

To: The Honorable Della Au Belatti, Chair
The Honorable Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
House Committee on Health & Homelessness

From: Paula Arcena, External Affairs Vice President
Mike Nguyen, Public Policy Manager

Hearing: Wednesday, March 30, 2024, 10:30 AM, Conference Room 329

RE: **HCR5/HR1 – Urging retail stores and pharmacies doing business in the state to adopt a policy on a national and local level guaranteeing an individual's unhindered access to all United States Food and Drug Administration-approved contraceptives.**

AlohaCare appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of HCR5 and HR1**. This resolution urges retail stores and pharmacies doing business in the State to adopt policies on a national and local level to guarantee an individual's unhindered access to all United States Food and Drug Administration-approved contraceptives.

Founded in 1994 by Hawai'i's community health centers, AlohaCare is a community-rooted, non-profit health plan serving over 84,000 Medicaid and dual-eligible health plan members on all islands. Approximately 40 percent of our members are keiki. We are Hawai'i's only health plan exclusively dedicated to serving Medicaid and Medicaid-Medicare dually-eligible beneficiaries. Our mission is to serve individuals and communities in the true spirit of aloha by ensuring and advocating for access to quality, whole-person care for all.

AlohaCare is committed to improving and advocating for access to care, including reproductive health care. We fully support this measure because people should be able to easily access contraceptives so they can make personal health choices. This measure would help to protect personal autonomy and contraceptive access for the residents of Hawai'i.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in **support of HCR5 and HR1**.



TESTIMONY FROM THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAII

COMMITTEE REFERRAL: HLT

MARCH 20, 2024

HCR 5/HR 1, URGING RETAIL STORES AND PHARMACIES DOING BUSINESS IN THE STATE TO ADOPT A POLICY ON A NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVEL GUARANTEEING AN INDIVIDUAL'S UNHINDERED ACCESS TO ALL UNITED STATES FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION-APPROVED CONTRACEPTIVES.

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Democratic Party of Hawaii supports HCR 5/HR 1, which urges retail stores and pharmacies doing business in the state to adopt a policy on a national and local level guaranteeing an individual's unhindered access to all United States Food and Drug Administration-approved contraceptives.

Reproductive care is an essential form of health care. In March 1970, Hawaii became the first state to legalize abortion, three years before the landmark *Roe v. Wade* decision by the United States Supreme Court that protected access to abortion nationwide. By legalizing abortion access, the state recognized that preserving access to safe and legal reproductive care is a vital public health objective for the islands.

Furthermore, Hawaii's unique geography and high cost of living present barriers to obtaining reproductive care for patients and potential patients. As of 2022, only a few abortion providers host reproductive care clinics on two to three islands in the state. According to Planned Parenthood, the number of abortion providers in the State has been on the decline since the 1990s.

Studies show that access to abortion care is linked to financial well-being. According to The Turnaway Study conducted by Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health at the University of California San Francisco, people who were denied access to an abortion experienced an increase in household poverty lasting at least four years relative to those who received an abortion. In addition, women who lacked access to reproductive care were also found to be less able to pay for basic living expenses and had lower credit scores and higher rates of debt and eviction than those with access to abortion care.

The United States Supreme Court's ruling in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* overturned *Roe v. Wade* and ended the federal constitutional right to abortion care. In overturning *Roe v. Wade*, the Court erased nearly fifty years of legal precedent supporting the fundamental right to reproductive freedom, leading to a wave of abortion restrictions enacted by state legislatures across the country. The Supreme Court's decision disproportionately harmed Black, Latino, indigenous, and other people of color, for whom access to health care and economic opportunities have historically been impeded by systemic racism.

Sadly, anti-abortion activists are currently attempting to impose attempt to impose a nationwide ban on mifepristone, one of two medications in a regimen that accounts for more than half the abortions in the United States, as well as other forms of contraception. In August of 2023, a federal appeals court ruled that mifepristone should not be prescribed past seven weeks of pregnancy or via telemedicine. Numerous states have also introduced legislation to restrict access to mifepristone and contraception. If implemented, these restrictions may apply even in states where abortion is legal.

Following the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* ruling, it is imperative for our state to implement proactive measures to protect access to reproductive care. In the face of a growing and persistent threat to reproductive care, we must preserve the islands' long legacy of leading the nation on this issue.

Mahalo nui loa,

Kris Coffield

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HR-1

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 3:01:53 PM

Testimony for HLT on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deb Nehmad	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

please support this VERY important effort.

Deb Nehmad

HR-1

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 3:32:28 PM

Testimony for HLT on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Younghee Overly	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for this opportunity to submit a testimony in strong support of HR1 to protect access to contraceptives.

HR-1

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 4:33:37 PM

Testimony for HLT on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Thaddeus Pham	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and HLT Committee Members,

As a public health professional concerned with community equity, I write in strong support of HCR5 and HR1, both resolutions that would move to improve access to FDA-approved contraceptives.

Mahalo,

Thaddeus Pham (he/him)

HR-1

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 8:39:24 PM

Testimony for HLT on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patti Cook	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONGL SUPPORT - Patti Cook - Waimea, Island of Hawai'i

HR-1

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 12:19:58 AM

Testimony for HLT on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara Shimei	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

IN SUPPORT

HR-1

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 8:25:13 AM

Testimony for HLT on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anne Leake	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai kakou. My name is Anne Leake. I am a retired nurse practitioner and reside in Kaneohe. I practiced for 30 yeras in federally funded community health centers in Hawaii. We need to make medication for termination of preganancy available in our retail pharmacies. This bill will help make that possible. Mahalo.

To: Hawaii State House Committee on Health & Homelessness

Hearing Date/Time: Wednesday March 20, 2024, 10:30am

Place: Hawaii State Capitol, CR 329 & Videoconference

Re: Judith Ann Armstrong supports resolutions HR1/HCR5 relating to UNHINDERED ACCESS TO ALL UNITED STATES FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION-APPROVED CONTRACEPTIVES.

Dear Chairs Rep. Della Au Belatti, Vice Chair Rep. Jenna Takenouchi and Rep. Darius K. Kila, and members of the Committee on Health & Homelessness

I, Judith Ann Armstrong, **strongly** supports resolutions HR1/HCR5 relating to UNHINDERED ACCESS TO ALL UNITED STATES FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION-APPROVED CONTRACEPTIVES.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of resolutions HR1/HCR5.

Sincerely,

Judith Ann Armstrong