



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## ‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

### Legislative Testimony

### Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Higher Education  
Wednesday, February 12, 2025 at 2:00 p.m.

By

S. Lani Park, PhD,  
Brenda Hernandez, PhD,  
and Alike Maunakea, PhD, Principal Investigators

And

Naoto T. Ueno MD, PhD, Director  
University of Hawai'i Cancer Center

And

T. Samuel Shomaker, MD, JD, MSM, Dean  
Lee Buenconsejo-Lum, MD, Principal Investigator, Pacific Regional Central Cancer Registry,  
U.S.-Affiliated Pacific Islands  
John A. Burns School of Medicine

And

Michael Bruno, PhD, Provost  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

#### HB 1300 HD1 – RELATING TO CANCER

Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i Cancer Center (UHCC) and John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) strongly supports HB 1300 HD1, which would appropriate revenues for UHCC to conduct a multi-ethnic cohort study focusing on social determinants of health, lifestyles, environmental exposures, and resilience factors of Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Filipinos in the state of Hawai'i.

This funding would provide vital resources to help initiate this long-term study, which would provide critical data to improve the cancer disparities and promote health equity in populations that experience high rates for many common cancers and continue to be understudied and underserved.

National data typically aggregate health information for Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (AANHPI) and, thereby, ignore the rich cultural and lifestyle diversity of these populations and mask their marked differences in cancer incidence and outcomes. UHCC has extensive experience studying cancer disparities in AANHPI. Disaggregated data have revealed stark cancer disparities across Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Asian American subgroups. For instance, Native Hawaiians, among other racial/ethnic groups in the United States (US), have one of the highest rates of lung, breast, colorectal, pancreatic, gastric, liver, endometrial and cervical cancers. Most of these excess risks are only partially explained by known risk factors pointing to the need to explore new hypotheses. Pacific Islanders have high rates for many cancers that should be addressed through culturally tailored health education

and prevention efforts, such as in smoking cessation, HPV vaccination, and screening. Filipino Americans have high incidence rates for lung, colorectal and thyroid cancer in Hawai'i, and rapidly increasing rates of breast and prostate cancers. Due to gaps in the available data, such as on social determinants of health and environmental and occupational exposures, the specific reasons that drive these disparities remain unknown. A new study that captures such information would directly address these research gaps. For instance, there are private waste landfills in Nānākuli, O'ahu, where a high density of Native Hawaiian communities resides. The measure of potential cancer-causing environmental hazards and exposures and their associations with health can be studied through establishing a new prospective cohort study.

The proposed two-year project would establish the feasibility of recruiting participants for a long-term prospective study and greatly strengthen a grant application to NIH to fund the full-scale research. It will also help us continue to build strong partnerships with these communities that we have initiated through our work to field a mobile health clinic with the Native Hawaiian Healthcare Systems and through the work of our Pacific Islander Community Health Workers, so as to define common priority research areas and assist with study recruitment and future dissemination of study findings.

Information from the Hawai'i Tumor Registry (the State central cancer registry, operated by the UHCC), shows disparities in how early certain cancers are diagnosed (i.e., stage at diagnosis), in the number of new cancers detected each year (i.e., incidence), and in the proportion of deaths caused by certain cancers in Native Hawaiians, Filipinos, and Pacific Islanders residing in Hawai'i. Similarly, the Pacific Regional Central Cancer Registry (the US Affiliated Pacific Islands central cancer registry, operated by JABSOM), shows significant cancer health disparities in late stage at diagnosis and extremely poor survival rates in cervical, oropharyngeal, uterine, and liver cancer among the several of the populations indigenous to the USAPI. Many of the US Pacific Islander populations move to Hawai'i for educational and economic opportunities, as well as for health care. There is inadequate information about the contributing factors to the cancer health disparities, especially in the USAPI populations who reside in Hawai'i and are diagnosed with and treated for cancer here. It is well-studied that certain types of cancer are heavily influenced by tobacco, dietary composition, and overweight/obesity. Additionally, there is a high correlation between poverty and food insecurity, tobacco use, obesity, and obesity-related chronic disease, including cancer. Studies conducted in the US, USAPI, and globally also indicate other sociocultural impacts on cancer aside from poverty.

This new multi-ethnic cohort study is highly needed, and the results will inform UHCC, JABSOM, and University of Hawai'i researchers' current and future work with Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and Filipino populations to address social, cultural, and economic determinants of cancer prevention, cancer screening, and early detection, treatment, and survivorship.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 1300 HD1, provided that its passage does not impact priorities as indicated in our Board of Regents Approved Budget.



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT TO HOUSE BILL1300 HD 1**  
**RELATING TO CANCER**

House Committee on Higher Education  
Hawai'i State Capitol

February 12, 2025

2:00PM

Room 309

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Dear Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato, and Members of the House Committee on Higher Education:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) submits this testimony in **SUPPORT** of HB 1300 HD 1 which appropriates funds to the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center to conduct a multiethnic cohort study focusing on the social determinants of health, lifestyles, environmental exposures, and resilience factors of Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Filipinos, including an analysis of the health effects and risks of individuals living in close proximity to landfills in Nanakuli, O'ahu. This bill further requires the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center to seek federal funding to complete the study.

OHA has long advocated for meaningful policies to help reduce the health disparities of Native Hawaiians and to better protect and uplift the health and vitality of the lāhui. OHA's strategy relating to improved health outcomes includes increased availability and access to quality, culturally based, and culturally adapted prevention and treatment interventions in 'ohana, schools, and communities (E Ola Mau a Mau). In furtherance of this priority, OHA supports an approach to health policy that incorporates "social determinants of health" – i.e., a holistic and systemic view in assessing and addressing health in Hawai'i's communities.

A holistic and systemic view of health must include the built and natural environment. Notably, research shows that Native Hawaiians continue to experience disparate outcomes compared to the rest of the US, with Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders having the highest prevalence of chronic diseases like type 2 diabetes, hypertension, and obesity.<sup>1</sup> These health disparities are correlated with disparities in areas recognized as social determinants of health,

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<sup>1</sup> Long CR, Narcisse MR, Bailey MM, Rowland B, English E, McElfish PA, "Food insecurity and chronic diseases among Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders in the US: results of a population-based survey," J Hunger Environ Nutr. (2022), <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9012098/>

such as housing, education, social services, leisure, individual rights, culture, and public safety. For example, in addition to poorer health outcomes, of the five largest race groups in Hawai'i, Native Hawaiians have the lowest household incomes and the highest poverty rates, despite 74.5% of this population working 35 or more hours per week.<sup>2</sup>

**To address these disparities, including and particularly with respect to the social determinants that may be causing or contributing to disparate health outcomes, a multiethnic study focusing on Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Filipinos is critical.** Data on social determinants of health for Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (NHPI) in the United States are hidden because data are often not collected or are reported in aggregate with other racial/ethnic groups, despite decades of calls to disaggregate NHPI data. As a form of structural racism, data omissions contribute to systemic problems such as inability to advocate, lack of resources, and limitations to political power.<sup>3</sup>

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs urges this committee to **PASS HB 1300 HD 1**. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

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<sup>2</sup> “Demographic, Social, Economic, and Housing Characteristics for Selected Race Groups in Hawaii,” Research and Economic Analysis Division – Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism – State of Hawaii (March 2018) at p. ii; 11; and 13,

[https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/economic/reports/SelectedRacesCharacteristics\\_HawaiiReport.pdf](https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/economic/reports/SelectedRacesCharacteristics_HawaiiReport.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Morey BN, Chang RC, Thomas KB, Tulua, Penaia C, Tran VD, Pierson N, Greer JC, Bydalek M, Ponce N, “No Equity Without Data Equity: Data Reporting Gaps for Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders as Structural Racism,” J Health Polit Policy Law (April 1, 2022) at Abstract,

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10959240/>

To: The Honorable Andrew Takuya Garrett, Chair  
The Honorable Terez Amato, Vice Chair  
Members, House Committee on Higher Education

From: Kanilehua Kim, Native Hawaiian Health and Community Engagement, Queen's Health Systems

Jace Mikulanec, Director, Government Relations, The Queen's Health Systems

Date: February 12, 2025

Re: Support for HB1300 HD1 - Relating to Cancer

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The Queen's Health Systems (Queen's) is a nonprofit corporation that provides expanded health care capabilities to the people of Hawai'i and the Pacific Basin. Since the founding of the first Queen's hospital in 1859 by Queen Emma and King Kamehameha IV, it has been our mission to provide quality health care services in perpetuity for Native Hawaiians and all of the people of Hawai'i. Over the years, the organization has grown to four hospitals, and more than 10,000 affiliated physicians, caregivers, and dedicated medical staff statewide. As the preeminent health care system in Hawai'i, Queen's strives to provide superior patient care that is constantly advancing through education and research.

Queen's appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB1300 HD1, which appropriates funds to the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center to conduct a multiethnic cohort study focusing on the social determinants of health, lifestyles, environmental exposures, and resilience factors of Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Filipinos, including an analysis of the health effects and risks of individuals living in close proximity to landfills in Nanakuli, Oahu.

The Queen's Medical Center is a long-standing member of the University of Hawaii Cancer Consortium, of which members have a common goal to eliminate cancer through research. The UH Cancer Center is one of only 71 institutions in the United States that hold the prestigious National Cancer Institute (NCI) designation and is the only NCI-designated center in the Pacific – making it particularly appropriate to undertake this study.

This proposed effort is in alignment with QHS's mission and vision while also underscoring the work that our Native Hawaiian Health program is undertaking to address systemic inequalities related to pollutant exposure and other environmental stewardship issues. Furthermore, the proposed study's holistic approach (including social determinants of health, resilience factors, and environmental exposures) ensures that community connections to land, culture, etc. are taken into account.

*The mission of The Queen's Health System is to fulfill the intent of Queen Emma and King Kamehameha IV to provide in perpetuity quality health care services to improve the well-being of Native Hawaiians and all of the people of Hawai'i.*

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



Committee on Higher Education  
Rep. Andrew Garrett, Chair  
Rep. Terez Amato, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: Wednesday, February 12, 2025

**ACS CAN SUPPORTS HB 1300 HD1 – RELATING TO CANCER.**

Cynthia Au, Government Relations Director – Hawai'i Guam  
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

Thank you for the opportunity in **STRONG SUPPORT** HB 1300 HD1 – RELATING TO CANCER which appropriates funds to the University of Hawaii Cancer Center to conduct a multi-ethnic cohort study focusing on the social determinants of health, lifestyles, environmental exposures, and resilience factors of Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, Filipinos and environmental factors.

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), the nonprofit, non-partisan advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society advocates for public policies that reduce death and suffering from cancer. ACS CAN works with federal, state, and local government bodies to support evidence-based policy and legislative solutions designed to eliminate cancer as a major health problem.

Cancer is the second leading cause of death in Hawaii with over 2,000 deaths each year. This year over 9,000 residents of Hawaii will be diagnosed with the disease. Cancer incidence and mortality rates have decreased in Hawaii over the last decade, but despite this overall reduction, the disparities between ethnic populations continue to be of concern. Cancer is the leading cause of death among Asian Americans and the second-leading cause (after heart disease) among Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander individuals. Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders have one of the highest incidence rates of breast, lung, colorectal, cervical, pancreatic, gastric and liver cancers among all U.S. racial/ethnic populations.

#### Hawaii Statistics:

- Cancer is the leading cause of death in females and the second leading cause of death after heart disease for males over the age of one.<sup>i</sup>
- Cancer is the leading cause of death in Filipino women and the second leading cause of death after heart disease for Filipino men.<sup>ii</sup>
- Cancer is the leading cause of death in Native Hawaiian women and the second leading cause of death after heart disease for Native Hawaiian men.<sup>iii</sup>
- Cancer is the leading cause of death in Pacific Islander women and the second leading cause of death after heart disease for Pacific Islander men.<sup>iv</sup>

To aid in research, collecting data on Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders and Asian groups including Filipinos will help to provide information on the contributing factors to cancer disparities that currently exist. Data collection will aid in future research to improve health outcomes for these minority populations.

The cancer death rate is 20% higher for individuals from the US counties with the lowest average of incomes compared to counties with a higher average of incomes. According to the US Census, there are currently over 200,000 Filipinos in the state. Research is critical to understanding and reducing cancer disparities, as well as examining gaps in cancer prevention and care delivery that contribute to these disparities.

The University of Hawaii Cancer Center is one of 72 research organizations in the U.S. designated by the National Cancer Institute (NCI) and the only one in the Hawaii Pacific region.<sup>v</sup> Its mission is to reduce the burden of cancer through research, education, patient care and community outreach with an emphasis on the unique ethnic, cultural and environmental characteristics of Hawaii and the Pacific. Cancer research focusing on Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Filipinos is unique to Hawaii and the University of Hawaii Cancer Center and cannot be easily conducted anywhere else in the world. Findings will further help with receiving future research grants from National Cancer Institute specific to these minority populations.

ACS CAN supports the legislature to fund \$1 million over two years for the University of Hawaii Cancer Center to conduct a multi-ethnic cohort study for the population of Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Filipinos unique to the state. All individuals should have equitable access to quality cancer care and an equal opportunity to live a healthy life. However, cancer does not affect everyone equally. Our ability to continue to make progress against cancer relies heavily on eliminating the inequities that exist in cancer care, including in research.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony in SUPPORT on this important matter. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Government Relations Director Cynthia Au at 808.460.6109, or [Cynthia.Au@Cancer.org](mailto:Cynthia.Au@Cancer.org).



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<sup>i</sup> Leading Causes of Death by Sex and Race/Ethnicity State of Hawaii, 2018-2022, Dec. 1, 2023  
<https://hhdw.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Leading-Cause-Death-RaceEth-Sex-2018-2022.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> Leading Causes of Death by Sex and Race/Ethnicity State of Hawaii, 2018-2022, Dec. 1, 2023 <https://hhdw.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Leading-Cause-Death-RaceEth-Sex-2018-2022.pdf>

<sup>iii</sup> Leading Causes of Death by Sex and Race/Ethnicity State of Hawaii, 2018-2022, Dec. 1, 2023  
<https://hhdw.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Leading-Cause-Death-RaceEth-Sex-2018-2022.pdf>

<sup>iv</sup> Leading Causes of Death by Sex and Race/Ethnicity State of Hawaii, 2018-2022, Dec. 1, 2023  
<https://hhdw.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Leading-Cause-Death-RaceEth-Sex-2018-2022.pdf>

<sup>v</sup> University of Hawaii Cancer Center <https://www.uhcancercenter.org/50years>



# Iron Workers Stabilization Fund

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T. George Paris  
Managing Director

February 12, 2025

Members of the House Committee on Higher Education

RE: HB 1300 – RELATING TO CANCER

Aloha Chair Garret, Vice-Chair Amato and Members of the Committee,

The Ironworkers Stabilization Fund strongly supports HB1300, which appropriates funds to the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center for a crucial multiethnic cohort study. This study, focusing on the social determinants of health, lifestyles, environmental exposures, and resilience factors of Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Filipinos, is essential for understanding and addressing health disparities in our state.

Investigating the impact of environmental factors, particularly for individuals living near landfills in Nanakuli, is critical. A study conducted by the federal government labeled 2010-2015 Center for Disease Control (CDC) small-area life expectancy study found that residents in this area had a life expectancy 10 years lower than the state average. The Waianae coast communities, in general, experience disproportionately higher rates of certain cancers and other chronic diseases, underscoring the urgent need for this research. This focus on environmental justice is paramount.

This study will not only benefit the Waianae community but also inform interventions for other communities facing similar environmental challenges. Identifying strengths and protective factors within these communities will contribute to building resilience and promoting positive health outcomes statewide.

I strongly urge the committee to pass HB1300 for the health and safety of the people of Hawai'i. Thank you.

Sincerely,

T. George Paris  
Managing Director

National Center for Health Statistics. U.S. Small-Area Life Expectancy Estimates Project (USALEEP): Life Expectancy Estimates File for {Jurisdiction}, 2010-2015]. National Center for Health Statistics. 2018. Available from: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/usaleep/usaleep.html>.



LEUKEMIA &  
LYMPHOMA  
SOCIETY®

**LATE**

February 11, 2025

**RE: SUPPORT – HB 1300, Relating to Cancer and University of Hawai‘i; Cancer Center; Multiethnic Cohort Study**

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Chair and members of the committee.

I am Adam Zarrin, the Director of State Government Affairs for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society® (LLS) is a global leader in the fight against cancer. The LLS mission: Cure leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease and myeloma, and improve the quality of life of patients and their families. LLS funds lifesaving blood cancer research around the world, provides free information and support services, and is the voice for all blood cancer patients seeking access to quality, affordable, coordinated care.

**We support HB 1300, relating to cancer, and a multi-ethnic cohort study.**

The study would identify reasons for the disproportionately high risk of chronic diseases among Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders. The study will also suggest new ways to address these long-standing disparities.

These first steps will help develop new therapies for patients with cancer and other serious illnesses. These conditions require extensive research and innovation and depend on foundational research like this.

History has shown us that not all patients have had the same opportunity or consideration in clinical research. For example, those from historically marginalized groups are often under-represented in clinical trials.

Such a lack of diversity among people participating is problematic on multiple levels. It impacts our understanding of how effective new drugs might be across populations and how to reduce disparities in access to treatment.

We are excited that Hawaii can be a leader in addressing health equity in underrepresented communities, and we hope you will support HB 1300.

Thank you.

## **HB-1300-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 12:44:34 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Josh Fowler	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

### **SUPPORT**

**House Committee on Health**

**RE: Strong Support of HB1300 – RELATING TO CANCER**

#### **Written Testimony**

My name is Joshua Fowler, and I am a volunteer and advocate with the **American Cancer Society - Cancer Action Network**. I strongly support **HB1300**, which provides funding for the **University of Hawaii Cancer Center** to conduct a **multiethnic cohort study** on the social determinants of health, environmental exposures, and cancer risks affecting Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Filipinos.

#### **Why This Matters:**

- **Addressing Health Disparities** – Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Filipinos continue to experience **higher cancer rates and mortality**. Research is needed to **identify the causes** and develop **targeted prevention strategies**.
- **Environmental Impact on Cancer Risk** – Residents in **Nanakuli, Oahu**, live near landfills and may be exposed to environmental toxins. This study will analyze **water and soil sample data** to assess potential **health risks**.
- **Hawaii-Specific Research** – Cancer disparities in Hawaii are **unique** and cannot be effectively studied elsewhere. The **UH Cancer Center** is the only **National Cancer Institute-designated** center in the Pacific and is best equipped to **lead this research**.
- **Leveraging Federal Funding** – This bill ensures that **state funding is supplemented with federal grants**, maximizing the impact of the study and **reducing the financial burden on Hawaii's taxpayers**.

#### **Looking at Other States:**

- **California** – Conducts extensive environmental health studies to assess **cancer risks in communities near hazardous sites**. Hawaii should do the same.
- **New York** – Implements multiethnic health research initiatives to **study disparities and improve early cancer detection**.

- **Hawaii's Opportunity** – HB1300 allows Hawaii to **lead in cancer disparity research**, directly benefiting **at-risk communities** across the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I urge the committee to **support HB1300** and fund this critical research to **protect the health of Hawaii's most vulnerable populations**.

**Mahalo,**  
Joshua Fowler  
Honolulu, Hawaii

To: Committee on Higher Education  
Rep. Andrew Garrett, Chair  
Rep. Terez Amato, Vice Chair

RE: Strong Support of HB 1300 HD1 – RELATING TO CANCER.

Hrg: Wednesday, February 12, 2025

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My name is Mark Vasconcellos and I am an advocate for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network. I thank you for the opportunity to SUPPORT HB 1300 HD1 – RELATING TO CANCER.

As a survivor of stage 3 non hodgekins lymphoma cancer and secondary male breast cancer. I'm now 19 plus cancer free. Also a survivor of colon cancer stage 1. Now a survivor for now 10 years. So I ask humbly to support us in this bill submitted to you.

Research is critical to understanding and reducing cancer disparities, as well as examining gaps in cancer prevention and care delivery that contribute to these disparities. I ask that you support funding for the University of Hawaii Cancer Center to conduct a multiethnic cohort study focusing on the social determinants of health, lifestyles, environmental exposures, and resilience factors of Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Asians including Filipinos.

Everyone should have equitable access to quality cancer care and an equal opportunity to live a healthy life. Our ability to continue to make progress against cancer relies heavily on eliminating the inequities that exist in cancer care, including research. Data collection will aid future research to improve health equity for minority populations unique to the people of Hawaii.

Please support and pass HB 1300 HD1.

Sincerely,  
Mark Vasconcellos  
Honolulu, 96822

To: Committee on Higher Education  
Rep. Andrew Garrett, Chair  
Rep. Terez Amato, Vice Chair

RE: Strong Support of HB 1300 HD1 – RELATING TO CANCER.

Hrg: Wednesday, February 12, 2025

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Chair Rep. Gregg Takayama, Chair, Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee:

My name is Cheryl K. Okuma and I am an advocate for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network. I am in STRONG SUPPORT of HB 1300 HD1 – RELATING TO CANCER. Cancer affects everyone, but it does not affect everyone equally.

Cancer has touched myself, family members across generations, as well as friends in its many different forms. A multi-ethnic research is a positive step towards understanding challenges of cancer impacts in our ethnically diverse population. Research is a step towards progress in achieving equity in our fight against cancer.

Cancer is the second leading cause of death in Hawaii and the leading cause of death among Asian Americans and the second-leading cause (after heart disease) among Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander individuals.

Research is critical to understanding and reducing cancer disparities, as well as examining gaps in cancer prevention and care delivery that contribute to these disparities for minority populations unique to Hawaii.

I humbly ask for your SUPPORT and pass HB 1300 for state funding of \$1 million over two years on a multi-ethnic cohort study by the University of Hawaii Cancer Center of Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders and Asian groups including Filipinos.

Sincerely,  
Cheryl K. Okuma  
Wailuku, 96793

**HB-1300-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 10:47:30 AM

Testimony for HED on 2/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mark Willingham	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

I ask that the Hawaii State Legislature supports HB1300 that appropriates funds to the University of Hawaii Cancer Center to conduct a multiethnic cohort study focusing on the social determinants of health, lifestyles, environmental exposures, and resilience factors of Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Filipinos, including an analysis of the health effects and risks of individuals living in close proximity to landfills in Nanakuli, Oahu. This research is essential to the communities of Hawaii and this research is critical.



**COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION**  
Representative Andrew Takuya Garrett, Chair  
Representative Terez Amato, Vice Chair

February 12, 2025 (2:00 pm)

**Individual Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 1300**  
**RELATING TO CANCER**

Aloha Chair Takuya, Vice Chair Amato, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit an individual testimony. I am in **strong support** of House Bill 1300, which would appropriate revenues for the UH Cancer Center to conduct a multi-ethnic cohort study focusing on social determinants of health, lifestyles, environmental exposures, and resilience factors of Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Filipinos in the state of Hawai‘i.

My name is Izumi Okado, and I am an Assistant Researcher/Professor at the University of Hawai‘i Cancer Center. My testimony is submitted as an individual and not as a representative of the University of Hawai‘i or the University of Hawai‘i Cancer Center.

This funding would provide essential resources to help initiate this long-term study, which would provide critical data to improve the cancer disparities and promote health equity in populations that experience high rates of many common cancers and continue to be understudied and underserved. Due to gaps in the available data, such as on social determinants of health and environmental and occupational exposures, the specific reasons that explain these disparities remain unknown. A new study that captures such information would directly address these research gaps.

By 2050, cancer cases worldwide are expected to increase by 77%, to over 35 million, and cancer deaths are projected to nearly double, to 18.5 million, according to the World Health Organization. Residents of Hawai‘i and the Pacific will not be immune from this grim trend.

This new multi-ethnic cohort study is highly needed, and the results will inform current and future work with Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and Filipino populations to address social, cultural, and economic determinants of cancer prevention, cancer screening, early detection, treatment, and survivorship.

Thank you.

Izumi Okado, PhD, Assistant Researcher/Professor, University of Hawai‘i Cancer Center

**LATE**

**HB-1300-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 9:58:13 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mel Kahele	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

February 11, 2025

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT TO HOUSE BILL 1300HD1**

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and members of the committee

My name is Mel Kahele I work for the Ironworkers Stabilization Fund. I'm testifying as a concerned resident that resides on the West side of Oahu. For over 90 years we have been the dumping grounds for the City and County Honolulu. Classic case of Environmental Racism against the Native Hawaiians living on the Leeward Coast of Oahu.

I submit this testimony in SUPPORT of HB1300HD1 which appropriates funds to the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center to conduct a multiethnic cohort study focusing on the social determinants of health, lifestyles, environmental exposures, of Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Filipinos, including an analysis of the health effects and risks of individuals living in close proximity to landfills in Nanakuli, O'ahu. This bill further requires the University of Hawai'i Cancer Center to seek federal funding to complete the study.

Enough is Enough!

I urge the committee to pass HB1300HD1

Thank you for allowing me to testify.

Mel Kahele

February 12, 2025

**LATE**

RE: HB 1300 HD1, RELATING TO CANCER.

Good morning, Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Keohokapu-Lee Loy, and members of the committee. My name is Dwayne Bautista, and I am a concerned citizen and resident of the west side of Oahu. I am here today to express my dedicated support for HB 1300 HD1. As someone with family living on the west side.

I am writing to advocate for appropriation to conduct a comprehensive study examining the potential health impacts on Asian and Pacific Islander (API) residents living next to a landfill in Nanakuli Oahu. This research is crucial to understanding the potential disproportionate burden faced by these residents and informing policies to protect public health that are living next to a landfill.

**Environmental Racism** is a critical concern. Evidence suggests that marginalized residents, including API populations, may be disproportionately found near environmentally hazardous sites, such as landfills. Proximity to landfills can expose residents to a range of potential health risks due to:

- **Air pollution:** Landfills release various gases, including methane (a potent greenhouse gas), hydrogen sulfide, and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). These can contribute to respiratory problems, neurological issues, and other health complications.
- **Water contamination:** Leachate, a liquid formed when rainwater filters through waste, can contaminate groundwater and surface water. This can introduce harmful chemicals and heavy metals into drinking water sources and the broader ecosystem.
- **Soil contamination:** Like water contamination, leachate can also contaminate the soil surrounding landfills, potentially affecting agricultural practices and food safety.
- **Vector-borne diseases:** Landfills can attract pests like rodents and insects, increasing the risk of disease transmission.
- **Nuisance factors:** Odors, noise, and dust from landfill operations can negatively impact quality of life and contribute to stress.

I urge you to pass this critical research on HB 1300 HD1. Assessing the potential health impacts of landfills on API communities is crucial for advancing environmental justice and safeguarding the well-being of all residents.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, featuring a series of sharp, vertical strokes and a long, sweeping horizontal line that extends to the right.

Dwayne Bautista