



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**  
**KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO**  
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**Testimony COMMENTING on SB1242**  
**RELATING TO HEALTH**

SENATOR JOY SAN BUENAVENTURA, CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Hearing Date: January 31, 2025; 1:34 PM

Room Number: 225

1 **Fiscal Implications:** \$100,000 for FY 2025-2026.

2 **Department Testimony:** DOH supports the intent of this measure, to ensure a robust nursing  
3 workforce, so long as it does not supplant the priorities and requests outlined in the Governors  
4 executive budget request.

5 The department respectfully submits that proposed subsections (a) and (b) are not necessary  
6 due to the current process for renewing nursing license every two years. Should a nurse's  
7 license lapse, they can reapply for a license by taking the National Council Licensure  
8 Examination, or NCLEX, again. Retaking the exam will measure that the individual's nursing  
9 knowledge is still intact and up to date, since a lot can change in two years with nursing practice  
10 and care delivery. NCLEX is one of several mechanisms by which this can be accomplished.

11 DOH supports more resources to minimize barriers to entry for healthcare careers such as  
12 nursing. However, the department points out the following complications:

- 13 • Awarding scholarships for a future commitment greatly depends on the number of  
14 facilities that are willing to accept new graduates; and
- 15 • DOH does not have the expertise to operate educational scholarship programs that may  
16 require a claw-back or similar enforcement.

- 1 In lieu of or in concert with a scholarship scheme, the Legislature may consider appropriating
- 2 resources to support nurse residency programs for new nurse training, such as those run by
- 3 Hawai'i State Center for Nursing. The expansion of such programs may keep nurses in Hawai'i
- 4 as there is an opportunity for the new graduates to transition into the workforce. Should the
- 5 Legislature proceed with scholarships, DOH recommends appropriations to private, non-profits,
- 6 such as the Hawai'i Community Foundation, or authorizing DOH to contract out for such
- 7 services.
  
- 8 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



**UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM**

**‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII**

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

**LATE**

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Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Health & Human Services  
Friday, January 31, 2025 at 1:34 p.m.

By

Clementina D. Ceria-Ulep, PhD, RN, Dean  
School of Nursing & Dental Hygiene

And

Michael Bruno, Provost  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 1242 - RELATING TO NURSES.

Chair San Buenaventura , Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure, which seeks to establish a five-year nurse recertification pilot program through the Department of Health. The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa School of Nursing and Dental Hygiene (SONDH) supports the intent of this bill and offers comments provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our BOR Approved Biennium Budget.

We appreciate the Legislature's ongoing commitment to addressing the state's nursing workforce challenges and recognize the multiple initiatives currently under consideration to strengthen the pipeline of qualified nurses. Your dedication to creating sustainable solutions is invaluable in ensuring the future of nursing in Hawai'i.

We extend our gratitude to Senator Joy San Buenaventura for her thoughtful approach in addressing two critical issues within the nursing profession—workforce shortages and the need for nurse educators. SONDH welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with the Department of Health should this measure be enacted.

The Translational Health Science Simulation Center at the UH Mānoa SONDH serves as a resource for practicing nurses. Additionally, SONDH offers programs designed to prepare future nurse faculty. While there is a pressing need for nurse educators in the state, we acknowledge that the cost of living and the salary gap between clinical practice and teaching present challenges in recruiting faculty. Incentives such as those proposed in this bill could serve as a meaningful step toward attracting experienced nurses who are passionate about education into faculty roles.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on this important and innovative initiative. Mahalo for your consideration.

**LATE**

Hawaii State Legislature

Honolulu Hale

Honolulu, HI

January 31, 2025

Aloha Kakou-

I am submitting this testimony for comment only. I find some parts of SB 1242 to be beneficial to the nursing profession. Scholarship for nurses who what to teach return to school after graduating to earn a masters degree is very much needed. Local schools of nursing cannot keep up with the demand for admission due to a lack of nursing educators. This is leads local student to other schools, some are on the mainland and some that are double the cost. Secondary education and especially graduate level education are expensive as is the cost of living in Hawaii. Many cannot afford to do both. Many nurses do not go into nursing education as they can make more money practicing then they can teaching nursing. Pay equity for nursing educators should also be a consideration.

My second comment has to do with supporting nursing residency programs for graduate nurses. Nursing is a difficult field and having programs to mentor, support new nurses and build skills while working is a beneficial in keeping nurses working in the profession. Providing funding for these programs will ensure new nurses are successful in their career and destine to continue, supporting our communities.

Lastly, recertification, I do not support retaking the NCLEX exam for nurses who have let their licenses expire. The exam is difficult, stressful and expensive. One would have to devote many hours to studying before taking the exam and passing, which that may not be possible. Being required to retake the NCLEX will turn away many who want to return to practice. I believe that requiring continuing education credits, a temporary licensure and developing mentorship programs for a nurse who let their licenses laps maybe a better option. This will allow returning nurse to be mentored and evaluated before full licensure would be granted.

Mahalo for your time.

Respectfully-

Sharon M. Ehlers, MAN, APRN-Rx

Assistant Professor of Nursing

Kauai Community College



**Written Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services  
Friday, January 31, 2025 at 1:34 PM  
Conference Room 225 and videoconference  
By  
Laura Reichhardt, APRN, AGPCNP-BC  
Director, Hawai'i State Center for Nursing  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa**

**COMMENTS on S.B. 1242**

Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and members of the committee:

Thank you for hearing this measure, which takes an innovative approach to address two factors that will support the stabilizing of the nursing workforce: nurses who have lapses in their licensure who seek to re-enter the workforce and nurses who are interested in becoming nurse educators. The Hawai'i State Center for Nursing (HSCN) provides comments on this measure.

Pursuant to HRS 457-9, a nurse who has not actively practiced for more than five years may be required by the board to submit proof of continued competency by retaking and passing the licensing examination or successfully completing appropriate continuing education recognized by the board. The HAR 16-89, Subchapter 18 details the requirements for license reinstatement as such:

*The nurse shall be required to:*

- (1) Submit an application prescribed by the board with the required fee(s); and*
- (2) Retake and pass the NCLEX-RN or NCLEX-PN, whichever is applicable; or*
- (3) Successfully complete a refresher course which must first be approved by the board. The course shall consist of at least sixty clock hours of didactic and sixty clock hours of clinical practice recognized by an approved provider and designed for the practical nurse or registered nurse who is returning to practice after more than five years absence from nursing practice. The nurse shall submit appropriate documentation to verify successful completion of the refresher course.*

At this current time, HSCN recognizes the need for a refresher course. As the coordinator of the Hawai'i Clinical Placement Collaborative, a program which supports clinical placements for approximately 80% of the nursing clinical education in our state, HSCN will work collaboratively to support the clinical aspect required for the refresher course, as applicable.

Further, HSCN has long documented the need for teaching faculty in nursing. This novel approach creates an incentive for nurses who are interested in teaching but may need a catalyst to do so.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.

*The mission of the Hawai'i State Center is to engage in nursing workforce research, promote best practices and disseminate knowledge, cultivate a diverse and well-prepared workforce, support healthy work environments, champion lifelong learning, and strategically plan for sound nursing workforce policy.*

**LATE**

**Written Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services  
Friday, January 31, 2025, at 1:34 PM  
Conference Room 225 and videoconference  
By**

**Ms. BJ Bartleson, MS, RN, NEA-BC, FAONL  
BJB Consulting LLC**

**COMMENTS on S.B. 1242**

Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and members of the committee:

Thank you for hearing this bill, SB 1242, which is yet another innovative state approach to addressing specific nursing workforce issues in Hawai'i. This bill will address nurses with licensure lapses, those seeking to re-enter the workforce, and nurses interested in becoming nurse educators. It will also establish appropriate resources for a five-year nurse recertification program.

Reentry programs have been instrumental in addressing nursing shortages in many states. Most states with programs report successful reentry of nurses with positive outcomes. Other states caution that the success of the reentry program depends on the structure and effectiveness of the implementation and monitoring process, which is why SB 1242's concept of a pilot program for monitoring is feasible and well-advised.

Under HRS 457-9, a nurse who has not actively practiced for more than five years may be required by the board to submit proof of continued competency by retaking and passing the licensing examination or completing appropriate continuing education recognized by the board. The HAR 16-89, Subchapter 18 details the requirements for license reinstatement as such:

The nurse shall be required to: (1) Submit an application prescribed by the board with the required fee(s); and (2) Retake and pass the NCLEX-RN or NCLEX-PN, whichever is applicable; or (3) complete a refresher course, which the board must first approve. The course shall consist of at least sixty-clock hours of didactic and sixty clock hours of clinical practice recognized by an approved provider and designed for the practical nurse or registered nurse returning to practice after more than five years of absence from nursing practice. The nurse shall submit appropriate documentation to verify the successful completion of the refresher course.

As with most other states, nurse faculty are aging and retiring, and nurses are more attracted to clinical practice versus teaching because of the monetary incentives. S.B 1242 also incentivizes nurses who would otherwise do clinical practice instead of teaching.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this bill.

Ms. BJ Bartleson, MS, RN, NEA-BC  
Health Policy Consultant, BJLLC  
Empowering Nurses Through Advocacy  
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**SB-1242**

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 3:07:59 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/31/2025 1:34:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nadia Oyama	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This testimony is related to the suggestion regarding scholarships for "nursing students" to teach in Hawaii after graduation. I would like to suggest that scholarships be offered to current registered nurses who are enrolled in a higher level of education and are adjunct faculty to a Hawaii based Nursing education and are current residents of Hawaii.