

Honolulu, Hawaii

**MAR 14** , 2024

RE: S.B. No. 3239  
S.D. 2  
H.D. 1

Honorable Scott K. Saiki  
Speaker, House of Representatives  
Thirty-Second State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2024  
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Health & Homelessness, to which was referred S.B. No. 3239, S.D. 2, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO MEDICAL DEBT,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to authorize the Office of Wellness and Resilience to develop, implement, and execute a program to acquire and forgive outstanding medical debt.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Office of Wellness and Resilience; State Health Planning and Development Agency; The Queen's Health System; Healthcare Association of Hawaii; Leukemia & Lymphoma Society; American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network; Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center; and two individuals.

Your Committee finds that medical debt is the most common form of personal bankruptcy across the nation. Your Committee further finds that medical debt can often serve as a social determinant of health, as medical debt often leads to patients to delay the care they need and is more likely to burden people with disabilities, lower-income people, and uninsured people. This measure authorizes the Office of Wellness and Resilience to develop a medical debt forgiveness program. However, your



Committee believes that implementation of such a program is premature at this time and additional work must be conducted to determine the feasibility of establishing a state-run medical debt forgiveness program.

Accordingly, your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Deleting the substantive contents of this measure and inserting language requiring the Office of Wellness and Resilience to establish a Medical Debt Forgiveness Working Group to study the feasibility of developing, implementing, and executing a program for the State to acquire and forgive outstanding medical debt of Hawaii residents;
- (2) Changing the effective date to July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and
- (3) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Health & Homelessness that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 3239, S.D. 2, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 3239, S.D. 2, H.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce.

Respectfully submitted on  
behalf of the members of the  
Committee on Health &  
Homelessness,



DELLA AU BELATTI, Chair



