

To: The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
The Honorable Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

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

Hearing: Monday, March 25, 2024, 10:30 AM, Conference Room 016

RE: **SCR14 – Urging the members of Hawai‘i’s congressional delegation to monitor *The Alliance for Hippocratic Medicine v. U.S. Food and Drug Administration* and take action to limit the case from further restricting access to safe abortion options.**

AlohaCare appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **support** of **SCR14**. This resolution urges members of Hawai‘i’s congressional delegation to monitor *The Alliance for Hippocratic Medicine v. U.S. Food and Drug Administration* and take action to limit the case from further restricting access to safe abortion options.

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 resolution because all people in Hawai‘i deserve timely, safe, and local access to health care, including abortion care. This measure would help to protect personal autonomy and access to care for the residents of Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in **support** of **SCR14**.



TESTIMONY FROM THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAII

COMMITTEE REFERRAL: HHS/JDC

MARCH 25, 2024

SCR 14, URGING THE MEMBERS OF HAWAII'S CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO MONITOR THE ALLIANCE FOR HIPPOCRATIC MEDICINE V. U.S. FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION AND TAKE ACTION TO LIMIT THE CASE FROM FURTHER RESTRICTING ACCESS TO SAFE ABORTION OPTIONS.

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i **supports** SCR 14, which urges members of Hawai'i's congressional delegation to monitor the *Alliance For Hippocratic Medicine v. U.S. Food and Drug Administration* and take action to limit the case from further restricting access to safe abortion options.

Reproductive care is an essential form of health care. In March 1970, Hawai'i 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, Hawai'i'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,

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March 25, 2024

LATE

TO: Senator Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry Aquino, Vice Chair and
Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services

TO: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair and
Members of the Judiciary Committee

From: Jeanne Y. Ohta, Co-Chair
Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus

RE: **SCR 14: URGING THE MEMBERS OF HAWAII'S CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO MONITOR THE ALLIANCE FOR HIPPOCRATIC MEDICINE V. U.S. FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION AND TAKE ACTION TO LIMIT THE CASE FROM FURTHER RESTRICTING ACCESS TO SAFE ABORTION OPTIONS.**

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus writes in support of SCR 14 which requests that Hawaii's congressional delegation monitor the Alliance for Hippocratic Medicine v. U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) case in the U.S. Supreme Court and take action to limit the case from further restricting access to safe abortion options. The Court is scheduled to hear oral arguments on the case on March 26, 2024.

This challenge by anti-abortion advocates challenges the FDA's approval of an abortion drug places medication abortion at risk across the U.S. Medication abortion is the most commonly used method of abortion in the U.S., accounting for more than half of all abortions.¹

Mifepristone was first approved by the FDA in 2000. Since then, it has established a well-documented safety record. Leading medical and scientific organizations such as the American Medical Association, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and the American Academy of Family Physicians recognize medication abortion care as safe and effective.

We believe that it is critical that access to medication abortion be available so that health care providers have an additional method of providing a safe and effective abortion treatment to their patients.

This is a priority issue for the Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus. The Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus is a catalyst for progressive, social, economic, and political change through action on critical issues facing Hawaii's women and girls.

¹ Guttmacher Institute, <https://www.guttmacher.org/article/2022/02/medication-abortion-now-accounts-more-half-all-us-abortions>, February 24, 2022.

We respectfully request that the Committee pass this resolution to show support for access to reproductive care.
Thank you for the opportunity to provide our testimony.

SCR-14

Submitted on: 3/22/2024 10:46:08 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leah McRae	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a registered voter in the state of Hawai'i, I support SCR14.

SCR-14

Submitted on: 3/23/2024 10:37:05 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristi Desaucido	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Subject: Testimony in Support of Maintaining and Protecting Access to Safe Abortion

I want to emphasize the critical importance of safeguarding access to safe and legal abortion. This testimony is driven by the conviction that reproductive rights are fundamental human rights, essential for individual autonomy, privacy, and health.

The case currently pending before the United States District Court for the Northern District of Texas, known as the Alliance case, has the potential to further restrict access to abortion, which could have devastating consequences for women, families, and our society as a whole. It is crucial that Hawaii's congressional delegation monitors this case closely and takes decisive action to prevent any measures that would erode access to safe and legal abortion services.

Restricting access to abortion does not eliminate it but drives women to seek unsafe and illegal alternatives, endangering their health, well-being, and even their lives. History and research have consistently shown that when access to safe abortion is limited, the rates of maternal mortality and morbidity increase significantly.

Furthermore, access to safe abortion is a matter of social justice. Restrictions disproportionately affect marginalized communities, including low-income individuals, people of color, and those living in rural areas, exacerbating existing inequalities.

Maintaining access to safe abortion is also essential for allowing individuals to control their reproductive lives, plan their families, and pursue their life goals without undue interference. It supports the health and economic stability of families and communities and is integral to achieving gender equality.

Therefore, I urge the members of Hawaii's congressional delegation to take a strong stand against any further restrictions imposed by the Alliance case or similar initiatives. It is imperative to act decisively to ensure that the rights to privacy, health, and autonomy are protected for all, regardless of where they live or their economic status.

Thank you for considering my testimony on this critical issue. Your actions can help safeguard the health, rights, and futures of countless individuals in Hawaii and across the nation.

Sincerely,
Kristi Desuacido

SCR-14

Submitted on: 3/23/2024 12:55:10 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dara Yatsushiro	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Hippocratic Oath, which is taken by physicians states, "*Primum non nocere*" or "First do no harm" or in other translations: "I will abstain from all intentional wrong-doing and harm".

Abortion is both wrongdoing and harm, and as such, this proposal is both wrong and harmful as it promotes and supports a culture of death which is wrong and harmful for all of us.

I STRONGLY OPPOSE SCR14, and you should as well if you truly care about the wellbeing of the people you're privileged to serve.

SCR-14

Submitted on: 3/24/2024 2:24:42 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cindy R Ajimine	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I OPPOSE SCR14.

- Federal decision making has already occurred. States are allowed to provide oversight for this. Use your privilege and responsibility to provide oversight in our state on more important matters.
- Leave medical decisions to the medical professionals. This has not been deemed as "safe" as some purport it to be.
- Stop rewarding sexual promiscuity & focus on prevention vs. reaction. Again.

I OPPOSE SCR14.