

**HAWAI'I NATIONAL GUARD
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE JOINT STAFF
3949 DIAMOND HEAD ROAD
HONOLULU, HAWAI'I 96816-4495**

STATE OF HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 88
RELATING TO THE HAWAI'I NATIONAL GUARD

BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

BY

BRIGADIER GENERAL WALTER R. ROSS, JR.
DIRECTOR OF THE JOINT STAFF
HAWAI'I NATIONAL GUARD

JANUARY 22, 2025

Aloha Chair Elefante, Vice-Chair Wakai, and members of the committee:

I am Brigadier General Walter Ross, Director of the Joint Staff, Hawai'i National Guard, State of Hawai'i, Department of Defense.

The Hawai'i National Guard provides testimony in **SUPPORT** of SB88.

We strongly support SB88. Passing this bill is vital to guarantee that Hawai'i National Guard (HING) servicemembers receive the necessary medical coverage when they are called to serve on State Active Duty over thirty days in support of the state during disasters or times of domestic crisis. Our HING servicemembers make significant sacrifices to protect and selflessly serve our communities, and they deserve this essential safeguard for their health and well-being.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

BG Walter R. Ross Jr., waltrr.r.ross2.mil@army.mil; 808-844-6087

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



STEPHEN F. LOGAN
MAJOR GENERAL
ADJUTANT GENERAL
KA 'AKUKANA KENELALA

PHILLIP L. MALLORY
BRIGADIER GENERAL
DEPUTY ADJUTANT GENERAL
KA HOPE 'AKUKANA KENELALA

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
KA 'OIHANA PILI KAUA
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
3949 DIAMOND HEAD ROAD
HONOLULU, HAWAI'I 96816-4495

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 88
RELATING TO THE HAWAII NATIONAL GUARD

BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

BY

MAJOR GENERAL STEPHEN F. LOGAN
ADJUTANT GENERAL
AND DIRECTOR OF HAWAII EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

JANUARY 23, 2025

Aloha Chair Elefante, Vice-Chair Wakai, and members of the committee:

I am Major General Stephen Logan, Adjutant General and Director of Hawaii Emergency Management Agency, State of Hawaii, Department of Defense.

The Department of Defense provides written testimony in **SUPPORT** of SB88.

We sincerely appreciate the introduction of this measure and are in full concurrence of the bill's language, which ensures that all of our Hawaii National Guard (HING) servicemembers and their families have complete medical coverage that is equivalent with federal active duty when they are ordered to State Active Duty (SAD) for extended periods of time exceeding 30 days in support of the State.

We would like to share with the legislature that recent increase in natural disasters throughout the State have resulted in an increased number of HING servicemembers being ordered to SAD for extended periods. As a result, many servicemembers have been required to take indefinite leaves of absence from their civilian employment, which can create challenges regarding their healthcare coverage. While some civilian employers may choose to continue paying their employees' company-provided healthcare premiums during an absence, this is not universally the case. Consequently,

HING servicemembers risk losing their healthcare benefits after 30 days of being on SAD orders. This situation forces them to continuously evaluate their ability to serve without healthcare coverage or to seek termination of their SAD orders to maintain their company-provided healthcare for themselves and their families.

This bill will help ensure complete healthcare coverage for all HING servicemembers and their families, and support an uninterrupted HING response force capability to the State.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

MG Stephen F. Logan, Stephen.f.logan@hawaii.gov; 808-672-1001



FROM: Senior Master Sergeant (Retired) Maui Quizon, President, Hawaii National Guard Enlisted Association

TO: The Senate Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs

DATE: January 23, 2025

SUBJECT: Testimony on Senate Bill 88, Relating to the Hawaii National Guard

Aloha Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Chair Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

I am Maui Quizon, a retired Senior Master Sergeant, and Immediate Past President of the Hawaii National Guard Enlisted Association, a non-profit veterans organization dedicated to advocating for the welfare of over 4,600 enlisted soldiers and airmen of the Hawaii National Guard. I am submitting this written testimony in favor of HB2395. I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 88 (SB88). As a retired Hawaii National Guardsman, I have a profound appreciation for the sacrifices made by our service members and the importance of ensuring they receive the benefits they have earned. This bill represents a critical advancement in supporting our Hawaii National Guard personnel, particularly regarding healthcare coverage.

Healthcare Coverage for Our Guardsmen: One of the most significant aspects of SB88 is its provision to authorize the payment of allowances for TRICARE, TRICARE Dental Program, and vision coverage for all officers, warrant officers, and enlisted personnel of the Hawaii National Guard who are ordered to active duty for more than 30 days. This provision is crucial for several reasons:

1. **Ensuring Comprehensive Care:** Access to TRICARE and associated healthcare programs ensures that our service members and their families can receive comprehensive medical, dental, and vision care. Many Guardsmen face challenges when activating for extended periods, and this coverage alleviates some of the stress associated with ensuring their families are cared for while they serve.

2. **Promoting Readiness and Retention:** By providing these essential benefits, we enhance the overall readiness of our National Guard. When service members know that they and their families will have access to healthcare during their activation, they are more likely to commit fully to their duties. This not only improves morale but also helps retain talented individuals within our ranks.

3. **Supporting Transition to Civilian Life:** As service members transition back to civilian life, having access to TRICARE and other healthcare benefits can significantly ease this transition. Many veterans struggle with healthcare access after their service and ensuring that they have coverage during their active duty helps create a smoother path back to civilian life.

4. **Acknowledging Sacrifice:** This bill acknowledges the sacrifices made by our service members who are called to active duty. It recognizes that their commitment extends beyond their time in uniform, impacting their families and communities. Providing healthcare coverage is a necessary step in honoring that commitment.

In conclusion, I strongly urge you to support Senate Bill 88. By passing this bill, we are making a clear statement that we value the service of our Hawaii National Guard personnel and are committed to ensuring they receive the benefits they deserve. Access to TRICARE, dental, and vision coverage will not only support our service members but also strengthen the entire community. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

R. Maui Quizon

R. MAUI QUIZON, SMSgt (Retired), HIANG
President, Hawaii National Guard Enlisted Association

SB-88

Submitted on: 1/21/2025 2:41:10 PM

Testimony for PSM on 1/24/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mike Golojuch, Sr.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I definitely support SB88.

Mike Golojuch, Sr, Lt Col, USAF (Ret)

SB-88

Submitted on: 1/23/2025 9:48:15 AM

Testimony for PSM on 1/24/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Regina Komine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members,

I am Regina Komine, a supervisor of Hawaii Air National Guard members, and I am writing to express my strong support for Hawaii Senate Bill 88. I have seen firsthand the sacrifices that our Guardsmen and their families make to serve our community. I have witnessed the challenges that our Airmen face in balancing their military service with their civilian lives. As Hawaii Guardsmen we are part of this community, and we take pride in answering the states call in time of need despite the challenges and risks involved.

This bill will greatly help our member by providing medical, vision and dental coverage to them while they are on extended orders supporting State of Hawaii missions. It is extremely difficult as a supervisor to continue to send Airmen into potentially dangerous situations knowing that they may or may not have medical coverage. Or, trying to figure out how to get the individuals support after they've been injured while supporting a State mission when they didn't have medical coverage.

Mahalo for considering my testimony. I am confident that Hawaii SB88 will make a significant difference in the lives of our Guardsmen and their families, and I look forward to seeing this legislation become law.

Sincerely,

Regina Komine

SB-88

Submitted on: 1/23/2025 12:21:18 PM

Testimony for PSM on 1/24/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ricardo A. Martin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this initiative as it takes care of the citizen Airmen that sacrifice time away from their families and primary civilian employers to repond to state domestic emergenies. Community members who chose to serve and respond to such events need to be adequately compensated and provided benefits in the event they require medical or mental health services. Face it when the Guard responds it is typically in a time of great stress and need for the community and that requires a great level of support for someone to leave their daily life routine, family and employer to serve our great state. Please suppport and pass this bill.

SB-88

Submitted on: 1/23/2025 12:26:15 PM

Testimony for PSM on 1/24/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ty Tanaka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair and members of the Committee,

I strongly support SB88. Many members would like to support the State in times of crisis but lack of health coverage for themselves and family members prevents them from performing State Active Duty. When on State Active Duty some private companies suspend health care and the Guard member is out serving the State with no health insurance. Please support this Bill.

Mahalo,

Ty Tanaka

SB-88

Submitted on: 1/23/2025 1:31:45 PM

Testimony for PSM on 1/24/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Misty Capps	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair,

I strongly support SB88. This bill will greatly help me and my family by allowing me to have medical, vision, and dental coverage when I am on order supporting state disasters, such as the Maui Wildfires and the Big Island Lava Disaster. I have supported state disasters in the past and having the proper medical coverage while I am away helps me to focus on the mission at hand and not worry about my family back home or about being injured and not having medical coverage. Thank you for reading my statement. Your support is greatly appreciated.

-Misty Capps

SB-88

Submitted on: 1/23/2025 1:09:46 PM

Testimony for PSM on 1/24/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Darilyn Lee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair and members of the Committee,

I strongly support SB88. Please pass this bill so my family and I are medically covered when I am ordered to support the state during a hurricane or other disaster.

SB-88

Submitted on: 1/23/2025 12:27:21 PM

Testimony for PSM on 1/24/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ryan Shular	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am a Hawaii Air National Guard Officer who strongly supports SB88. For over six months, I was on staff with the Hawaii National Guard as we responded to the tragic Maui Wildfires. I can attest that more Tricare Reserve Select support would make a big difference towards the eagerness of our service members to commit to State Active Duty for an extended duration. I personally witnessed many members that converted to a non-pay status with their civilian jobs, and they had to find alternate health care, or pay out of pocket to maintain their premiums on their current policy. Considering that they were required to maintain their military medical readiness, having that TRS backing would be awesome.

Please consider supporting our local service members by approving SB88. Mahalo.

Sincerely,

Ryan Shular

SB-88

Submitted on: 1/23/2025 2:09:18 PM

Testimony for PSM on 1/24/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kevin Horton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Senator Elefante & Distinguished Senators,

As you know many of our Hawaii Army & Air National guard have been and are regularly called upon to serve their state in the face of natural disasters, which is really our great honor. Unfortunately, without your intervention this service comes at great cost to them and their family when they have to pay out of pocket or go without medical coverage during these periods of extended service. As such I Thank you for introducing and I express my support of SB88.

SB88 bill will greatly help our Guard members by providing medical, vision and dental coverage while they serve on orders supporting state disasters. Passage of this bill will financially help them as their full-time employer usually drops their medical coverage if they are on orders for over 30 days. Thank you for allowing me to testify. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Aloha

Col Kevin Horton

LATE

SB-88

Submitted on: 1/23/2025 4:12:47 PM

Testimony for PSM on 1/24/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dana Ayala	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair and members of the Committee,

I strongly support SB88. This bill will greatly help me and my family by providing medical, vision and dental coverage while I am on orders supporting state disasters. Passage of this bill will financially help me and my family as my full-time employer unfortunately drops my medical coverage if I am on orders for over 30 days. Thank you for allowing me to testimony. Your support is greatly appreciated.

LATE

SB-88

Submitted on: 1/23/2025 10:22:55 PM

Testimony for PSM on 1/24/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elzadia Kaina	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Sir/Ma'am,

Please support SB88. This bill allows medical care for me and my dependents when I am activated on State Active Duty to support our community.

Mahalo

LATE

SB-88

Submitted on: 1/24/2025 6:44:15 AM

Testimony for PSM on 1/24/2025 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Grant Remington	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for considering my testimony, and introducing this important bill before the senate. As a current member of the Hawaii National Guard who has responded multiple times to the State's need during a disaster, I am honored and humbled to be given the opportunity to serve Hawai'i and her people. Disaster response missions are never easy, but those of us who chose to volunteer our services to respond and act, do it with professionalism and pride each time we are called on. Injuries are not uncommon during these response missions, and having access to timely healthcare is not a guarantee. The inclusion of all uniformed National Guard members who serve more than 30 days in service to Hawai'i access to Tricare Reserve Select will allow those soldiers, airmen and guardians who don't have medical coverage the peace of mind that they will be taken care of during and after their mission is complete. Thank you for considering the bill and the effect it will have on your Hawai'i National Guard.