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KE KIA'ĀINA



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ADJUTANT GENERAL
KA 'AKUKANA KENELALA

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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 HOUSE BILL 674
RELATING TO THE HAWAII NATIONAL GUARD
BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

BY

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

JANUARY 31, 2025

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice-Chair Iwamoto, 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 HB674.

This measure amends the Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS), Chapter 121 and authorizes the use of State funds to pay for TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS), TRICARE Dental Program (TRD), and vision coverage for all officers, warrant officers, or enlisted personnel of the Hawaii National Guard (HING) servicemembers while serving on State Active Duty (SAD) for more than thirty days in service to the State.

The HING places significant emphasis on selfless service to the State of Hawai'i, as well as on the welfare of the dedicated women and men who comprise the HING and support the State during critical times. In light of the recent increase in natural disasters throughout the State, numerous HING servicemembers have been ordered to SAD for extended periods. This commitment has resulted in many servicemembers being 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, many 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. It is important to acknowledge that expecting HING servicemembers to serve the State on SAD without healthcare coverage is an unreasonable burden, particularly when they are already being asked to take an indefinite leave from their civilian jobs to support the State's emergency response efforts.

The proposed healthcare coverage solution represents a financially responsible approach for the State to provide support to HING servicemembers activated on SAD for more than 30 days. The individual monthly premium cost for medical, dental, and vision coverage is approximately \$73.66, in contrast to the State of Hawaii's monthly employer-sponsored cost for an individual plan, which is approximately \$529.60.

If passed, the bill will authorize the use of State funds, such as the Major Disaster Fund (MDF), to compensate HING servicemembers that require healthcare coverage for their health, dental, and vision enrollment cost during their activation on SAD for more than 30 days. This will help ensure healthcare coverage for HING servicemembers and an uninterrupted HING response force capability to the State, and the most cost-effective stewardship of State funds.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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

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

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 674
RELATING TO THE HAWAII NATIONAL GUARD
BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

BY

BRIGADIER GENERAL WALTER R. ROSS, JR.
DIRECTOR OF THE JOINT STAFF
HAWAII NATIONAL GUARD

JANUARY 29, 2025

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice-Chair Iwamoto, and members of the committee:

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

I am presenting this testimony in **SUPPORT** of HB674.

I strongly support HB674. Passing this bill is essential to ensure that Hawaii National Guard (HING) servicemembers receive the necessary medical coverage when they are called to serve on State Active Duty for more than thirty days, especially during disasters or domestic crises. Our HING servicemembers make significant sacrifices and often put their lives on the line to protect and serve our communities selflessly. They deserve this vital safeguard for their health and well-being.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

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

HB-674

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Testimony for PBS on 1/31/2025 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Teri Heede	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Come on....they deserve healthcare!