

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 3204

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 21 2024

RE: H.B. No. 1533
H.D. 2

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Second State Legislature
Regular Session of 2024
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Health and Human Services, to which was referred H.B. No. 1533, H.D. 2, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO DEATH BENEFITS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to increase the amount of death benefits paid by the Department of Human Services to cover the cremation and disposition costs for a deceased person who was eligible for medical or financial assistance at the time of the person's death and whose body is unclaimed.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Hawaii Funeral & Cemetery Association, Inc.; Mililani Group, Inc.; International Longshore & Warehouse Union Local 1000; Sebastian's ARCH LLC; and one individual.

Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of Human Services.

Your Committee finds that the State's mortuaries and crematories handle the cremation, transportation, storage, and final disposition of unclaimed bodies on behalf of the State, but for decades have been reimbursed only \$800 to cover the cost of these services. Your Committee further finds that the costs of fuel, labor, and materials continue to increase, and that many businesses in the industry are struggling to cover costs above the



State's reimbursement level and have even opted out of taking in unclaimed remains. This measure increases the amount of death benefits paid by the Department of Human Services to more sufficiently cover the cremation and disposition costs for unclaimed bodies that financially burden mortuaries and crematories in the State.

Your Committee notes the testimony of the Department of Human Services that the current allocated amount for death benefits to cover the cremation and disposition costs for unclaimed bodies is \$800, and that in fiscal year 2022-2023, the Department paid a total amount of \$277,600 for this type of death benefit. If death benefits are increased to \$1,600, the Department of Human Services will need an additional \$277,600 general fund appropriation. Your Committee further notes the Department of Human Services' request that any appropriation be included in the Executive Budget as a recurring expense, rather than a one-time appropriation through this measure.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Health and Human Services that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 1533, H.D. 2, and recommends that it pass Second Reading and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Health and Human
Services,



JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA, Chair



The Senate
 Thirty-Second Legislature
 State of Hawai'i

Record of Votes
Committee on Health and Human Services
HHS

Bill / Resolution No.:* HB 1533, HD 2	Committee Referral: HHS, WAM	Date: 3/18/24		
<input type="checkbox"/> The Committee is reconsidering its previous decision on this measure. If so, then the previous decision was to: _____				
The Recommendation is: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pass, unamended 2312 <input type="checkbox"/> Pass, with amendments 2311 <input type="checkbox"/> Hold 2310 <input type="checkbox"/> Recommit 2313				
Members	Aye	Aye (WR)	Nay	Excused
SAN BUENAVENTURA, Joy A. (C)	✓			
AQUINO, Henry J.C. (VC)	✓			
KEOHOKALOLE, Jarrett	✓			
SHIMABUKURO, Maile S.L.	✓			
AWA, Brenton	✓			
TOTAL	5			
Recommendation: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Not Adopted				
Chair's or Designee's Signature:				
Distribution: Original Yellow Pink Goldenrod File with Committee Report Clerk's Office Drafting Agency Committee File Copy				

***Only one measure per Record of Votes**