

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 02 2024RE: S.B. No. 1444
S.D. 1

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 S.B. No. 1444 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to:

- (1) Establish provisional or associate-level licensure requirements for marriage and family therapists, mental health counselors, and psychologists, and authorize insurance reimbursements in certain circumstances; and
- (2) Allow psychologist license applicants to take licensing examinations before completing other requirements.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Hawai'i Psychological Association; National Association of Social Workers-Hawai'i Chapter; Hilopa'a Family to Family, Inc; Catholic Charities Hawai'i; Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center; The Hawaiian Islands Association for Marriage and Family Therapy; and twenty-five individuals.

Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs and Board of Psychology.



Your committee finds that there is a critical shortage of mental health professionals in Hawaii, particularly in rural areas. It is imperative for the State to meet the burgeoning demand for quality mental health services, especially considering the increased emotional and mental toll suffered by residents who were affected by the August 2023 Maui wildfires. This measure reduces administrative obstacles for mental health professionals to obtain licenses and practice in the State to help meet these demands.

Your Committee notes the testimony of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs requesting the following appropriations to ensure proper implementation of this measure:

- (1) \$73,406 to establish, recruit, and hire an office assistant V to process provisional license applications; and
- (2) \$75,000 to make appropriate updates to the Department's internal database for the new license types and associated requirements.

Therefore, your Committee requests that subsequent committees to which this measure is referred consider inserting an appropriation amount of \$148,406 for fiscal year 2024-2025 for proper implementation of this measure. Your Committee further notes the Department's request to delay the implementation of this measure until January 1, 2026.

Accordingly, your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Deleting language that would have required associate licensees in marriage and family therapy and mental health counseling to pass their licensing examination before obtaining the associate license;
- (2) Deleting language that would have allowed psychologist license applicants to take licensing examinations before completing other requirements;
- (3) Deleting language that would have authorized the Board of Psychology to grant waivers or extensions for licensees who failed to timely renew their licenses



under certain conditions, at these provisions already exist in state law;

- (4) Inserting language declaring that the general fund expenditure ceiling for fiscal year 2024-2025 has been exceeded;
- (5) Inserting an appropriation for an unspecified amount of general funds to be expended by the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs to ensure proper implementation of this measure;
- (6) Amending section 1 to reflect its amended purpose;
- (7) Making parts II, III, IV and V of the measure take effect on July 1, 2026; and
- (8) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

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 S.B. No. 1444, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 1444, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committees on Commerce and Consumer Protection and Judiciary.

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.:* | Committee Referral: | Date: | | |
| SB1444 | HHS, CPN/JDC | 01/26/2024 | | |
| <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 type="checkbox"/> Pass, unamended 2312 <input checked="" 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 | ✓ | | | |
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| 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

Revised: 12/27/23