



**POOL &
HOT TUB**
ALLIANCE

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Alexandria, VA 22314
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service@phta.org

March 15, 2024

House Committee on Culture, Arts & International Affairs
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Re: SB 2841 - relating to Water Safety Day

Dear Chair Tam, Vice Chair Martinez and House Committee on Culture, Arts and International Affairs Members,

I write to you today in **support** of Senate Bill 2841. This bill will designate May 15 of each year as Water Safety Day.

Through education and awareness of water safety, aquatic venues, natural and manmade, can be places of entertainment, exercise and relaxation. As the world's oldest and largest association representing the swimming pool, hot tub and spa industry, the Pool and Hot Tub Alliance considers swim safety and drowning prevention an utmost priority. In addition to the drowning statistics mentioned in the bill, nationwide, fatal drowning is the leading cause of death for children ages 1-4 and the second leading cause of unintentional injury death for children ages 5-14, behind motor vehicle crashes according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

With the passage of this bill, and in turn, the development and implementation of water safety education and awareness campaigns, children will have greater opportunity to equip themselves for when they interact in water environments. One study found that children ages 1-4 who learn to swim from a qualified instructor have a reduced risk of drowning by 88%. For every child under age 18 who dies from drowning, another 7 receive emergency department care for nonfatal drowning.

PHTA fully supports Hawai'i in the passage of this bill and taking steps towards educating children and families of the importance of water safety. We urge the committee for a favorable report.

Thank you for considering our comments and please use us as a resource.

Warm regards,

Tyler D. Jones
Director of Government Relations
Pool and Hot Tub Alliance

TJones@phta.org

About Us

The Pool & Hot Tub Alliance was formed in 2019, combining the Association of Pool & Spa Professionals (APSP) and the National Swimming Pool Foundation (NSPF). With the mission to “Celebrate the Water,” PHTA facilitates the expansion of swimming, water safety, and related research and outreach activities aimed at introducing more people to swimming, making swimming environments safer, and keeping pools open to serve communities.

APSP, now the PHTA, is the world’s oldest and largest association representing swimming pool, hot tub, and spa manufacturers, distributors, manufacturers’ agents, designers, builders, installers, suppliers, retailers, and service professionals. Dedicated to the growth and development of its members’ businesses and to promoting the enjoyment and safety of pools and spas, PHTA offers a range of services, from professional development to advancing key legislation and regulation at the federal and local levels, to consumer outreach and public safety. PHTA is the only industry organization recognized by the American National Standards Institute to develop and promote national standards for pools, hot tubs, and spas. For more information, visit PHTA.org.



March 13, 2024

House Committee on Culture, Arts, and International Affairs

Chair Tam, Vice Chair Martinez, and Committee Members:

Testimony in Support of
SB 2841

The purpose of this letter is to provide our support for SB 2841, which seeks to establish May 15 as Water Safety Day in Hawaii.

As a canoe club on the Big Island, we believe it is necessary to recognize and spread awareness of the many water hazards that exist in Hawaii. Establishing a statewide Water Safety Day to educate youth in becoming safer in and near the ocean, streams, waterfalls, and swimming pools. Drowning is the leading cause of death in Hawaii for keiki ages 1-15 and the State ranks second in the nation for the rate of drowning among residents. These statistics, if you will, are unacceptable.

A Water Safety Day will help bring awareness to this public safety issue for children and adults.

We strongly support this SB 2841 and urge your committee to pass this bill.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edward T. Teixeira", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

EDWARD T. TEIXEIRA
President



March 14, 2024

Re: Senate Bill 2841 - Support

Board of Directors

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Kirsten Hermstad
Executive Director

Honorary Legends

Ralph Goto
Brian Keaulana
Archie Kalepa
Mark Cunningham

Aloha,

On behalf of the Board and membership of the Hawaiian Lifeguard Association. I am writing to express our support of Senate Bill 2841 which designates May 15 of each year as Water Safety Day, to recognize and spread awareness of the drowning pandemic and to educate Hawaii's youth in becoming safer in and around the water.

Drowning is the leading cause of death in Hawaii for keiki ages 1-15, and Hawaii ranks second in the nation for the rate of drowning among residents. A Water Safety Day will help bring awareness to this public safety issue so we may highlight water safety with our youth before the summer vacation.

Mahalo

Kirsten Hermstad
Executive Director

Hawaiian Lifeguard Association

P.O. Box 844 Kapa'a, Hawai'i 96746

info@hawaiianlifeguardassociation.org

Tax ID 99-0308213

SB-2841

Submitted on: 3/14/2024 11:23:49 AM

Testimony for CAI on 3/15/2024 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| Sarah Fairchild | Outrigger Duke Kahanamoku Foundation | Support | In Person |

Comments:

Dear Chair Tam and Committee,

I'm writing in strong support of SB2841 to make May 15th the official Water Safety Day in Hawaii.

May 15th is International Water Safety Day and is designed to help spread global awareness of the ongoing drowning pandemic, and to educate the youth in becoming safer in and around water. It is a day to spread drowning awareness and water safety education by any means possible. The lack of water safety education has propelled drownings worldwide. Locally, drowning is the leading cause of death for Hawaii keiki ages 1-15 and Hawaii ranks second in the nation for rate of drowning among residents. A designated water safety day would be a great way to engage local schools and community groups in talking about water safety right before the summer vacation months.

Mahalo,

Sarah Fairchild

Executive Director

Outrigger Duke Kahanamoku Foundation

Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks! is a nonpartisan 501c4 nonprofit committed to advocating for children and their families. Our core issues are safety, health, and education.

To: House Committee on Culture, Arts, and International Affairs
RE: SB2841 in strong support
Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 309
March 15, 2024; 10:00 am

Aloha Chair Tam, Vice Chair Martinez, and members of the committee,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) Speaks!, mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **STRONG SUPPORT of Senate Bill 2841** relating to Water Safety Day. I strongly support this bill to establish May 15 of each year as Water Safety Day to spread awareness of the drowning pandemic and to educate Hawai'i's youth about becoming safer in and around the water.

Drowning is the [leading cause of death](#) in Hawai'i for keiki ages 1-14, and Hawai'i ranks second in the nation for the rate of drowning among residents. No statewide education program in schools exists to teach children this essential life skill. Community organizations such as the International Water Safety Foundation and the American Red Cross know that water safety can be taught as a life skill. When children learn water safety skills and education, it could lessen the number of child drowning fatalities. Swimming proficiency in multiple aquatic skills is a way to stay safe in the water and also a requirement of personal aquatic safety competency by the [American Red Cross](#).

All children who grow up in Hawai'i need access to life-saving aquatic safety skills. Creating more awareness of the importance of learning these skills is a step in the right direction toward healthier and safer keiki who live on our islands. This initiative is a vital step towards preventing drownings, saving lives, and protecting the well-being of our keiki. Mahalo for your support of this bill.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Mai Hall, M.Ed.
Children's Health Coordinator

SB-2841

Submitted on: 3/13/2024 10:00:28 AM

Testimony for CAI on 3/15/2024 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Xiao Yi | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I am in support to establish the Water Safety Day in Hawaii on May 15th, in effort to spread global awareness of the drowning pandemic and to educate youth and adults in becoming safer in and around the water.

SB-2841

Submitted on: 3/13/2024 6:50:23 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/15/2024 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Ron Bregman | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I am in strong support of SB2841 which designates May 15 of each year as Water Safety Day, to recognize and spread awareness of the drowning pandemic and to educate Hawaii's youth in becoming safer in and around the water. Drowning is the leading cause of death in Hawaii for keiki ages 1-15, and Hawaii ranks second in the nation for the rate of drowning among residents. A Water Safety Day will help bring awareness to this public safety issue so we may highlight water safety with our youth before the summer vacation.

Ron Bregman

Chief Lifeguard and Aquatics Director

Marine Corps Base Hawaii

SB-2841

Submitted on: 3/13/2024 8:16:21 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/15/2024 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Jotis Russell-Christian | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I am in strong support of SB2841 which designates May 15 of each year as Water Safety Day, to recognize and spread awareness of the drowning pandemic and to educate Hawaii's youth in becoming safer in and around the water. Drowning is the leading cause of death in Hawaii for keiki ages 1-15, and Hawaii ranks second in the nation for the rate of drowning among residents. A Water Safety Day will help bring awareness to this public safety issue so we may highlight water safety with our youth before the summer vacation. I participated in a youth lifeguard training over my childhood summers, and I greatly support water rescue/safety education for youth.

SB-2841

Submitted on: 3/13/2024 9:25:35 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/15/2024 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Lidiya Peralta | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I am in strong support of SB2841 which designates May 15 of each year as Water Safety Day, to recognize and spread awareness of the drowning pandemic and to educate Hawaii's youth in becoming safer in and around the water. Drowning is the leading cause of death in Hawaii for keiki ages 1-15, and Hawaii ranks second in the nation for the rate of drowning among residents. A Water Safety Day will help bring awareness to this public safety issue so we may highlight water safety with our youth before the summer vacation.

SB-2841

Submitted on: 3/14/2024 1:21:48 AM

Testimony for CAI on 3/15/2024 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Duane DeSoto | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I am in strong support of SB2841 which designates May 15 of each year as Water Safety Day, to recognize and spread awareness of the drowning pandemic and to educate Hawaii's youth in becoming safer in and around the water. Drowning is the leading cause of death in Hawaii for keiki ages 1-15, and Hawaii ranks second in the nation for the rate of drowning among residents. A Water Safety Day will help bring awareness to this public safety issue so we may highlight water safety with our youth before the summer vacation. This along with other programs like Nā Kama Kai will empower our keiki to keep themselves safe and help save the lives of other youth.

SB-2841

Submitted on: 3/14/2024 8:22:35 AM

Testimony for CAI on 3/15/2024 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Jana Ireijo | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I am in strong support of SB116 to create a Duke Kahanamoku license plate to fund water safety. Drowning is the leading cause of death in Hawaii for keiki ages 1-15, and Hawaii ranks second in the nation for the rate of drowning among residents. This plate would perpetuate the legacy of one of Hawaii's most legendary watermen while empowering existing water safety programs at minimal cost to the government.

Mahalo,

Jana Ireijo

SB-2841

Submitted on: 3/14/2024 3:05:40 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/15/2024 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| George R. Norcross | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Duke Kahanamoku's name is synonymous with Hawaii's "Aloha Spirit" and "Water Sports". He should be honored with a license plate to perpetuate his legacy. The funds can be used to promote Water Safety which is especially needed our Keiki's and adults.

Mahalo!

SB-2841

Submitted on: 3/14/2024 3:48:47 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/15/2024 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Allison Schaefers Dubovsky | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I am writing to support the Water Safety Day bill, which I believe will do much to spread awareness of the drowning pandemic and to educate Hawai‘i’s youth in becoming safer in and around the water.

As a reminder, we are facing some grim drowning statistics in Hawai‘i:

- Hawai‘i has the second-highest drowning rate for residents in the nation.
- Drowning is now the leading cause of death of Hawai‘i children aged 1-16.
- Drowning is the leading cause of injury-related death for tourists.

As the parent of a drowning victim, I understand these statistics and the cost to our community, perhaps better than most. My daughter Charlotte “Sharkey” Schaefers, 5, drowned in 2004 while trying to save a friend who had fallen into a poorly maintained and clogged detention pond that had become a drowning hazard.

I regret that although my daughter knew how to swim, I never discussed the dangers of attempting a rescue on her own. It was not fathomable to me that she would be in that situation at her age.

I am part of the Hawai‘i Water Safety Coalition, and we are working on a statewide water safety plan, which will have recommendations to bring down the terrible drowning rates in our state.

There are efforts by member organizations within the Hawai‘i Water Safety Coalition to include water safety in schools and such discussions are part of the curriculum. But the Hawai‘i Water Safety Coalition needs more community exposure. I believe that a Water Safety Day would provide that benefit.

Drowning isn’t an individual problem; it is a community problem. Rescues are expensive and put our first responders and other Good Samaritans in our community at risk. Visitor deaths threaten our reputation as a top visitor destination. Community deaths hurt the soul of Hawai‘i and leave an irreplaceable gap in our collective ohana.

Just like my daughter, who stood on the banks of a flooded pond and watched her friend struggling, you have a life-or-death decision to make. Let me remind you that even though the risks were great, my daughter Sharkey didn't hesitate. She saved a life. Will you work with us to save lives?

Mahalo nui loa for your consideration.

Allison Schaefer Dubovsky

(808)343-3048

SB-2841

Submitted on: 3/14/2024 10:07:00 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/15/2024 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| Jessamy Town Hornor | Individual | Support | In Person |

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tam, Vice-Chair Martinez and members of the committee,

I am writing in strong support of establishing a Hawaii Water Safety Day. For me, this is deeply personal as I lost my youngest daughter Mina and my husband Mark in an ocean accident in 2016 due to a rogue wave set at a remote location with long response times. The effect of this sudden loss in my family can never be repaired, but it is my hope that no other families have to go through what we have.

A statewide water safety day on May 15th just prior to summer would be a platform to work together to share drowning prevention basics, like the importance of going to lifeguarded beaches during lifeguard hours, swimming with a buddy at any age, always having a designated adult water watcher when children are in or around the water, and making sure that there are barriers to pools to ensure that a child cannot reach them unattended. Drowning can happen to anyone but it is also preventable with more public outreach and education. Several other states have established water safety days, including Washington and California, and they have been very successful in building out more robust drowning prevention programming. Drowning is a leading cause of death here in Hawaii, but it doesn't have to be.

Today I ask you to support this bill in memory of my Mark and Mina.

Thank you,

Jessamy Town Hornor

SB-2841

Submitted on: 3/14/2024 10:12:23 PM

Testimony for CAI on 3/15/2024 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Earl S. Tenn | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I am in strong support of SB2841 which designates May 15 of each year as Water Safety Day, to recognize and spread awareness of the drowning pandemic and to educate Hawai'i's youth in becoming safer in and around the water.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Earl S Tenn, Liason for Nadine Alexander Kahanamoku, (Mrs. Duke Kahanamoku).