

To: Senate Committee on Transportation and Culture and the Arts
RE: SB 2841 in strong support
Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 224
February 27, 2024; 3:01 pm

LATE

Aloha Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, 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

LATE

SB-2841

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 9:11:52 PM

Testimony for TCA on 2/27/2024 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Xiao	Testifying for Hawaii Water Safety Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Establishing a Water Safety Day for the State of Hawaii is crucial, particularly in alignment with International Water Safety Day.

1. Addressing a Vital Need: Given Hawaii's extensive coastline and popularity for water-related activities, the risk of water-related accidents and drownings is significant. A dedicated Water Safety Day provides an opportunity to raise awareness about the importance of water safety and educate the community on preventive measures.
2. Saving Lives: Water Safety Day can equip individuals with essential knowledge and skills to prevent accidents and respond effectively in emergency situations. By promoting water safety practices, such as swimming lessons, CPR training, and proper use of life jackets, lives can be saved.
3. Supporting Tourism: Hawaii's tourism industry heavily relies on water-based activities such as swimming, snorkeling, and surfing. Implementing a Water Safety Day demonstrates the state's commitment to visitor safety, enhancing the overall experience for tourists and encouraging repeat visits.
4. Strengthening Community Resilience: Water Safety Day fosters collaboration among various stakeholders, including government agencies, nonprofits, and local businesses, to address water safety issues collectively. By working together, communities can develop comprehensive strategies to reduce water-related accidents and improve emergency response efforts.
5. Promoting Health and Wellness: Encouraging water safety practices encourages individuals to engage in recreational water activities with confidence, leading to improved physical fitness and mental well-being. By promoting a culture of safety, Water Safety Day contributes to the overall health and wellness of Hawaii's residents and visitors alike.

with Aloha

LATE

SB-2841

Submitted on: 2/26/2024 8:57:13 PM

Testimony for TCA on 2/27/2024 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Oleksii Savenko	Testifying for Legislation and Policy Coordinator Hawaii Water Safety Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

On May 15th, International Water Safety Day, we commemorate a crucial aspect of our collective well-being that often goes overlooked: water safety. This day holds immense significance as it serves as a global reminder of the importance of understanding, respecting, and safeguarding our water resources.

Water is fundamental to life, essential for drinking, sanitation, agriculture, industry, and recreation. However, despite its vital role, water can also pose significant risks, especially when safety measures are neglected or ignored. Drowning remains a leading cause of accidental death worldwide, claiming hundreds of thousands of lives annually, with many of the victims being children.

International Water Safety Day is not only about raising awareness of these dangers but also about promoting education, training, and proactive measures to prevent water-related incidents. It emphasizes the need for communities, governments, organizations, and individuals to come together to implement effective strategies for water safety and drowning prevention.

This day serves as a platform to advocate for policies that prioritize access to safe water and sanitation facilities, particularly in underserved regions where such resources are scarce. It highlights the importance of teaching essential swimming and water safety skills to children and adults alike, empowering them to enjoy water activities responsibly and confidently.

Furthermore, International Water Safety Day encourages the development and dissemination of innovative technologies and practices that enhance water safety, such as life-saving equipment, advanced rescue techniques, and public awareness campaigns.

In commemorating May 15th as International Water Safety Day, we honor the memory of those who have lost their lives to water-related incidents and reaffirm our commitment to preventing future tragedies. By working together to promote water safety awareness and education, we can strive towards a world where everyone can enjoy the benefits of water safely and responsibly. Let us seize this opportunity to renew our dedication to preserving this precious resource and ensuring that no life is lost needlessly to water-related accidents.

International Water Safety Day holds particular importance for Hawaii due to the state's unique relationship with water and its dependence on tourism and ocean-based activities.

1. **Ocean Culture:** Water activities such as surfing, snorkeling, and swimming are deeply ingrained in Hawaiian culture. For many residents and visitors, the ocean is not just a recreational space but a sacred and essential aspect of daily life.
2. **Tourism:** Hawaii's economy heavily relies on tourism, with millions of visitors flocking to the islands each year to enjoy its beautiful beaches and pristine waters. Ensuring water safety is paramount to protecting both tourists and locals and maintaining Hawaii's reputation as a safe destination.
3. **High Risk of Drowning:** Despite its allure, the ocean can be dangerous, with strong currents, powerful waves, and unpredictable conditions posing significant risks, especially for those unfamiliar with Hawaii's waters. Drowning incidents, unfortunately, occur in Hawaii, making water safety education and awareness crucial.
4. **Community Engagement:** International Water Safety Day provides an opportunity for the Hawaiian community to come together to promote water safety initiatives. This may involve educational programs, lifeguard training, beach safety signage, and community outreach efforts aimed at reducing the number of water-related accidents and fatalities.
5. **Cultural and Environmental Stewardship:** Hawaii places a strong emphasis on protecting its natural resources and preserving its cultural heritage. International Water Safety Day aligns with these values by promoting responsible stewardship of Hawaii's oceans, rivers, and lakes, ensuring they remain safe and accessible for future generations.

In summary, International Water Safety Day holds particular significance for Hawaii due to its reliance on water-based activities, its tourism-driven economy, the high risk of drowning incidents, the importance of community engagement, and its commitment to environmental and cultural stewardship. By observing this day, Hawaii can reinforce its dedication to promoting water safety and protecting the well-being of its residents and visitors alike.

SB-2841

Submitted on: 2/23/2024 6:15:24 PM

Testimony for TCA on 2/27/2024 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sarah Fairchild	Testifying for Outrigger Duke Kahanamoku Foundation	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chairman and Members of the Committee,

I'm writing testimony in support of SB2841 to designate May 15 of each year as Water Safety Day. 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. As an island state with ideal ocean conditions and a strong Native Hawaiian waterman heritage, we can and should educate all of our residents to be safe in and around water. This day is just a start, but it is a simple way to bring awareness to this urgent issue.

Mahalo,

Sarah Fairchild

Executive Director

Outrigger Duke Kahanamoku Foundation



**POOL &
HOT TUB**
ALLIANCE

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February 27, 2024

Senate Transportation and Culture and the Arts Committee
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Re: SB 2841 - relating to Water Safety Day

Dear Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye and Senate Committee on Transportation and Culture and the Arts 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.

SB-2841

Submitted on: 2/25/2024 7:36:04 AM

Testimony for TCA on 2/27/2024 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
glenn pang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha and Mahalo for the opportunity to voice my support for SB-2841 to create a Water Safety Day, As you are aware Hawaii has a long and rich history with the ocean (kai), and the various types of activities that both locals and visitors enjoy year-round.

As part of a group of water safety educators, any opportunity to share the knowledge and skills that were taught to us by our kupuna with the next generation will only allow this to enrich the long history of water safety.

Please support SB 2841 to continue the rich history of water safety in Hawaii

Mahalo Glenn Pang