Finally, at the first hearing for this measure, the Department of Labor testified that they would need at least 100 new staff, so the [prior committee's report](#) requested that the WAM Committee add nearly \$16 million for 122 new positions, making this bill very expensive. That is many times higher than what two comprehensive analyses of implementing paid family leave in Hawai'i found:

- **One study estimated that we'd need between 14 and 24 new staff, at \$5.4 million spread out over 5 years ([see p. 31 here](#))**
- **The other study (prepared for the Legislative Reference Bureau) estimated that we'd need about 22 new staff at a cost of about \$2.6 million per year ([see p. 84 here](#))**
- **ALL of those costs would be paid back to the state by the payroll deductions**

Thank you for your intentional consideration of this imperative legislation.

Aloha.

LATE

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 11:02:33 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Natalie Lucas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I have taken unpaid family leave twice during my service between 2015 to present. I cannot express how hard it is to try to pay the same bills on a lesser amount of pay. I am a loyal worker. I do not have plans to leave my position and while I am at work, I complete all my assignments and work as hard as I can. But life happens. I have two children and I am the sole person responsible for rent, childcare payments, electric, gas, groceries, my medical bills, and more. I really don't make that much for the cost of living in Hawaii. I normally bring home \$3772.00 a month. My rent is \$1546.00; childcare is \$575; electric is \$150.00; phone is \$85.00; gas is \$200.00; and whatever is left over is budgeted to buy groceries and pay for bills which sometimes do not get paid. If you do the math after paying my bills, that is \$1216.00; however, like I had mentioned: life happens. I have been taking intermittent family leave to care for my son since December 2023 to present. My bring home pay is now \$3148, which now leaves me with \$592.00 for groceries after paying the mandatory bills. I also don't even qualify for SNAP, which would be incredibly helpful if I could. But \$592.00 is a huge difference from my normal left over funds. How am I supposed to care for my family when I need to take leave for them? This is why a paid family leave is necessary. It will also help keep staff from leaving, enable staff to feel less stress and more mental stability. To have paid family leave will make happier employees. It will make life easier and make us happier to be at work. Expecting families to figure it out when life happens is extremely non-supportive and not conducive to retaining happy employees. Paid family leave would make a tremendous difference in the workplace.

LATE



February 27, 2024

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Re: S.B. 2474 S.D.1 Relating to Family Leave

Hearing: Wednesday, February 28, 2024, 10:01 a.m., CR 211 & Videoconference

Dear Senators Dela Cruz and Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

Hawaii Women Lawyers (“**HWL**”) is a lawyer’s trade organization that aims to improve the lives and careers of women in all aspects of the legal profession, influence the future of the legal profession, and enhance the status of women and promote equal opportunities for all.

HWL supports the intent of S.B. 2474 S.D.1 to require the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program that pays family leave insurance benefits and extends the period of family leave to 16 weeks for certain business employees under specified terms.

HWL supports efforts to expand paid family leave. The majority of Hawaii’s workforce cannot afford to take unpaid leave, and women, who are often the primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents, are affected disproportionately by the absence of paid family leave. The development and advancement of women in the legal profession, as well as in other careers, is impeded by the lack of affordable caretaking options. The amendments proposed by S.B. 2474 are reasonable and sound.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this measure.

LATE

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 11:10:31 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara J. Service	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass SB2474. Paid family leave is a win-win. Good for families, good for employers and good for the economy.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Barbara J. Service MSW

Child Welfare Services (ret.)

Kupuna Advocate

thank

LATE

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 11:12:05 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elizabeth Nelson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aoha, I strongly support this bill and hope you will agree and pass it. I worked at hospice for 25 years and saw first hand how difficult it was for family members to care for their loved one on a daily basis. Many times there was only 1 family member designated as the caregiver.

Hawaii has one of the fastest growing populations over the age of 65 in the nation. Nearly one-third of workers who do not have access to family leave will need time off to care for an ill spouse or elderly parent.

Multiple studis have shown that family leave programs can be established in a manner that is affordable for small businesses and our state. Caregiving is difficult enough without the added burden of financial concern. Please pass this bill.

Thank you.

LATE

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 11:34:02 AM
Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rebecca Delafield	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill.

There is no better way to show Hawai'i's families that they are valued and that their well-being matters than supporting Paid Family & Medical Leave.

Ensuring that Paid Family & Medical Leave is passed into law will allow families to provide needed care for their keiki and kūpuna.

The positive impacts will be seen now and in the next generation.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Delafield (Kaimuki)

LATE

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 12:15:13 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Teri Heede	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is a common sense solution to a problem EVERY family has sooner or later.

Pass the bill.

LATE

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 12:23:12 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kahanaaloha Kuikahi-Duncan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

With costs of living rising and resources dwindling, it is imperative that we give na po`e o hawai`i a chance to thrive. Now 51% of Native Hawaiians live outside of Hawai`i because our own people cannot afford to live here. We need to do better. Providing PFML will help many multigenerational families be able to care for one another, from kupuna to babies.

LATE

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 12:26:49 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laurie Temple	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support paid family leave.

LATE

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 12:38:31 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cardenas Pintor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support this bill.

Mahalo nui,

Cardenas Pintor

LATE

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 1:01:19 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mykie Ozoa-Aglugub	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members, my name is Mykie Ozoa-Aglugub and I am a first-time mom to a six-month-old baby boy.

I am testifying in strong support of SB2474, which would create a paid family and medical leave program in Hawai'i. Right now, we have zero weeks of paid leave, but research shows that families who have access to paid leave are healthier, more economically secure, more likely to stay in the workforce, and less likely to need public benefits. Children especially benefit from paid family leave, with positive impacts presenting well into adulthood. Paid leave is also good for businesses and the economy.

Six months ago, I was lucky enough to have enough vacation and sick leave to stay home with my son for four months. Not only did it give me time to heal from childbirth, but it gave me and my baby a chance to develop a secure attachment during his very important first few weeks of life. Today, my son is healthy, well-adjusted socially, meeting every developmental milestone early and with ease, and we continue to have a successful breastfeeding journey, even as I have returned to work full-time while he goes to a sitter. I know I am lucky and I also know it should not be a matter of luck -- every family should enjoy these same opportunities. Everyone benefits in a state with paid leave, especially our keiki and our kupuna. Thus, I respectfully ask that you pass SB2474.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mykie Ozoa-Aglugub, J.D.

LATE

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 1:08:06 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marion McHenry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My life as a working mother of 3 boys prepared me to strongly support this bill! Our families in Hawaii need this kind of support. It will make for healthier and stronger families across our state.

Please pass this bill

Marion McHenry

Kauai

LATE

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 3:19:26 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Glenn Choy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly urge you to support paid family leave

LATE

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 3:27:07 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ann S Freed	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and members,

This legislation is so overdue. It affects women, particularly single mothers, disproportionately. As you may know some of us have been fighting for this issue for well over 20 years.

Here's a summary of the facts:

The United States is the only developed country without national paid family leave. Thirteen states and the District of Columbia have passed paid family leave laws, and the states with paid family leave have seen significant health, social and economic benefits. Paid family leave is good for business—employees become more productive and loyal when they have it.

Paid family leave allows workers to take time off and still receive part of their income when they need to care for their own serious health needs or those of a loved one, or to bond with a new child.

SB2474/HB1768 would require the department of labor and industrial relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program. The program extends family leave to 16 weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees. Mothers who gave birth would be able to take paid family leave in addition to temporary disability insurance (TDI). SB2474/HB1768 would eliminate the previous threshold of 100 employees for employers to be subject to the family leave law.

Women, as primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents, are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family and medical leave. According to AARP Hawaii, there are approximately 157,000 unpaid family caregivers in the State.

According to AAUW, moms working full-time, year-round are paid 74 cents for every dollar paid to dads. This is known as the motherhood tax. For each child a woman has her average pay goes down. But FATHERS, receive a raise!

Mahalo for hearing our testimony,

Ann S. Freed, Member Policy Committee of AAUW Honolulu, and resident of Mililani

LATE

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 3:46:20 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lindsey A Drayer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support and hope you will add the amendment to include safe leave for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

Thank you

LATE

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 4:18:19 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
mary drayer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Position: SUPPORT, with requesting an amendment to include safe leave for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking

Mary Drayer

557 Imi Dr

Wailuku, Hi 96793

LATE

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 5:48:42 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
tlaloc tokuda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

No one should have to sacrifice their financial well-being to care for their keiki or kupuna. The majority of Hawai'i's workforce cannot afford to take unpaid leave to care for a new child or assist a family member with a serious health condition. Hawai'i law only provides a four-week extension of unpaid leave to employees of large employers with more than one hundred employees.

In 2018, only 17 percent of workers in the United States had access to paid family leave through their employers. Women, who are often the primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents, are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family leave.

Hawai'i has one of the fastest growing populations over the age of 65 in the nation. From 2020 to 2030, the percentage of people aged 65 and over is expected to increase to 22.5 percent of the state's population. Nearly one-third of workers who do not have access to family leave will need time off to care for an ill spouse or elderly parent.

Multiple studies have shown that family leave programs can be established in a manner that is affordable for small businesses and our state. When medical emergencies arise, no one should be forced to choose between caring for their loved ones or earning a paycheck.

Mahalo for your consideration

Tlaloc Tokuda

Kailua Kona, HI 96740

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 7:12:01 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2024 10:01:00 AM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Pelenatita Namoa-Hanusa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill! We all deserve to take care of our loved ones during major events in our lives, and should not have to choose a paycheck over it. This is possible if we follow Colorado's footsteps on paid family leave. It is doable! Imua SB2474!