



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
P. O. Box 3378
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB1422
RELATING TO NON-GENERAL FUNDS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH.

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

Hearing Date: February 3, 2025

Room Number: 229

Department Testimony: The Department of Health (DOH) strongly supports SB1422, which is part of Governor Green's Administrative Package, to repeal the birth defects special fund and deposits a portion of fees for certified copies and marriage licenses into the vital statistics improvement special fund.

Report No. 21-03 published by the Hawaii Office of the Auditor found that the birth defects special fund did not meet the criteria of a special fund, in part because there was no clear link between the birth defects program and marriage license fees, and recommended its repeal. Repealing the birth defects special fund will satisfy these concerns.

It is essential to redirect the deposits from the birth defects special fund into the vital statistics special fund to overhaul vital statistics business functions. There have previously been lengthy backlogs in customer requests due to a decades-old, unreliable computer system that drives a sub-optimal manual workflow, as well as overall increases in customer orders.

The redirection of deposits from the general fund to the vital statistics improvement special fund will provide a more reliable stream of resources to offset costs for the daily operations of the

1 vital statistics systems and to support modernization and automation of the system than a budget
2 increase or appropriation would provide. The department processes approximately 125,000
3 customer requests a year, which is increasing steadily year after year due to a growing population
4 and additional requirements for which vital records are essential, such as the REAL ID Act of
5 2005 (Pub.L. 109-13). Along with the increase in the number of transactions, the cost of security
6 paper, printers and toner, postage, and other supplies continues to rise. Recovering a greater
7 share of the fees for certified copies would allow the department to meet operational needs, and
8 make more immediate investments in business operations, quality improvement, and customer
9 service.

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11 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.