



JOSH GREEN, M. D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA

BRENNA H. HASHIMOTO
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR
KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA

BRIAN K. FURUTO
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMŌHALA LIMAHANA
235 S. BERETANIA STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-2437

Statement of
BRENNA H. HASHIMOTO
Director, Department of Human Resources Development

Before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE
Wednesday, February 12, 2025
2:00PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 329

In consideration of
HB755 HD1, RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE

Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Chun, and the members of the committee.

The Department of Human Resources Development (HRD) offers the following comments for HB755 HD1.

The purpose of HB755 HD1 is to:

1. Repeal Chapter 392 – Temporary Disability Insurance of the Hawaii Revised Statutes.
2. Require the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance payment of benefits.
3. Require the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to start receiving claims and paying benefits under the program.

HRD appreciates the intent to establish a family and medical leave insurance program; however, we have concerns regarding adding additional costs to an already generous benefits package for State employees and the potential impact to operations.

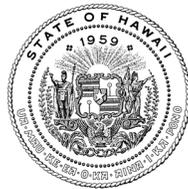
1. Most public sector employees are already afforded generous vacation and sick leave benefits. Employees can earn up to fourteen (14) hours of sick and vacation leave per month. There is no limit to the amount of sick leave that can be accumulated. Employees can accumulate up to 720 hours of vacation leave. By Chapter 398, HRS, employees are provided four (4) weeks of unpaid job protection leave. However, through collective bargaining, employees are allowed

to utilize their sick leave benefits for the entire duration. The only caveat is that the employee's sick leave balance may not go below the minimum requirement of fifteen (15) days to satisfy our self-insured temporary disability insurance plan. In addition, through the Federal Medical Leave Act (FMLA), eligible employees are provided with twelve (12) weeks of unpaid job protected leave. Employees may use vacation leave during the entire period to care for others. If for their own health/illness issues, employees can exhaust their sick leave balance and use any vacation leave balance if approved.

2. This bill would provide an extra 12 weeks of paid leave in addition to the employees' accrued vacation and sick leave benefits. HRD is concerned about the potential cost to the state and the impact this will have on operations and public services.

Should this measure advance, HRD recommends that the definition of employer not include the State or counties or any political subdivision.

We are available to answer any questions or provide further information as needed.



JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

LUIS P. SALAVERIA
DIRECTOR

SABRINA NASIR
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
Ka 'Oihana Mālama Mo'ohelu a Kālā
P.O. BOX 150
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT

WRITTEN ONLY

TESTIMONY BY LUIS P. SALAVERIA
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION AND COMMERCE
ON
HOUSE BILL NO. 755, H.D. 1

February 12, 2025
2:00 p.m.
Room 329 and Videoconference

RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

House Bill No. 755, H.D. 1, adds a new chapter in the HRS to establish the Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program, administered by the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR), to provide paid family and medical leave which shall begin collecting payroll contributions to finance the payment of benefits by January 1, 2028; specifies eligibility requirements and employee protections under the program; and requires DLIR to start receiving claims and payment benefits under the program by January 1, 2029.

The bill also establishes the Family and Medical Leave Trust Fund (FMLTF) to be administered by DLIR and all contributions pursuant to the new chapter shall be paid into the FMLTF and all benefits payable shall be paid from the FMLTF.

On January 1, 2026, the Director of Finance is authorized to transfer an unspecified amount of general funds to the FMLTF as a loan, and no later than December 31, 2030, DLIR shall repay the general fund loan.

B&F defers to DLIR on the overall merits of this proposal; however, B&F strongly recommends first conducting a feasibility/actuarial study of the impact of this program. B&F also believes it would be prudent to conduct an operational study of the resources DLIR would need to implement this measure before going forward with a major program implementation, such as this.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.



February 11, 2025

Testimony in Strong Support of HB755, Relating to Paid Family Leave

To: Representative Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair
Representative Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

From: Llasmin Chaine, LSW, Executive Director, Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women

Re: Testimony in Support of HB755, Relating to Paid Family Leave

Hearing: Wednesday, February 12, 2025, 2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

On behalf of the Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women, I would like to thank the committee for hearing this important bill. I would like to express my strong support of HB755, which establishes a paid family and medical leave (PFML) program in Hawai'i.

Recent research has shown, "a comprehensive paid family and medical leave program keeps people out of poverty. It means more people would stay financially stable when they experience health and caregiving needs, and it would help employers recruit and retain workers."¹

Currently, only about one in four private sector workers has access to paid family and medical leave.² **Lower-income workers in Hawai'i**—who are more likely to be Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander—are the least likely to have PFML, while **they need that financial support the most**. Women in Hawai'i are also disproportionately represented among low earners.³

HB755 includes parental, medical, caregiving, deployment and safe leave, which would benefit the state's working mothers and fathers, children, elderly, and the survivors of gender-based violence.

As PFML has been shown to benefit working adults and positively impact local businesses, I respectfully urge this Committee to pass HB755. Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony.

Llasmin Chaine, LSW, Executive Director, Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women

¹ News Release. (November 21, 2024). US Department of Labor Announces New Research that Underscores Benefits of Paid Family and Medical Leave. U.S. Department of Labor.

² Paid Leave Means a Stronger Hawai'i. (February 2025) National Partnership for Women & Families. <https://nationalpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/paid-leave-means-a-stronger-hawaii.pdf>

³ Inafuku, Rachel. (May 28, 2024) Exploring the Gender Pay Gap in Hawai'i. University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization. <https://uhero.hawaii.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/ExploringGenderPayGapinHawaii.pdf>



STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
KA 'OIHANA PONO LIMAHANA

February 12, 2025

To: The Honorable Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair,
The Honorable Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair, and
Members of the House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Date: Wednesday, February 12, 2025
Time: 2:00 p.m.
Place: Conference Room 329, State Capitol

From: Jade T. Butay, Director
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR)

Re: H.B. 755 HD1 RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE

I. OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION

The DLIR **appreciates the intent** of this measure to establish paid family and medical leave but does not support the repeal of the TDI Law and notes the bill may jeopardize the Hawaii Prepaid Health Care Act's exemption from preemption under ERISA.

HB755 HD1 proposes to add a new chapter to establish a family and medical leave insurance program by collecting payroll contributions by January 1, 2028 and receiving claims and paying benefits by January 1, 2029. The proposal includes:

- A family and medical leave trust fund supported by employer and employee contributions to fund benefits and the administration of the program.
- An option for the employer to charge employees up to half of the cost of providing the family leave insurance premiums.
- Partial wage replacement to covered individuals, including self-employed individuals that opt to participate, for up to 12 weeks of family leave insurance benefits and 26 weeks of medical leave insurance benefits per benefit year.
- Weekly benefit of 90% of the employee's average weekly wage if the employee earns up to half (currently \$595.75) the State average weekly wage. As an individual's weekly wage increases above half the State average weekly wage, the portion of the wage greater than half the State average weekly wage would be compensated at a lower percentage. The

maximum weekly benefit is the State average weekly wage (currently \$1191.50).

- Family leave insurance benefits when caring for a child after the birth, adoption, or placement of the child; caring for a family member or designated individual with a serious health condition; caring for a service member who is the covered individual's next of kin; the individual's family member is on active duty in the armed forces or is notified of impending active duty service; and when the individual who is a victim of domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking needs leave for medical care, victim services, court appearances, or relocation.
- Medical leave insurance benefits for individuals unable to work due to serious health conditions that are not caused by work.
- Employment protection and restoration of benefits, pay, and other terms and conditions for eligible employees.
- Appropriation of an unspecified amount to the fund of which an unspecified amount must be repaid.

The bill would also:

- Repeal Chapter 392, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), the Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) law.
- Repeal Subpart B of part VI of Chapter 378, HRS, Victims Leave.
- Remove references to Chapter 392, HRS, from the following statutes: Section 41D-2, Section 103D-310, Section 393-3, Section 398-4, and Section 431:10-244, HRS.
- Amend the title of part VI, subpart C of Chapter 378, HRS and repealing various definitions from Chapter 378-71, HRS.

II. CURRENT LAW

Chapter 398, HRS, Hawaii Family Leave Law (HFLL) provides four weeks of protected leave for employees of employers with 100 or more employees, for the birth or adoption of the employee's child, or to care for the employee's child, spouse, reciprocal beneficiary, sibling, grandchild, or parent with a serious health condition. The law does not provide leave for the employee's own serious health condition. In general, family leave is unpaid, unless the employee elects to substitute any of their accrued paid leaves, for any part of the four-week period.

Chapter 392, HRS, requires Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) benefits to be paid to a qualified employee for up to 26 weeks while the employee is disabled due to the employee's non-industrial illness or injury.

Prepaid Health Care Law (PHC), Chapter 393, HRS, requires employers to continue the employee's coverage by contributing to the premium the amounts

paid by the employer toward such premium prior to the employee's sickness for the period that the employee is hospitalized or prevented by sickness from working for no more than three months following the month during which the employee became hospitalized or disabled from working, or the period the employer has undertaken the payment of the employee's regular wages, whichever is longer.

The Social Security Act requires states that administer unemployment insurance programs to comply and conform with federal law, including the use of unemployment insurance grant funding for the administration and operations of the federal-state unemployment insurance program.

Section 383-95, HRS, prohibits the disclosure of unemployment information in the absence of a written agreement.

Section 383-37, HRS, specifies that unemployment insurance appeals will be heard by an impartial referee.

III. COMMENTS ON THE HOUSE BILL

The DLIR is concerned about the repeal of the TDI Law that covers both private and public sector workers. In addition to questions about how the repeal would affect TDI claims effective prior to the start of the family and medical leave insurance benefits, the weekly benefit amount under the family and medical leave insurance program could be less than the weekly benefit provided by TDI because of differences between the programs regarding the percentage of wages replaced and the method for calculating the individual's average weekly wage.

The DLIR also believes subsection-7(c) (Pg. 15, line 16 to Pg. 16 line 4) conflicts with the Prepaid Health Care Act as it requires the employer to provide health care benefits from the date the covered individual commenced the leave until the date the family and medical leave insurance benefits terminate whereas the Prepaid Law only obligates the employer to continue health care coverage for up to three months notwithstanding the proposed (b) and (c) of the proposed section -7 (Pages 15 & 16). Section 7 of the proposal also modifies Chapter 393.

If the intent is for the family and medical leave insurance program to rely on data from the Unemployment Insurance (UI) Division, the proposal has the potential to impact the operations of the UI Division and its ability to comply with federal law. Federal law requires that UI programs adhere to stringent standards, including maintaining the confidentiality of UI information and ensuring that such information is used strictly for its original purpose. These requirements mandate that any information obtained from workers, employers, or other parties during the administration of the unemployment program must remain confidential. Disclosure is only permitted if an authorized agency enters into a formal written agreement with the department. Additionally, any costs incurred by the UI Division for

providing data, technology, or personnel resources must be fully reimbursed under federal cost allocation rules.

The department estimates that approximately 120 staff would be required to implement and administer this program. Staffing is needed for employer account registration; contribution intake and processing; cashiering, delinquency, collection, and compliance; fund monitoring and compliance; claims intake and adjudication; payment processing and disbursement; complaint intake and processing; hearings and adjudication; information technology support; and administrative staff support.

For comparison, Colorado began paying benefits on January 1, 2024, from its Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program (FAMLI). The program pays up to 12 weeks of benefits for family and medical leave reasons and up to 4 additional weeks are available for pregnancy or childbirth complications. As of January 1, 2025, \$687,746,050 has been distributed with an average weekly benefit payment of \$914¹. 80,500 applications were submitted to care for one's own serious health condition and 61,000 applications were submitted to bond with a new child. When leave was taken continuously, the average duration of leave was 51.7 days.

The department also notes the following.

- Annually determining the amount of payroll contributions necessary to provide benefits and administer the program would be challenging for the department, especially as it currently does not do so for any other existing program as required by subsection (b) on Page 13, lines 5 to 11.
- The procurement and development of an information technology system to implement and administer the program would require substantial resources and time to develop and implement.
- The benefit amount is based on the wages earned prior to the submission of the application. The department requests clarification about whether the benefit amount must be recalculated after a subsequent application is filed within an existing benefit year.
- The department notes that if the individual files a claim for family leave insurance in advance of the period of absence, the weekly benefit will be based on the wages earned prior to the filing of the application and will exclude wages earned during the week of the application until the leave begins.
- Unlike TDI, the medical leave insurance benefit will not have a one-week waiting period for benefits to begin so the medical leave insurance program may have more compensable claims than current TDI plans.

¹ <https://famli.colorado.gov/resources/famli-by-the-numbers>

- A person must meet a minimum number of weeks of employment to be a covered individual. Since the weeks of employment can occur any time in the 12 months prior to the claim including the weeks immediately prior to the claim, the department would need employers to promptly report current info about weeks work so eligibility can be determined whenever claims are filed.
- The individual's weekly benefit amount is based on the wages individual earned in the 12 months prior to the claim. The department would need employers to promptly report earned wage information immediately after the end of a month so the benefit amount can be determined promptly.
- The requirement to pay benefits within 2 weeks of the claim and every two weeks thereafter may conflict with the requirement that benefits not be paid until the individual accumulates at least 8 hours of family and medical leave benefits.
- The benefit amount must be coordinated with paid leave from the employer, if the covered individual receives paid leave compensated at less than the employee's usual pay. The bill should require the employer to report the relevant information to the department within a specified period so the family or medical leave insurance payment, if any, can be paid promptly without overpayment.
- It could be difficult to verify the self-employed individual's income and weeks worked.
- The department requests clarification on whether Section -7 (Pages 14-16) applies and what the employer's requirements and rights are if an individual is not entitled to family leave insurance benefits or medical leave insurance benefits; is disqualified due to a false statement or misrepresentation or failure to report a material fact; or the claim is rejected after benefits are paid.



JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR OF Hawaii
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I

KENNETH FINK, MD, MGA, MPH
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KA LUNA Holocene

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STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON AGING
NO. 1 CAPITOL DISTRICT
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HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-2831

Testimony in SUPPORT of HB755 HD1
RELATING to PAID FAMILY LEAVE

COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION AND COMMERCE
REP. SCOT Z. MATAYOSHI, CHAIR
REP. CORY M. CHUN, VICE-CHAIR

Testimony of Caroline Cadirao
Director, Executive Office on Aging
Attached Agency to the Department of Health

Hearing: Wednesday, February 12, 2025, 2:00 P.M., Conference Room 329

1 **EOA Position:** The Executive Office on Aging (EOA), an attached agency to the Department of

2 Health (DOH) **supports HB755 HD1.**

3 **Fiscal Implications:** No appropriation is included in the measure.

4 **Purpose and Justification:** This measure requires the Department of Labor and Industrial

5 Relations (DLIR) to establish and administer a family and medical leave insurance program and

6 begin collecting payroll contributions by 1/1/2028; requires DLIR to start receiving claims and

7 paying benefits by 1/1/2029; and specifies eligibility requirements and employee protections

8 under the program.

9 According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics most working people in the United

10 States do not have paid family leave through their jobs, including about 75 percent, about

1 508,000 workers, in Hawai'i. Even unpaid leave under the federal Family and Medical Leave
2 Act is inaccessible for 69 percent of Hawai'i residents.

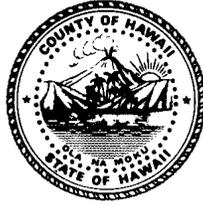
3 Between 2020 and 2030 the population of those age sixty-five and over is expected to
4 increase significantly by 22.5%. As Hawai'i's aging population continues to rise many
5 caregivers' struggle to balance full or part-time work with caring for their loved one. A paid
6 family leave program would provide a work/life balance for caregivers.

7 Paid family leave benefits employers as well. Workers with family leave are more likely
8 to return to work after their leave is over. Studies have shown that paid family leave increases
9 worker productivity and retention rates. Thirteen states and the District of Columbia have passed
10 family leave laws. States with family leave have seen significant health, social, and economic
11 benefits. Implementing a state paid family and medical leave program benefits businesses and
12 workers.

13 **Recommendation:** EOA supports this measure and defers to the DLIR for the development and
14 implementation of the program.

15 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Jennifer Kagiwada
Council Member District 2 South Hilo



Office: (808) 961-8272
jennifer.kagiwada@hawaiicounty.gov

HAWAI‘I COUNTY COUNCIL - DISTRICT 2
25 Aupuni Street • Hilo, Hawai‘i 96720

DATE: February 10, 2025
TO: House Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce
FROM: Jennifer Kagiwada, Council Member
Council District 2
SUBJECT: HB 755

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Chun, and Committee Members,

I am writing to you in support of HB 755 which will establish a family and medical leave insurance program. In 2018, only 17 percent of workers in the United States had access to paid family leave through their employers. Women, who are often the primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents, are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family leave. No one should have to sacrifice their financial well-being to care for their keiki or kupuna. The majority of Hawai‘i’s workforce cannot afford to take unpaid leave to care for a new child or assist a family member with a serious health condition. Hawai‘i law only provides a four-week extension of unpaid leave to employees of large employers with more than one hundred employees.

All workers deserve access to family leave, which is essential in allowing parents to care for newborn keiki and family members who are seriously ill. Hawai‘i has one of the fastest growing populations over the age of 65 in the nation. From 2020 to 2030, the percentage of people aged 65 and over is expected to increase to 22.5 percent of the state’s population. Nearly one-third of workers who do not have access to family leave will need time off to care for an ill spouse or elderly parent. Multiple studies have shown that family leave programs can be established in a manner that is affordable for small businesses and our state. When medical emergencies arise, no one should be forced to choose between caring for their loved ones or earning a paycheck.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jenn Kagiwada".

Jenn Kagiwada



Where LGBTQIA+ Rights Meet the Labor Movement
A constituency group of the Hawai'i State AFL-CIO

February 10, 2025

House's Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Hearing: Wednesday, February 12, 2025 at 2:00 PM

RE: **SUPPORT the Intent for House Bill 755 HD 1**

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice-Chair Chun and fellow committee members,

Pride at Work – Hawai'i is an official chapter of [Pride at Work](#) which is a national nonprofit organization that represents LGBTQIA+ union members and their allies. We are an officially recognized constituency group of the AFL-CIO that organizes mutual support between the organized Labor Movement and the LGBTQIA+ Community to further social and economic justice.

Pride at Work - Hawai'i submits this testimony in support of the intent of House Bill 755 HD 1, which establishes a family and medical leave insurance program to provide essential benefits to Hawaii's workforce. By creating a sustainable, paid leave system, this bill ensures that workers will no longer have to choose between financial stability and taking time off to care for a loved one or recover from a serious illness.

As an organization dedicated to advocating for the rights and well-being of LGBTQIA+ workers and their families, we recognize that access to paid family and medical leave is critical for our community. Many LGBTQIA+ individuals rely on chosen family rather than traditional family structures for caregiving support. Without paid leave protections, these workers are disproportionately at risk of financial hardship when they need to care for a partner, child, or aging family member.

While we support the overall intent of HB 755, we strongly believe that the cost of this program should not fall on the shoulders of workers. **Healthy employees with Paid Family Leave are productive employees**, and it is in the best interest of employers and the state to invest in a system that supports workforce well-being without placing additional financial burdens on workers.

The need for paid family and medical leave is more urgent than ever. Hawaii's working families, especially those from marginalized communities, deserve the peace of mind that they will be supported during life's most challenging moments. States that have implemented similar programs have seen positive economic and social benefits, including increased workforce participation and improved health outcomes for workers and their families.

We urge the committee to amend HB 755 HD 1 to ensure that workers are not responsible for funding this crucial program. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of the intent of this important legislation.

In solidarity,

Michael Golojuch, Jr. (he/him)
President
[Pride at Work – Hawai'i](#)



HIPHI Board

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HIPHI Initiatives

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Community-Based Research &
Evaluation

Community Health
Worker Initiatives

COVID-19 Response

Environmental Health

Hawai'i Drug & Alcohol-Free Coalitions

Hawai'i Farm to School Network

Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition

Hawai'i Public Health Training Hui

Healthy Eating + Active Living

Kūpuna Collective/Healthy Aging &
Community Living

Public Health Workforce Development

Date: February 10, 2025

To: Representative Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair
Representative Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce

RE: Support for HB 755, HD1, Relating to Paid Family Leave

Hrg: Wednesday, February 12, 2025, at 2:00 PM, Conference Room 329

The Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) Coalition, convened by the Hawai'i PublicHealth Institute, **supports HB 755, HD1**, relating to paid family leave. This bill would provide employees with up to 12 weeks of paid family leave by establishing a family and medical leave insurance program within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, which would be funded through payroll contributions.¹

It is time for Hawai'i to pass a strong family leave insurance program. Employees need paid time off to care for a newborn, newly adopted or foster child, ill family member, or other unexpected health emergency. Paid family leave guarantees that employees can cover their basic living costs, while also providing care to family members when they need it most. Thirteen states and Washington, D.C., have passed similar legislation providing partial wage replacement for family and medical leave purposes.²

Improved Health for Mothers and Babies

Studies have shown that paid family leave is associated with a reduced risk for medical conditions that put children at risk. For example, a 2015 study in the Journal of Health Economics found that paid family leave was correlated with a 3.2 percent reduced risk of being low birthweight and a 6.6 percent lower risk of an "early term" or premature birth.

Paid family leave is essential in uplifting the health of parents and infants. It has been linked with improved blood pressure, healthier BMI, and less pain in mothers. Researchers found that infants of women with paid leave are 47 percent less likely, and mothers themselves are 51 percent less likely, to end up back in the hospital after birth compared to women without access to paid family leave or other paid leave programs.³

¹<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/the-state-of-paid-family-and-medical-leave-in-the-u-s-in-2023>

² <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0167629615000533>

³ <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10995-017-2393-x>



Financial Stability

Studies have found that paid family leave significantly impacts the economic⁴ security of families after a child is born. A 2019 report published in Social Science Review concluded that for families of 1-year-old children, paid family leave decreased the risk of poverty by an estimated 10.2 percent and increased household income by an estimated 4.1 percent. The analysis found that these gains were especially concentrated for low-income mothers, who have fewer social supports for caregiving than more affluent families.

Kūpuna Care

As our kūpuna population continues to grow, paid family leave will be a vital tool in empowering families to care for their loved ones without jeopardizing their financial well-being. Our state has a rapidly aging population. According to the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism, almost one in five residents is now at age 65 or older and more than one-third of all households include at least one person age 65 or older.⁵ The elderly population is expected to continue increasing at a much faster rate than the overall population until 2030, when all baby boomers will be over the age of 65.

We support HB 755, HD1, and urge your committee to pass this important measure.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Nate Hix'.

Nate Hix
Director of Policy and Advocacy

⁴ <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/703138>

⁵ https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/economic/reports/Elderly_Population_in_Hawaii-Housing_Dec2021.pdf



UNITED PUBLIC WORKERS

AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THE THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2025**

COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE

Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair

Rep. Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 12, 2025, 2:00 PM
Conference Room 329 & Videoconference

Re: Testimony on HB755, HD1 – RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE

Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Chun, and Members of the Committee:

The United Public Workers, AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO (“UPW”) is the exclusive bargaining representative for approximately 14,000 public employees, which includes blue collar, non-supervisory employees in Bargaining Unit 1 and institutional, health, and correctional employees in Bargaining Unit 10, in the State of Hawaii and various counties.

UPW **opposes** HB755, HD1, which by 1/1/2028, requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (“DLIR”) to establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance payment of benefits. Additionally, this measure specifies that by 1/1/2029, DLIR is required to start receiving claims and paying benefits under the program. This bill further specifies eligibility requirements and employee protections under the program.

We strongly believe that paid family and medical leave is a benefit that employers can and should provide to their workforce to remain in step with evolving trends in the labor market. Hawaii’s public employees are currently saddled with substantial payroll deductions for health plans offered by the Employer-Union Health Trust Fund as well as mandatory contributions to the Employees’ Retirement System. An additional, yet to be determined payroll deduction for a benefit that our members may not utilize could prove to be a significant financial burden for those who are lower income earners. As a result, what is intended to serve as an employee benefit may prove to serve as a deterrent to employment in the public sector.

UPW appreciates that intention of this bill, but we simply cannot support legislation that would result in additional financial burden for our membership. This is a benefit that should be fully paid by the employer.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify on this measure.

HEADQUARTERS

1426 North School Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817-1914
Phone 808.847.2631

HAWAII

362 East Lanikaula Street
Hilo, Hawaii 96720-4336
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Toll Free - Molokai/Lanai only



To: House Committee on Consumer Protections and Commerce
Hearing: February 12, 2025, 2:00 p.m., Rm.329
Re: SUPPORT of HB755 HD1 Relating to Paid Family Leave

Dear CPC Chair Scot Matayoshi, Vice Chair Cory Chun and Committee Members,

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in **support of HB755 HD1** which would create an insurance plan to allow workers to receive paid family and medical leave.

The United States remains the only industrialized nation in the world without paid family leave. By establishing paid family leave, Hawai'i would join the states of California, Colorado, Connecticut, D.C., Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin who have paid family leave.

The Federal Family Leave and Medical Leave Act was passed in 1993 and provides leave but no wage replacement. For many lower income workers, it is economically impossible to take sufficient time off for the birth of a baby or to care for a family member. This burden falls heavily on women who are more likely to be family care givers and heads of single parent households.

Please pass HB755 HD1.

Sincerely,

Amy Monk

Legislative Volunteer, Indivisible Hawaii

We're a grassroots movement of thousands of local Indivisible groups with a mission to elect progressive leaders, rebuild our democracy, and defeat the Trump agenda. In Hawai'i, we have ten groups across four islands, representing over a thousand pro-democracy citizens.



Testimony to the House Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce
Wednesday, February 12, 2025
2:00 p. m.
State Capitol Conference Room 329 and via videoconference

Re: HB 755 HD 1 Relating to Paid Family Leave

Dear Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Chun, and Honorable Members of the House Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce:

I am Gary Simon, a member of the board of the Hawai'i Family Caregiver Coalition, whose mission is to improve the quality of life of those who give and receive care by increasing community awareness of caregiver issues through continuing advocacy, education, and training. I am offering testimony on behalf of the Hawai'i Family Caregiver Coalition.

The Hawai'i Family Caregiver Coalition strongly supports HB 755 HD 1, which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance payment of benefits by January 1, 2028; requires the Department to start receiving claims and paying benefits under the program by January 1, 2029; and specifies eligibility requirements and employee protections under the program.

Up to 40 percent of people in the workforce are not eligible for leave under the Family Medical Leave Act — and many cannot afford to take unpaid leave. Lack of paid family leave can lead to financial strain and negative workplace impacts for caregivers. Paid leave programs result in better health outcomes and lower overall health care system costs.

We urge you to support paid family leave and HB 755 HD 1, and we urge you to recommend its passage.

Mahalo for seriously considering the bill.

Very sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Simon".

Gary Simon



Email gsimon@aarp.org



Andy Huang, Chairman – L&L Hawaiian Barbecue Ave Kwok, Past Chair – Jade Dynasty Seafood Restaurant
Mike Palmer, Incoming Chair – Ho'okipa Partners Tambara Garrick, Treasurer – Hawaii Farm Project
Victor Lim, Government Relations Lead – McDonald's | Mail: 2909 Wai'ala'e Avenue #22, Honolulu, HI 96826

Sheryl Matsuoka, President & CEO Ginny Wright, Operations Associate Holly Kessler, Vice President of Operations

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Date: February 10, 2025

To: Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair
Rep. Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

From: Victor Lim, Legislative Lead

Subj: HB755 Relating to Paid Family Leave

The Hawaii Restaurant Association representing 4,000 Eating and Drinking Place locations stand opposed to HB 755 that requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family and medical leave insurance program by 1/1/2028

Since Covid, our economy has gone very soft and continues to be very challenging for our industry with many legacy restaurants continuing to go out of business. This new additional mandate to businesses will be like a sledgehammer to our small and medium business because that is also when our current state minimum wage is scheduled to reach \$18/hr. This will not just be a major cost increase for the Hawaii businesses but also further fuel the inflation index for everyone here in Hawaii.

Many restaurants currently offer Paid Time Off for their employees that allows employees to earn time off for various needs as they choose. If this bill passes, we will be forced to reduce or eliminate many benefits like free and discount meals and Paid Time Offs. The bill as it is written also provides very little information as to what the actual premium and costs to the businesses.

The fallacy that businesses can afford all of these mandates and have unlimited resources to fund all the social wants is not a reality. Just managing mandated medical and general insurance cost increases already put many of us in a bind.

Thank you for this opportunity to share our concerns.



COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE

Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair

Rep. Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair

BILL HB755

POSITION: SUPPORT

Hearing Date: Wednesday, February 12, 2:00 PM, Conference Room 329

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Chun, and Committee Members:

Aloha United Way and the ALICE Initiative support HB755, which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance payment of benefits.

Aloha United Way and agencies in the ALICE initiative support this bill to create a state system on paid family leave, which will increase income and employment opportunity for ALICE families. **ALICE** stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. ALICE are our households who are employed but whose incomes are not sufficient to meet basic costs.

The new **2024 State of ALICE in Hawaii report found that 40% of our State's residents are ALICE**. and even a short break in paid work to care for a family member can mean economic uncertainty for too many of Hawaii's families, and often mean an unnecessary departure from the workforce, economic hardship, and sometimes loss of housing.

This can be done by adapting existing systems, and by replacing the TDI pay in with a small increase in per paycheck pay-in, Hawaii can build a much-needed and economically positive safety net for workers when they need to take time from their paid role to care for a family member. Furthermore, in states with paid family leave, businesses report improved employee retention rates and no or positive impacts on their business' performance and profitability.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your action to support ALICE families and pass HB755.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Michelle Bartell in blue ink.

Michelle Bartell
President & CEO
Aloha United Way

Handwritten signature of Suzanne Skjold in blue ink.

Suzanne Skjold
Chief Operating Officer
Aloha United Way



Date: February 10, 2025

To: House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce
Representative Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair
Representative Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair
And members of the Committee

From: Early Childhood Action Strategy

Re: Support for HB755, which would establish a family and medical leave insurance program

Early Childhood Action Strategy (ECAS) is a statewide cross-sector collaborative designed to improve the system of care for Hawai'i's youngest children and their families. ECAS partners work to align priorities for children prenatal to age eight, streamline services, maximize resources, and improve programs to support our youngest keiki.

ECAS strongly supports passage of HB755, which would establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance payment of benefits.

Paid family and medical leave provides working 'ohana with **paid time off from work** to care for and bond with a new keiki or to address caregiving needs for loved ones. Paid family and medical leave supports workers in **balancing work and family responsibilities** by allowing workers to take time off **without sacrificing income**.

Working families don't get to choose when or how medical needs happen - but they need to preserve their incomes and work stability when issues arise. The average income household of \$62,000/year would contribute only about \$4/week in payroll deductions to PFML, and would be able to receive over \$900/week in benefits when eligible. Our economy can be stronger if we support workers through programs that help them obtain and stay at their jobs while being able to care for themselves and their families.

Here in Hawai'i, where most 'ohana are **living paycheck to paycheck**, it is critical that our state provide such support for our communities so that **'ohana are able to thrive and not just survive**.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony **in support of HB755** which would establish a family and medical leave insurance program. This measure will help all of the people working hard to raise keiki here in Hawai'i.



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facebook.com/AARPHawaii

The State Legislature
House Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce
Wednesday, February 12, 2025
Conference Room 329, 2:00 p.m.

TO: The Honorable Scot Matayoshi, Chair
FROM: Keali'i Lopez, State Director, AARP Hawaii
RE: Strong Support for H.B. 755, HD1 -Relating to Paid Family Leave

Aloha Chair Matayoshi and Members of the Committee:

I am Keali'i Lopez, State Director for AARP Hawai'i. AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, social impact organization dedicated to empowering people 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. We advocate at the state and federal level for the issues that matter most to older adults and their families. On behalf of our nearly 135,000 members statewide, we thank you for the opportunity to share our testimony.

AARP is in strong support of H.B. 755, HD1 which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance payment of benefits that will allow workers to receive paid leave to care for a loved one at home.

As noted in AARP's 2023 report, *Valuing the Invaluable: Strengthening Supports for Family Caregivers*, an estimated 154,000 family caregivers in Hawai'i provide \$2.6 billion of unpaid care. Many of these caregivers work full- or part-time jobs while supporting their loved ones. Nationally 60% of family caregivers of adults worked either full-time or part-time in 2023. 40% of caregivers cite the emotional stress of juggling caregiving with paid work as biggest challenge. Many of these family caregivers, including adults sandwiched between caring for older family members and children at home, are struggling to manage both their caregiving responsibilities and the jobs they need. 30% of all caregivers are caring for two generations. Many family caregivers must cut back their work hours or even leave the workforce to care for loved ones. Career disruptions and breaks due to caregiving can lead to substantial economic risk and even long-term financial struggles for caregivers.

H.B. 755, HD1 will provide support for working family caregivers to better balance their job and family responsibilities, reducing their stress and allowing them to better support their loved ones. Establishing a paid family leave program in Hawaii would allow workers to take time off and still receive part of their income when they need to care for the health needs of their loved

one(s), or to bond with a new child. Paid leave would provide a critical lifeline to working family caregivers, yet just 21 percent of workers have paid family leave through their jobs.¹

H.B. 755, HD1 also supports Hawaii businesses. A Paid Family Leave Program in Hawaii will benefit workers, employers, and the economy by helping family caregivers remain at their jobs. According to AARP's Valuing the Invaluable report, "when caregivers are unable to continue balancing work and caregiving responsibilities, employers are faced with the loss of valuable, experienced workers and the cost of hiring new employees."

Results of a 2024 AARP Hawaii survey of voters 40 years of age and older, indicated that most voters (88%) support some amount of paid family leave for working family caregivers. And a majority of voters (56%) want government to do more to support family caregivers. H.B. 755 demonstrates Hawaii's commitment to helping working Hawaii residents and their families, supporting small businesses and will benefit workers, employers, and the economy by helping family caregivers remain at their jobs. H.B. 755 comes to the Thirty Third Legislature after years of hard work to propose an effective program that will fit our state. We urge you to vote in favor of H.B. 755 so that Hawaii can finally support our working family caregivers.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify in **Strong Support of H.B. 755, HD1.**

¹ US. Bureau of Labor Statistics and U.S. Department of Labor. (2020, September) National Compensation Survey: Employee Benefits in the United States, March 2020, Table 31: Leave Benefits. Retrieved 15 July 2021 from <https://www.bls.gov/ncs/ebs/benefits/2020/employee-benefits-in-the-united-states-march-2020.pdf>



HB 755, HD1, RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE

FEBRUARY 12, 2025 · CPC HEARING

POSITION: Support.

RATIONALE: Imua Alliance supports HB 755, HD1, relating to paid family leave, which by 1/1/2028, requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance payment of benefits; by 1/1/2029, requires the Department to start receiving claims and paying benefits under the program; and specifies eligibility requirements and employee protections under the program.

It is time to *finally* establish a family leave insurance program for Hawai'i's workers that provides paid time off to address family emergencies, including care for newborn keiki and kūpuna care. Once effectuated, family leave insurance should also provide progressive wage replacement, allowing low-income workers to receive a higher percentage of their weekly wages (ideally, up to 90 percent) to make the benefit accessible to everyone.

Hawai'i's workers need this benefit. In a 2017 public poll, 62 percent of Hawaii respondents reported that they had wanted to take leave in the past in order to care for a new child or family member. Currently, though, only one in four private sector workers has access to paid family and medical leave. Lower-income workers in Hawai'i, who are more likely to be Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, are the least likely to have paid family leave, while they need support the most.

The federal Family Medical Leave Act (which leaves out 40 percent of the state's workforce) provides for only *unpaid* leave with up to 12 weeks for employers with 50 or more employees. The

Hawai'i Family Leave Law (HFLL) only applies to employers with 100 or more employees and provides up to four weeks of *unpaid* leave to workers.

Hawai'i has the fastest growing aging population in the nation. Our senior (age 65+) population is expected to grow 81 percent by 2030. Our state currently has 154,000 unpaid caregivers providing care to kūpuna or seriously ill adult relatives, which can lead to financial and emotional strain. Hawai'i caregivers provide 144 million hours of unpaid care a year, worth \$2.6 billion annually. Notably, 34,898 residents of Hawai'i moved to states that passed paid leave laws in 2021, further showing our population's desire for family leave support.

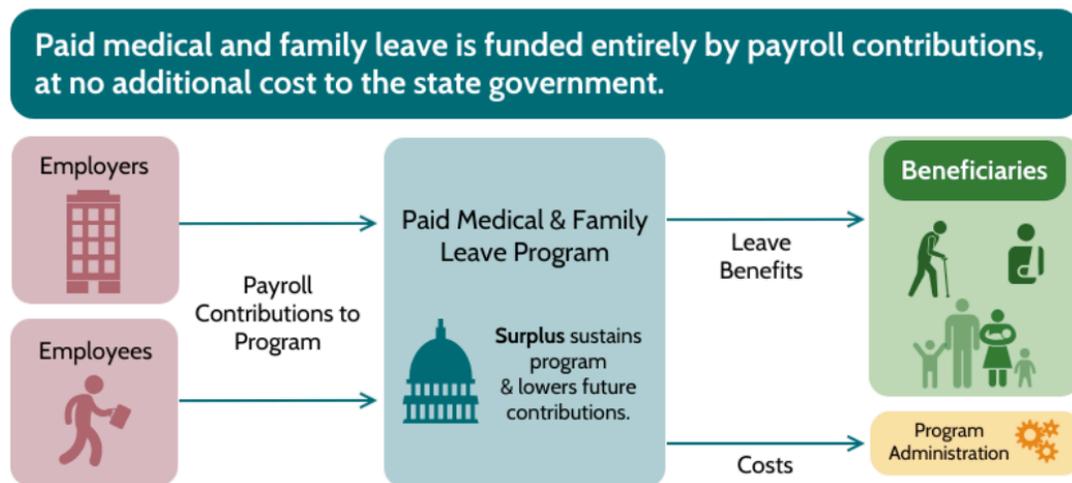
This program would help Hawaii's businesses. Family leave insurance increases worker retention and loyalty. Workers who have access to family leave benefits are more likely to return to work after their leave is over. In a 10-year study of the California family leave insurance program, businesses reported that family leave had either a positive or a neutral effect on their business. Small businesses were less likely than large businesses to report any negative effects.

Statewide paid family and medical leave also helps even the playing field for small businesses. Most small businesses cannot afford to offer adequate paid family and medical leave to their employees, which puts them at a disadvantage in attracting and retaining the best workers. Under a statewide paid family and medical leave program, however, small payroll deductions would go into a state fund, which workers would apply to when they need to take leave. A survey conducted by the small business advocacy organization Small Business Majority revealed that two-thirds of small business owners support paid family and medical leave.

Providing paid time off for family caregiving strongly promotes gender equity. Women are often disproportionately impacted by the lack of paid leave, as they are the primary caregivers of infants, children, and aging parents. The lack of paid family leave exacerbates the gender wage gap for women and adversely impacts the economic stability of both male and female caregivers. Most working mothers who give birth can get partial pay through Hawai'i Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) to recover from childbirth, but TDI cannot be used by non-birth parents or to care for other family members.

We know this can work in Hawai'i. Top experts on family leave have studied the usage, cost, and feasibility of implementing a family leave insurance program for the islands. Multiple studies have been performed about the establishment of family leave for Hawai'i, all of which have found that paid family leave is a cost-effective way for workers to take adequate time off to care for their families without facing financial ruin or jeopardizing their careers, and that a statewide program can be implemented without significant cost to the state.

According to a study conducted by Prenatal-to-3 Policy Impact Center at Vanderbilt University, instituting paid family leave in Hawai'i would cost just 0.7 percent of payroll. **A worker earning \$62,000/year would pay \$217 per year in premiums for a return of \$930 per week in benefits.** Critically, the cost to administer a paid family leave program is minimal according to the Vanderbilt analysis, at between \$8 million and \$10 million, **which would be entirely financed through revenue generated by premiums paid by workers and/or employers.**



It's a stark reality when employees face the dire choice of caring for newborn or sick children, spouses, or parents or working to sustain their family's income. We must offer a smart, affordable solution that empowers workers to care for their families, while preserving their incomes.

Contact us at imuaalliance.org/contact.



HOUSE BILL 755, HD1, RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE

FEBRUARY 12, 2025 · CPC HEARING

POSITION: Support.

RATIONALE: The Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus **supports** HB 755, HD1, relating to paid family leave, which by 1/1/2028, requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance payment of benefits; by 1/1/2029, requires the Department to start receiving claims and paying benefits under the program; and specifies eligibility requirements and employee protections under the program.

Hawai'i needs to pass paid family leave to uplift hardworking families. Here is why.

Paid family leave saves the lives of our keiki. A study published in *Contemporary Economic Policy* in October of 2022 found that when California mandated six weeks of paid parental leave from 2004 to 2008, 339 fewer infant deaths occurred on average when compared with states that did not mandate paid parental leave. The researchers estimated that three months of paid parental leave for the whole U.S. would save nearly one thousand infant lives per year.

Another study published in *Children and Youth Services Review* in 2020 concluded in 35 countries that belong to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) that have launched or expanded paid leave policies, paid leave was associated with a decrease in mortality

of infants and all children under 5. Specifically, paid maternity leave was associated with a 5.2 percent decrease in newborn death rates, a 2.4 percent decrease in infant death rates, and a 1.9 percent decrease in death rates for children under 5 years.

Paid family leave is essential for the physical and mental health of parents. Paid leave has been linked with improved blood pressure, healthier BMI, and less pain in mothers. Research has found that infants of women with paid leave are 47 percent less likely to end up back in the hospital and mothers are 51 percent less likely to end up back in the hospital compared to women with no paid leave or women with no leave at all. Family leave is also linked with a lower risk for depression and psychological distress.

Paid family leave has long-term benefits Researchers from the Institute for Labor Economics have concluded that when parents have paid leave, children are more likely to graduate high school, attend college, and even earn more money as adults. Other analyses have found that paid family leave results in parents spending increased time with their infants—**not only during the leave period but also after returning to work, up until 3 years of age.** This includes mothers spending increased time reading to, talking to, and helping with homework and fathers playing with children for more hours per week.

Paid family leave does not negatively impact employers. One of the only arguments against paid leave is that harms employers, especially small businesses, and the overall economy. Yet, women with paid leave are persistently shown to be less likely to leave the workforce, which saves businesses the high expense of finding and training new employees. Furthermore, employers in numerous studies have reported that paid leave increased their ease of dealing with extended employee absences. After California enacted a paid family leave policy, for example, 90 percent of employers reported no negative impacts on their profitability, turnover, or employee morale.

According to an analysis performed by PN3 Policy Center at Vanderbilt University, instituting paid family leave in Hawai'i would cost just 0.7 percent of payroll. **A worker earning \$62,000/year would pay \$217 per year in premiums for a return of \$930 per week in benefits.**

Contact: educationcaucusdph@gmail.com



To: House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce
Hearing Date/Time: Wednesday, February 12, 2025

Place: Hawaii State Capitol, Room 329
Re: Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of HB755

Dear Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Chun, and the Members of Committee,

Members of AAUW of Hawaii thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of HB755 which would establish a paid family and medical leave program for Hawaii.

The United States is the only developed country without national paid family and medical leave. To fill that gap, thirteen states plus the District of Columbia have passed PFML laws – more than half of them passed since 2018. Hawaii should join them!

Paid family and medical leave allows workers to take time off and still receive part of their income when they need to care for their own serious health needs or those of a loved one, or to bond with a new child.

The federal Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and Hawai'i Family Leave Law (HFLL) protect an employee from losing their job while they are caring for a sick relative or their self or bonding with a new child, but that leave is unpaid. And since the FMLA and HFLL apply only to very large employers, most Hawaii workers are not even eligible for that unpaid leave.

Meanwhile, Hawai'i has 154,000 unpaid family caregivers, providing 144 million hours of care worth \$2.6 billion per year, and those numbers will continue to increase as our population ages.

Paid family and medical leave helps families: Research found that states with PFML programs have seen significant health, social and economic benefits. Families who have access to paid leave – especially working women – are healthier, more economically secure, more likely to stay in the workforce, and less likely to need public benefits.

Paid family and medical leave helps business: Researchers found that PFML is good for business, because employees with PFML are more productive, which increases profits, and loyal, which lowers turnover costs.

The HB755 PFML program would:

- Be a state-run benefit program, like Social Security or Medicare.
- Be funded by small payroll deductions that go into a state fund, which workers apply to when they need to take leave. In the states with PFML programs, the average payroll deduction is 0.69% of wages, usually split between employers and employees.
- Employers would not need to pay employees while they are on leave, since they are paid from the state fund.
- Would be available to both full and part-time workers.
- Provide up to 12 weeks for parental leave and up to 26 weeks for caregiving in an application year.
- Provide a higher portion of wages to lower-income workers, so they can afford to take the leave.
- Ensure that employees have a job to go back to after they take leave
-

No one in Hawaii should have to choose between their loved ones and their paycheck. It's time for paid family and medical leave in Hawaii.

Sincerely,
Nancy Rustad
Public Policy Committee, AAUW of Hawaii
publicpolicy-hi@aauw.net

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) of Hawaii is an all volunteer, statewide chapter of a national organization and is made up of six branches: Hilo, Honolulu, Kaua'i, Kona, Maui, and Windward Oahu. AAUW's mission is to advance gender equity through research, education, and advocacy. Our goal is economic security for women.

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 5:10:26 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Merle Minami-Shima	AARP Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Matayoshi and Members of the Committee:

My name is Merle Minami-Shima and I am in STRONG SUPPORT of HB 755, HD 1 which establishes a family and medical leave insurance program for working family caregivers.

The likelihood that many of us will one day become a caregiver for our elderly loved ones increases as our population ages. Some of us will also have young dependents that may also need our care which increases the burden of taking time off from work without pay. The financial strain of this type of situation can be eased by having employers provide a reasonable amount of paid leave. Offering paid family leave benefits will also enhance employers' recruiting efforts.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Merle Minami-Shima, Wailuku, Maui

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 5:54:18 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Angela Serota	AARP	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Matayoshi and Members of the Committee:

My name is Angela Serota and I live on the North Shore of Kauai. I have been a caregiver for my parents and I continue to work with family caregivers on Kauai. I know first hand how expensive, time consuming, and exhausting being the primary caregiver can be. I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 755, HD 1 that establishes a family and medical leave insurance program for working caregivers.

Mahalo nui loa for your support.



Young Democrats of Hawai'i

Executive Board:

Cori Terayama
President

Cameron Deptula
Vice-President

Jimmy Nguyen
Secretary

Isaiah Baclaan
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Cindy Ng
**Young Democrats of
America National
Committeewoman**

Maria Glodilet Rallojay
**Membership and Events
Director**

Dave Nagaji
Campaign Director

Jennifer Tse
Internal Affairs Director

February 10, 2025

**RE: Testimony in Support of HB755 HD1, Relating to Paid Family Leave
Hearing Date: Wednesday, February 12, 2025 at 2:00PM
Conference Room: 329**

Aloha e Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Chun, and Members of the House
Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce,

The Young Democrats of Hawai'i (YDHI) **SUPPORTS HB755 HD1,
RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE.**

HB755 HD1 would require the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance payment of benefits by 1/1/2028. Furthermore, the Department would be required to start receiving claims and paying benefits under the program. Specifies eligibility requirements and employee protections under the program by 1/1/2029. Effective 7/1/3000.

YDHI supports this bill because many young adults are building their careers while also starting families or caring for aging relatives. Access to paid family leave ensures that we do not have to choose between our paycheck and our loved ones. At this pivotal stage of our careers, we are also navigating the responsibilities of caring for our elderly parents and pursuing the goal of starting a new family. We need support to balance our professional ambitions with our personal goals and obligations. If enacted, HB755 HD1 would allow us to contribute effectively to our workplaces, our families, and the future generations of Hawai'i.

YDHI is an organization whose mission is to increase the political strength of young democrats between 18 and 35 years old by providing opportunities for civic engagement, political advocacy, and participation in the Democratic Party of Hawai'i. YDHI consists of over 1,600 members.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in SUPPORT of HB755 HD1,
RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE.



February 12, 2025

Members of the House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce:

Chair Scot Z. Matayoshi

Rep. Sam Satoru Kong

Vice Chair Cory M. Chun

Rep. Nicole E. Lowen

Rep. Linda Ichiyama

Rep. Lisa Marten

Rep. Greggor Ilagan

Rep. Adrian K. Tam

Rep. Kim Coco Iwamoto

Rep. Elijah Pierick

Re: HB755 HD1 Relating to Paid Family Leave

Dear Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Chun, and Members of the House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce:

The Hawai'i State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (HSCADV) addresses the social, political, and economic impacts of domestic violence on individuals, families, and communities. We are a statewide partnership of domestic violence programs and shelters.

On behalf of HSCADV and our 25 member programs statewide, I respectfully submit testimony in **strong support of HB755 HD1**.

HB755 HD1 requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family and medical leave insurance program **that includes safe leave for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking** and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance the payment of benefits by 1/1/2028. The Department must also start receiving claims and paying benefits under the program by 1/1/2029.

This critical policy is not only beneficial for Hawai'i's caregivers and families but also to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking (all forms of gender-based violence) who need to take time off to receive victim services, make court appearances, seek medical services, or relocate themselves and family. Rhode Island, Connecticut, Oregon, Colorado, Minnesota, and Maine currently include safe leave in their paid family leave laws.

Paid safe leave provides survivors of violence with options:

- ways to navigate safety;
- time to maintain their economic security; and
- the chance to find healing without fear of job loss, leading to increased abuse and homelessness.

Survivors who have already faced immense trauma should not be forced to choose between personal and family physical safety or financial stability. **Survivors and their loved ones in**

Hawai'i need paid safe leave to manage their safety, care for their families, and remain in the workforce.

Maintaining economic independence is critical to survivors' immediate, intermediate, and long-term safety and ability to recover from trauma. However, many survivors struggle to remain connected to the workforce as they face numerous challenges in obtaining and maintaining employment as a consequence of the abuse or violence.

A safe leave policy, as proposed in HB755 HD1, allows survivors to take paid time away from work to heal, recover, and make themselves and their families safe, promising to strengthen survivors' ties to the workforce and allow them to meet critical needs in the wake of violence. Gender-based violence presents a concern for public health and safety, as well as for the economy, and victimization has serious repercussions for workers.

- More than half of survivors of all types of violence report difficulty with work or school as a result of victimization.¹
- Survivors and their loved ones miss over 6.7 million work days yearly.²
- A 2022 national survey of victims of all types of violence found that one in six violence survivors reported losing a job or being demoted when they needed time off from work due to victimization.³
- An overwhelming 83% of survivors of domestic violence report an abusive partner has disrupted their ability to work; of those, more than half have lost their jobs because of abuse.⁴

By creating pathways to remain in the workforce and adequately support survivors of violence, Hawai'i's economy benefits from a reduction in lost productivity and retains talented and innovative workers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.

Sincerely,
Angelina Mercado, Executive Director

¹ Alliance for Safety and Justice, "Crime Survivors Speak: National Survey Of Victims' Views On Safety and Justice" (September 2022), <https://allianceforsafetyandjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Alliance-for-Safety-and-Justice-Crime-Survivors-Speak-September-2022.pdf>.

² Alliance for Safety and Justice and Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice, "Lost Work, Pay, and Safety: Victims of Violence Urgently Need Safe Leave" (April 2024), <https://allianceforsafetyandjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/LostWorkLostPayLostSafety.pdf>.

³ Alliance for Safety and Justice, "Crime Survivors Speak: National Survey Of Victims' Views On Safety and Justice" (September 2022), <https://allianceforsafetyandjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Alliance-for-Safety-and-Justice-Crime-Survivors-Speak-September-2022.pdf>.

⁴ Cynthia Hess & Alona Del Rosario, "Dreams Deferred: A Survey on the Impact of Intimate Partner Violence on Survivors' Education, Careers, and Economic Security" 9, Institute for Women's Policy Research (2018), https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/C475_IWPR-Report-Dreams-Deferred.pdf.



Advocating for the Hawai'i LGBTQIA+ Community

February 10, 2025

House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Hearing: Wednesday, February 12, 2025, at 2:00 PM

RE: Strong Support for House Bill 755 HD 1

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Chun, and committee members,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 755, HD 1 on behalf of the Hawai'i State Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Plus. (LGBTQ+) Commission, which was established by the 2022 Hawai'i State Legislature with the following purpose:

“...to improve the State's interface with members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, plus community; identify the short- and long-range needs of its members; and ensure that there is an effective means of researching, planning, and advocating for the equity of this population in all aspects of state government.”

The Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission strongly supports House Bill 755, which will establish a family and medical leave insurance program, ensuring that working individuals in our state have access to paid leave when they need it most. This legislation represents a critical step forward in fostering workplace equity, economic security, and the well-being of Hawai'i's diverse communities.

The LGBTQIA+ community in Hawai'i, like many others, faces unique barriers when it comes to securing necessary time off to care for loved ones or to manage personal health concerns. Many LGBTQIA+ individuals, especially chosen family members who provide care for one another, are disproportionately impacted by gaps in paid leave policies. HB 755 recognizes and addresses these disparities by establishing a comprehensive, inclusive, and sustainable paid family and medical leave program that provides economic relief to workers regardless of their family structure.

By requiring the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish the program by January 1, 2028, and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance benefits, this bill sets forth a well-structured timeline that allows for proper implementation and administration. Furthermore, ensuring that claims and benefits begin by January 1, 2029, provides working families with the assurance that they will not have to choose between financial stability and caring for their loved ones.

In addition to its broad benefits for Hawai'i's workforce, HB 755 advances workplace protections and ensures that employees are not penalized for taking necessary leave. Such protections are

HI State LGBTQ+ Commission Testimony in Strong Support of SB 755 HD 1

essential to preventing discrimination, particularly against LGBTQIA+ employees, who may already face biases in workplace policies.

Other states have successfully implemented similar programs, demonstrating that paid family and medical leave is not only feasible but also strengthens local economies by improving worker retention and productivity. Hawai'i must join these efforts to support working individuals and families by passing HB 755.

We urge the Committee to pass this critical legislation to support all families in Hawai'i, including LGBTQIA+ individuals and their chosen families, in accessing the protections they deserve. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Should you or any member of your staff have any questions regarding this testimony you can reach the Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission at hawaiistatelgbtqpluscommission@gmail.com.

Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration,

Kathleen O'Dell, Ph.D. (she/her)

Chair

[Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission](#)



**TESTIMONY OF TINA YAMAKI, PRESIDENT
RETAIL MERCHANTS OF HAWAII
FEBRUARY 12, 2025
HB 755 HD1 RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE.**

Aloha, Chair Matayoshi and members of the House Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce. I am Tina Yamaki, President of the Retail Merchants of Hawaii and I appreciate this opportunity to testify.

The Retail Merchants of Hawaii was founded in 1901 and is a statewide, not for profit trade organization committed to supporting the growth and development of the retail industry in Hawaii. Our membership includes small mom & pop stores, large box stores, resellers, luxury retail, department stores, shopping malls, on-line sellers, local, national, and international retailers, chains, and everyone in between.

We respectfully oppose HB 755 HD1. This measure by 1/1/2028, requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance payment of benefits; by 1/1/2029, requires the Department to start receiving claims and paying benefits under the program; specifies eligibility requirements and employee protections under the program; and is effective 7/1/3000.

Employers want to take care of their employees, but there must also be a balance between what businesses can afford.

Many employers already offer benefits that include significant paid time off to those employees who have earned it in addition to the mandated family leave for employees to care for their family who are ill and ensure that their jobs are secure when they return to work.

We want to point out that **Hawaii is the only state in the entire nation that mandates medical insurance coverage for employees' healthcare. This is an added benefit to employees while being an increasing cost to employers every year with rate hikes in healthcare.** For a small business, the cost for individual health insurance could be anywhere from \$900 per month or more per employee depending on the program they have.

Retailers often are not able to absorb all the costs associated with these types of government mandates and must pass the cost on to the customer by raising prices of goods and services. This means groceries, clothing, supplies, appliances... will be even more expensive than they are now. This helps Hawaii to continue to be one of the most expensive states in the nation to live in.

While we understand the intent of a Family Leave Insurance Program, now is not the time to implement this program. Retailers are already operating on a very thin margin. Many are not able to afford these kinds of costly operational increases and are still barely hanging on to keep their doors open and their employees employed.

Many small local businesses still carry a large debt and for some the loans taken out during the pandemic are coming up. The rising cost for employee health care benefits, products and goods, services, and shipping continue to have a substantial effect on our operations. Furthermore, numerous businesses are still trying to recover from the Maui Fires as some of our local retailers lost multiple stores in the fires – this not only includes Maui based stores but also business from the neighboring islands who have expanded to Maui. We are also seeing streamlined and pivoted business with shortened hours of operations and freeze in employee hiring for certain positions. We continue to see local and national retailers quietly closing their doors in Hawaii. Many small locally owned businesses are also unsure how they will afford the minimum wage hike coming in January 2026. **Measures like this will encourage more businesses to close their doors as they can no longer afford to operate in Hawaii and thus more of our friends, family and neighbors will be unemployed.**

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.



HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 8:58:06 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Miller	Tiki's Grill & Bar	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We strongly oppose H.B. No. 755 and HB755_HD1, which mandates a state-run Paid Family Leave program funded by employer and employee payroll contributions. While the intent is to support workers, this bill places an unnecessary financial strain on small businesses in Hawai'i, particularly in the hospitality industry, where staffing and operational costs are already high.

At Tiki's Grill & Bar, we already provide Paid Time Off (PTO), allowing our employees to use it as they choose. If this bill passes, we would be forced to eliminate PTO and cut other valuable employee perks like discounts and incentives just to comply. Instead of a one-size-fits-all mandate, businesses should have the freedom to structure benefits that align with their workforce and financial sustainability.

We also believe employees should have the freedom to choose where they work. If someone values a specific benefit, they can seek out an employer that offers it, rather than forcing all businesses to comply with a rigid government program. Let businesses decide how to attract and retain employees, and let workers choose the employer that best meets their needs.

For the sake of Hawai'i's small businesses and workforce stability, we urge you to reject H.B. No. 755 and [HB755_HD1](#) and allow businesses and employees the freedom to decide what works best for them.

**Mahalo for your time and consideration.
Michael Miller | Director of Operations / Partner
Tiki's Grill & Bar**



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Testimony of Bob Hood

President of the Hawaii Energy Marketers Association (HEMA)

OPPOSITION TO HB 755 HD1

RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE

House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

The Honorable Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair

The Honorable Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 12, 2025 @ 2:00 p.m.

Conference Room 329 & Videoconference

Hawaii State Capitol, 415 South Beretania Street

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Chun, and Members of the Committee:

I am Bob Hood, President of the Hawaii Energy Marketers Association (HEMA). HEMA is a nonprofit trade association comprised of members who market motor fuel products and operate convenience stores across the state.

While we appreciate the intent behind HB 755 HD1 and recognize that employees may occasionally need time off for reasons beyond existing policies, HEMA respectfully opposes this measure.

Paid family and medical leave are valuable components of benefits packages used to attract, recruit, and retain our local workforce, and employers already offer these benefits voluntarily.

Hawaii employers face numerous financial challenges, including: rising operating costs; minimum wage increases; inflation; escalating health insurance premiums; and growing compliance expenses. The proposed extended family leave coverage would add substantial costs for private employers, potentially jeopardizing business viability and employment opportunities for Hawaii residents.

If the intent is to encourage private sector employers to offer extended leave, discussions should focus on potential tax deductions or other forms of relief for businesses operating in Hawaii and conduct a comprehensive economic impact study to fully understand the potential consequences on Hawaii's business landscape.

We believe that implementing additional mandates at this time could have unintended negative consequences for both businesses and workers.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in opposition.

Feb. 12, 2025, 2 p.m.
Hawaii State Capitol
Conference Room 329 and Videoconference

To: House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce
Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair
Rep. Cory M. Chun, Vice-Chair

From: Ted Kefalas, Director of Strategic Campaigns
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

RE: TESTIMONY OPPOSING HB755 HD1 — RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice-Chair Chun and other members of the Committee,

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii would like to offer its **comments in opposition** to [HB755 HD1](#), which would establish a family leave insurance program funded by employer and employee contributions.

The idea of being able to take paid leave from work to care for a family member is certainly appealing, but decades of data demonstrate that such programs rarely live up to their promise and may even harm those they intend to help.

It is often assumed that family leave policies will be especially helpful to female workers, as women are expected to benefit more from paid leave. However, research demonstrates that family-leave programs show no benefit to female workforce participation, and may even have a negative effect.

A recent study of the long-term effects of California's Paid Family Leave Act found that it did not help narrow the pay gap, and was instead associated with reduced employment and earnings for first-time mothers.¹

¹ Martha J. Bailey, Tanya S. Byker, Elena Patel, et al., "[The Long-Run Effects of California's Paid Family Leave Act on Women's Careers and Childbearing: New Evidence from a Regression Discontinuity Design and U.S. Tax Data](#)," National Bureau of Economic Research, October 2019.

A different study of maternity leave reform in the United Kingdom found that among highly educated workers, paid-leave programs tend to increase gender inequality, with fewer women holding management and promotion-track jobs, while lower-educated female workers were 10 percentage points less likely to receive a promotion than they were before the reforms were enacted.²

Nor are the benefits of paid-leave programs evenly distributed. Low-income workers are significantly less likely to take advantage of paid leave, making it little more than a government-subsidized leave program for well-paid workers.

In 2020, 18 million California workers paid into the state's family leave program and were eligible to take advantage of its benefits. However, only 14% of workers earning less than \$20,000 took paid leave, while workers earning \$80,000 to \$99,999 had a utilization rate four times higher than the lowest earners. Those making \$100,000 or more a year utilized paid leave three times as much as low income workers.³

Family leave policies in San Francisco⁴ and New Jersey⁵ have seen similar results, with low-income families far less likely than high-income earners to utilize leave policies.

Paid-leave programs also struggle with problems of cost. It is nearly impossible to properly evaluate the financial viability of the program proposed in this bill, as the contribution requirements are left to a later determination. However, there is a real risk of underestimating the full cost of the program, which could create a burden for the state budget and taxpayers.

The AEI-Brookings Working Group on Paid Family Leave analyzed the proposed federal FAMILY Act — which also relies on payroll contributions — and argued that the authors of the bill had severely underestimated the costs of the paid-leave program. Depending on take-up rates, the funding mechanism might have only covered half the program's costs.⁶

Before embarking on an ambitious paid-leave program such as the one proposed by HB755, lawmakers should demand a strict analysis of its financial impact on the state budget and the economy as a whole to ensure that the program would not become a fiscal nightmare.

² Jenna Stearns, [“The Long-Run Effects of Wage Replacement and Job Protection: Evidence from Two Maternity Leave Reforms in Great Britain.”](#) SSRN, May 7, 2018.

³ Kristin Schumacher, [“Paid Family Leave Payments Don't Add Up for California Workers.”](#) California Budget and Policy Center, February 2022.

⁴ Julia M. Goodman, William H. Dow and Holly Elser, [“Evaluating the San Francisco Paid Parental Leave Ordinance: Employer Perspectives.”](#) University of California at Berkeley, February 2019.

⁵ Amy Dunford, [“Boosting Families, Boosting the Economy: How to Improve New Jersey's Paid Family Leave Program.”](#) New Jersey Policy Perspective, April 2017.

⁶ [“Paid Family and Medical Leave: An Issue Whose Time Has Come.”](#) AEI-Brookings Working Group on Paid Family Leave, May 2017.

Finally, we must consider the effect that enacting this bill would have on Hawaii's business climate.

Because the proposed program is very broad — it even includes small businesses with fewer than five employees — it would add to the cost of doing business in our state. Employers would have to compensate for the increased costs associated with the program, which could mean fewer jobs or stagnant wages.

If Hawaii workers knew that state-mandated family leave would equate to higher taxes or cause them to forgo raises or promotions, support for family leave probably would go down.

As attractive as the idea of paid leave might be, the negative tradeoffs that accompany family leave programs cannot be ignored.

Given the many questions raised by this bill, it seems clear that more analysis is needed of the potential effects and fiscal impact of mandatory paid family leave in Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our comments.

Sincerely,

Ted Kefalas
Director of Strategic Campaigns
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii



1050 Bishop St. PMB 235 |
Honolulu, HI 96813
P: 808-533-1292 | e:
info@hawaiiifood.com

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Eddie Asato, Pint Size Hawaii, *Advisor*
Gary Okimoto, Safeway, *Immediate Past Chair*

TO: Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce
FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: February 12, 2025

TIME: 2pm

RE: HB755 HD1 Relating to
Position:

The Hawaii Food Industry Association is comprised of two hundred member companies representing retailers, suppliers, producers, manufacturers and distributors of food and beverage related products in the State of Hawaii.

HFIA has some concerns about how this mandate may impact labor costs for businesses in our state. Hawaii already has some of the highest labor costs in the country, and the highest cost of living in the country. We are concerned that creating additional labor costs for our local food businesses will have unintended consequences that could lead to business closures or price increases.

The measure does not specify the amount of contributions that employers and employees will make and the implementation timeline is extremely rapid. We are concerned that by the time the department is able to specify the contribution amounts it will be very close to the effective date and both employers and employees will not be able to plan in advance for how this will impact their finances.

We believe that more information from stakeholders, additional detailed data about the possible unintended consequences, and an extended time frame would be advisable prior to enacting a mandate of this scope.

We thank you for the opportunity to testify.



745 Fort St. Mall
17th Floor
Honolulu, HI 96815

808-521-9500
NFIB.com

February 11, 2025

TO: Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair
Rep. Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Consumer
Protection & Commerce

FR: Michael Iosua, State Director
NFIB, Hawaii Chapter

RE: **OPPOSITION** TO HB 755 – RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE

Hearing date: February 12, 2025, at 2:00 PM

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Chun and members of the committee,

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of NFIB's Hawaii Chapter in **OPPOSITION** to HB 755 – RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE. NFIB is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, and member-driven organization exclusively dedicated to small and independent businesses. With members in all four counties, NFIB's Hawaii chapter advocates on issues that affect Hawaii's small and independent business owners.

HB 755 would require DLIR to create a family and medical leave insurance program financed by employers, including 100% of the cost for businesses with 5 or more employees. While we understand the legislature's intent to address emergency family medical situations, we have significant concerns about the financial and operational impact HB 755 would have on Hawaii's businesses and workers.

Many employers already offer paid leave programs for their employees, which benefits could be disrupted by forcing a one-size-fits-all mandate. The bill also allows for intermittent leave without clear limits, which could create staffing and scheduling challenges, particularly for small businesses. These mandates are just simply too costly for Hawaii's small businesses. Without flexibility, companies may be forced to cut jobs, reduce hours, or even close their doors.

Furthermore, similar proposals in previous legislative sessions led to the recognition that a study was necessary to assess the impact of such a program, particularly on small businesses. Until a comprehensive economic analysis is conducted and reviewed, it is premature to impose this additional burden. The committee should take further time to think through alternative approaches that support both employees and businesses without compromising economic stability.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to defer HB 755. Mahalo for your consideration.



*American College of
Obstetricians and Gynecologists
District VIII, Hawai'i (Guam &
American Samoa) Section*

TO: Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce
Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair
Rep. Cory M Chun, Vice Chair

DATE: Wednesday, Feb 12, 2025
PLACE: Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 329

FROM: Hawai'i Section, ACOG
Dr. Angel Willey, MD, FACOG, Chair
Dr. Tiffinie R. Mercado, MD, FACOG, Vice-Chair
Dr. Ricardo A. Molero Bravo, MD, FACOG, Legislative Chair

**Re: HB755 Relating to Paid Family Leave
Position: SUPPORT**

On behalf of the Hawai'i Section of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), I write in strong support of HB755, which seeks to establish a paid family and medical leave insurance program for workers in Hawai'i. This bill is a crucial step toward ensuring that employees do not have to choose between their health, their families, and their financial security.

As providers of obstetric and gynecologic care, we understand the importance of paid leave for new parents, individuals with serious health conditions, and those caring for a sick family member. The absence of a statewide paid leave program disproportionately affects women, low-income families, and communities of color, exacerbating maternal health disparities and financial instability for working families.

HB755 takes a comprehensive and responsible approach by:

- Establishing a statewide paid family and medical leave insurance program – Ensuring all workers can access leave for childbirth, illness, caregiving, and other qualifying events.
- Providing up to 12 weeks of paid family leave and 26 weeks of paid medical leave – Offering critical support during major life events.
- Ensuring job protection and continuation of health benefits – Preventing retaliation and loss of employment for those utilizing the program.
- Implementing an equitable funding mechanism – Using payroll contributions to sustainably finance the program while reducing the burden on employers.
- Paid family and medical leave is not just a workplace benefit; it is a public health necessity. Evidence shows that paid leave policies lead to lower rates of postpartum complications, increased breastfeeding duration, reduced infant mortality, and improved mental health for parents. Additionally, caregivers of sick or elderly family members experience less stress and improved financial stability when they are supported by paid leave policies.

Currently, too many families in Hawai'i must rely on unpaid leave, patchwork employer policies, or risk financial hardship when a health crisis arises. By passing HB755, the Legislature can provide a long-overdue safety net for Hawai'i's workforce, promoting economic security and better health outcomes for families across the state.

We respectfully urge your support for HB755 to establish this critical program for Hawai'i's workers and their families.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 755 HD1: RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE

TO: House Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce
FROM: Tina Andrade, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawai'i
Hearing: **Wednesday, 2/12/25; 2:00 PM; via Videoconference or Room 329**

Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Chun, and Members, Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce:

Catholic Charities Hawai'i **Strongly Supports HB 755 HD1**, which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family and medical leave insurance program. **This bill provides one step to address the great burden that Hawaii's cost of living places on our workforce.**

Catholic Charities Hawai'i (CCH) is a tax exempt, non-profit agency that has been providing social services in Hawai'i for over 75 years. CCH has programs serving elders, children, families, homeless and immigrants. Our mission is to provide services and advocacy to the most vulnerable of the people in Hawai'i. We serve over 40,000 people each year throughout the state. This bill is one of our economic justice priorities.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i strongly urges your support for paid family and medical leave that will help our residents live a life of peace and dignity. This is one step to help ensure a healthier and more productive local workforce. This bill would assist our working families to meet their basic needs in times of family crises.

Middle class, ALICE, and low-income families face severe burdens when they undergo situations when they cannot work but do not have paid family or medical leave. Paid leave is also a critical public health tool to combat disease and can result in significant savings in health care costs. Low-income workers are less likely to have paid family or medical leave than other members of the workforce. Hawai'i's cost of living is so high that sudden or long-term family crises may result in great stress and even the risk of homelessness. Many of the vulnerable in Hawai'i are the working poor, people who work hard, but due to our high cost of living, struggle to make ends meet. We serve these workers in our programs. They are often barely able to avoid homelessness, working several jobs to juggle the basic expenses of their families and unable to spend time raising their children. These workers are parents who try very hard to provide care and support to their families but have little or no reserves when a crisis strikes.

Paid leave is good for local businesses, since workers are more productive and loyal, which lowers turnover costs. It also helps small businesses compete for workers with large companies that can afford to offer family/medical leave on their own.

Paid family and medical leave supports the State's priority to assist workers to remain in Hawai'i. We urge your support for this bill. If you have any questions, please contact our Legislative Liaison, Betty Lou Larson at (808) 527-4813.





HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION
AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

RANDY PERREIRA, Executive Director • Tel: 808.543.0011 • Fax: 808.528.0922

The Thirty-Third Legislature, State of Hawaii
House of Representatives
Committee Consumer Protection and Commerce

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association

February 12, 2025

H.B. 755, H.D. 1 — RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE

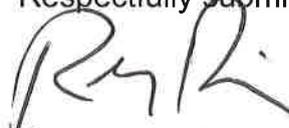
The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO strongly opposes H.B. 755, H.D. 1, which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish and administer a family and medical leave insurance program.

It is our strong position that Paid Family and Medical Leave must be a 100% employer paid program and benefit. We represent thousands of members that are on the lower end of the salary schedule, including roughly 2400 members that make less than 20 dollars an hour. They are already subject to hefty payroll deductions from the Employer-Union Health Trust Fund and the Employee Retirement System, among others. Adding an additional payroll deduction will cause financial constraint for our members which may push them to their financial breaking point. We find it inherently unfair that this program would require all employees to contribute an unknown percentage of their salary to a program that they may not take advantage of.

Furthermore, most of our membership, and the public sector workforce, are entitled to 21 days of sick leave, 21 days of vacation leave, and 13 paid holidays per year. We believe that our members that would qualify, under specified circumstance, to take advantage of this program would rather opt to use their vacation/sick leave (if available), because they will not receive their full salary under the benefits structure in this program. While we recognize a need for a paid family leave benefit, the program proposed in this bill would negatively impact our memberships livelihoods. **Therefore, and if this bill is to move forward, we respectfully request that public sector employees be carved out and exempted from this program.**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition of H.B. 755, H.D. 1.

Respectfully submitted,



Randy Perreira
Executive Director



Hawai'i

Committee: Consumer Protection and Commerce
Hearing Date/Time: Wednesday, February 12, 2025 at 2:00pm
Place: Conference Room 329 & Via Videoconference
Re: **Testimony of the ACLU of Hawai'i in SUPPORT of HB755 HD1 Relating to Paid Family Leave**

Dear Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Chun and Members of the Committee:

The ACLU of Hawai'i **supports HB755 HD1 Relating to Family Leave**, which by 1/1/2028 requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) to establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance payment of benefits. By 1/1/2029, the bill requires DLIR to start receiving claims and paying benefits under the program. The bill also specifies eligibility requirements and employee protections under the program.

ACLU National and ACLU of Hawai'i have a longstanding commitment to redressing the adverse effects of racism and sexism and other forms of invidious discrimination. That includes decades long commitments to affirmative action in employment and paid leave reflected in our organization's policies. It includes commitments to defend essential health care coverage to address "harsh economic and social disparities that threaten our country's democratic foundation and the cohesion of our society."

In the past seven years, the State has conducted **at least two** comprehensive studies on the efficacy and implementation of a paid family leave program for Hawai'i. The first was **completed in 2017 by the Commission on the Status of Women (HSCSW)¹ with a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor**. The second was conducted by the **Legislative Reference Bureau² in response to ACT 109 (2018)**.

The U.S. is the only developed country in the entire world that does not provide by law paid family leave to workers. The federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) only provides unpaid leave. And only for a little more than half of all U.S. employees.³

For workers living paycheck to paycheck, this is not an option. When a loved one is sick, their only options are to leave them unattended, or lose income and risk missing

¹ https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/CommitteeFiles/senate/LBR/LBRfiles/DOL_Hawaii-State-Paid-Family-Leave-Analysis-Grant-Report.pdf

² https://lrb.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019_PaidFamilyLeaveProgramImpactStudy.pdf

³ https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OASP/evaluation/pdf/WHF_FMLA2018SurveyResults_Appendices_Aug2020.pdf

utility bill payments, not buying food, or worse, risk becoming houseless. This is unacceptable.

Providing robust family leave for every worker is a principle of equality.

“As of March 2023, only 27 percent of civilian workers had access to paid family leave through their employer,” according to the U.S. Department of Labor.⁴ What’s more, that number drops substantially when looking at “the lowest-wage earners, just 6 percent” of whom have access to paid leave through their employers. **Those most likely to have access to paid family leave are higher-wage earners, who also happen to be white.** During the COVID pandemic, those were the same workers able to work safely from the comfort of their own homes.

The COVID-19 pandemic showed us just how vulnerable our workers and families are to virulent disease. Not only would a public paid family leave program provide much needed assistance to Hawai‘i’s “essential workers” who live paycheck to paycheck and are predominantly women and people of color, it could also prove useful in protecting customers and coworkers from catching and spreading contagious illnesses.

A robust public paid family leave insurance program would provide workers up to 12 weeks of paid leave. And because a public insurance program would cover all workers in the state, it could cost as little as \$58 a year for each worker.⁵ **When split with the employer, that amounts to just \$0.56 a week.**

A more recent study conducted by researchers at Vanderbilt University determined a universal paid family leave program could be funded with just 0.7% of payroll (0.35% paid by the employer, 0.35% paid by the employee).

How would paid family leave work in Hawai‘i?

- Employers currently pay **0.5%** of payroll for **TDI alone**
- A state-run **PFL program** would cost **0.7%** of payroll
- Employers could cover the cost of PFL premiums or have their employees to pay up to half
- The state’s administration costs are included in the 0.7%

⁴ <https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/wb/wb20241121>

⁵ https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/CommitteeFiles/senate/LBR/LBRfiles/DOL_Hawaii-State-Paid-Family-Leave-Analysis-Grant-Report.pdf

<i>A worker earning:</i>	<i>Would pay:</i>	<i>And receive:</i>
Minimum wage (\$29,000 per year)	\$102 per year	\$504 per week
Average wage (\$62,000 per year)	\$217 per year <i>in premiums</i>	\$930 per week <i>in benefits</i>

- Of note, the lack of public paid family leave insurance exacerbates sex and gender inequality:
 - A gender wage gap emerges after a child, known as the Motherhood Penalty.
 - Wage gaps mean significantly lower earning potential over the course of someone's career.

13 states and the District of Columbia have implemented paid family leave programs. It's time for Hawai'i to join them.

Sincerely,

Josh Frost

Josh Frost
 Policy Assistant
 ACLU of Hawai'i
jfrost@acluhawaii.org

The mission of the ACLU of Hawai'i is to protect the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the U.S. and State Constitutions. The ACLU of Hawai'i fulfills this through legislative, litigation, and public education programs statewide. The ACLU of Hawai'i is a non-partisan and private non-profit organization that provides its services at no cost to the public and does not accept government funds. The ACLU of Hawai'i has been serving Hawai'i for over 50 years.

To: House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce
Re: **HB 755 HD1 – Relating to Paid Family Leave**
Hawai'i State Capitol & Via Videoconference
February 12, 2025, 2:00 PM

Dear Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Chun, and Committee Members,

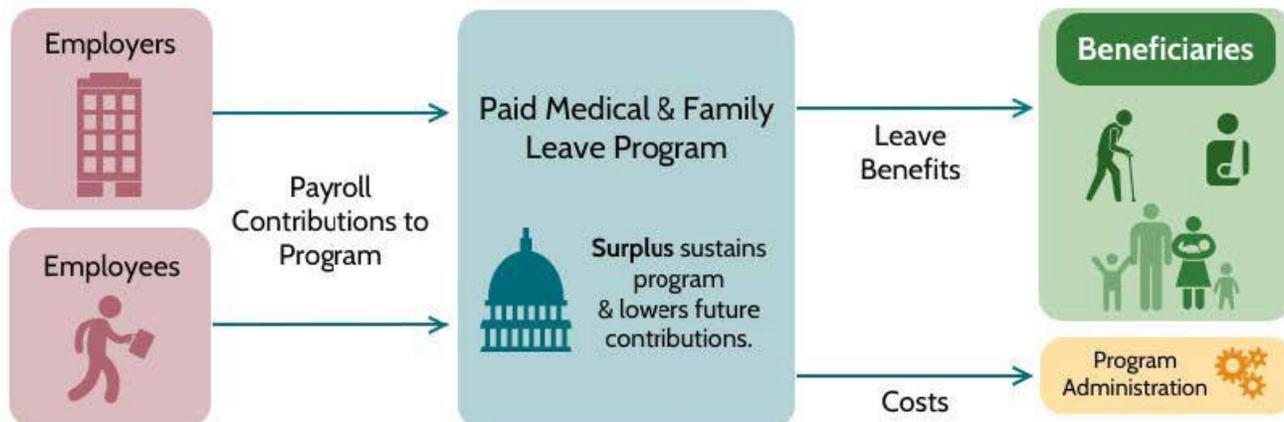
On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in **SUPPORT of HB 755 HD1**. This bill requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) to establish a family and medical leave insurance program by certain dates and specifies eligibility requirements and employee protections under the program.

Paid family leave allows **workers to take time off and still receive part of their income** when they need to care for their own serious health needs or those of a loved one, or to bond with a new child.

The United States is the only developed country without national paid family leave.¹ The average amount of paid family leave in OECD nations is about one year. **To fill that gap, thirteen states plus the District of Columbia have passed paid family leave laws.**² California was the first state to pass paid family leave, about 20 years ago. Hawai'i should join them.

This chart shows how a statewide paid family and medical leave program works.³ It is financed by small payroll deductions that go into a state fund, which workers apply to when they need leave. **Since employees are paid from the state fund while taking leave, employers do not need to pay them while they are on leave:**

Paid medical and family leave is funded entirely by payroll contributions, at no additional cost to the state government.



¹ <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/explainer/paid-family-leave-across-oecd-countries/>

² <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/explainer/state-paid-family-leave-laws-across-the-u-s/>

³ "Analysis Model of Paid Family & Medical Leave Programs in Hawaii," Prenatal to 3 Policy Impact Center, Vanderbilt University, https://assets.nationbuilder.com/goodbeginnings/pages/2485/attachments/original/1738192053/2024_PFML_Analysis_PN3.pdf

The statewide paid family and medical leave program in this bill includes:

- Parental leave – for parents, including fathers and adoptive parents, to bond with a new child
- Medical leave – for a worker to recover from their own serious illness or injury
- Caregiving leave – for a worker to care for a family member with a serious health condition.
- Deployment leave – to handle arrangements for military service
- Safe leave⁴ – to deal with domestic violence, such as seeking a restraining order or relocating.

Employers could choose to cover all of the payroll deductions, just as some employers choose to cover all of their employees' health insurance premiums. The bill places a cap on the portion of the premiums that employees would pay, at 50%. It is likely that most employers and employees would split the payroll deductions 50/50, which is how Social Security and Medicare are financed.

Employers with fewer than five employees would pay only half of the standard percent of payroll, and they could ask their employees to cover the entire contribution. Self-employed workers could opt into the program, and they would pay only half of the standard level as well.

Employers also would no longer need to purchase and administer private Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) for their employees (since employees' own illness or injury would be covered by the medical leave in the program), saving them time, administrative burdens, and money.

Vanderbilt University researchers recently analyzed the language of this bill and determined that it would require **0.7% of payroll to provide worker benefits as well as cover DLIR's costs of administration** of the program.⁵ Anecdotally, we have found that employers are currently paying about 0.5% for TDI, which they would no longer need to pay if this bill became law.

In other words, employers would pay between 0.35% and 0.7% of payroll for the much more robust benefits of a paid family and medical leave program, while no longer needing to pay about 0.5% for TDI.

How would paid family leave work in Hawai'i?

- Employers currently pay **0.5%** of payroll for **TDI alone**
- A state-run **PFL program** would cost **0.7%** of payroll
- Employers could cover the cost of PFL premiums or have their employees to pay up to half
- The state's administration costs are included in the 0.7%

⁴ <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/the-state-of-paid-family-and-medical-leave-in-the-u-s-in-2023/>

⁵ Prenatal to 3 Policy Impact Center, op.cit.

⁶ https://www.abetterbalance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/PFML_Health-Case_Fact-Sheet_11.30.21.pdf

Paid leave helps children by helping their parents. Research has found that states with paid family leave have seen significant **health, social and economic benefits**.⁶ Families who have access to paid leave – especially working women – are healthier, more economically secure, more likely to stay in the workforce, and **less likely to need public benefits**.

This bill would provide up to **12 weeks** of parental, caregiving, deployment or safe leave per year. It would also provide up to **26 weeks** of medical leave, which is the same amount of leave that Hawaii workers currently are eligible for under Hawaii's Temporary Disability Insurance law.⁷

The wage replacement rates in this bill are as 90 percent of pay for workers earning less than 50 percent of the state average weekly wage (SAWW), 75 percent of pay for those earning between 50 and 100 percent of the SAWW, and 50 percent of pay for those earning at least 100 percent of the SAWW.

That means that a minimum wage worker would pay less than \$2 per week into the program (assuming that their employer matches that amount) and receive \$504 per week in benefits. An average wage worker, earning about \$62,000 per year, would pay a little over \$4 per week and receive \$930 per week in benefits.⁸

<i>A worker earning:</i>	<i>Would pay:</i>	<i>And receive:</i>
Minimum wage (\$29,000 per year)	\$102 per year	\$504 per week
Average wage (\$62,000 per year)	\$217 per year	\$930 per week
	<i>in premiums</i>	<i>in benefits</i>

Paid family leave is good for business. According to research that looks at how paid family leave works in other states,⁹ employees with paid family leave are more productive, which can help increase profits, and loyal, which lowers turnover costs.

In addition, statewide **paid family leave helps even the playing field for small businesses**. Currently, most small businesses cannot afford to offer adequate paid family leave to their employees, which puts them at a disadvantage when it comes to attracting and retaining the best workers.

Enabling small businesses to provide paid family leave through a state program helps them compete for the best workers. Not surprisingly, recent surveys show that two-thirds of small business owners support paid family leave.¹⁰

⁷ https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/hrscurrent/Vol07_Ch0346-0398/HRS0392/HRS_0392-0023.htm

⁸ Prenatal to 3 Policy Impact Center, op.cit.

⁹ https://www.abetterbalance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/PFML_Business-Case_Fact-Sheet_5.10.22.pdf

¹⁰ <https://smallbusinessmajority.org/our-research/small-businesses-support-bold-investments-child-care>

Similarly, as Hawaii struggles to keep our working-age families from moving away, we are competing with states that have paid family leave – including the entire West Coast – for the best workers. **In 2023, more than 25,000 residents of Hawai'i moved to states that have passed paid leave laws.**¹¹ When young couples are deciding where to start a family, paid family leave may be an important deciding factor for them.

In addition, Vanderbilt University recently released a new benefit-cost analysis of HB 755 in order to better understand the impact of the bill on beneficiaries, employers, and the state.² They focused exclusively on the new baby bonding leave in the bill because of the robust existing research on its effects.

This analysis finds that just the bonding leave provided by this bill, which would be less than half of the leaves taken annual through the statewide program,³ would generate **\$36 million in annual net benefits to Hawai'i families, businesses and the state**, including:

- close to \$90 million in additional income annually for households and families
- \$3.4 million in additional state sales tax revenue annually
- nearly \$9 million in healthcare costs avoided annually
- \$676,720 in subsidized child care costs for the state avoided annually

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide this testimony. Please pass this bill.

Sincerely,

Nicole Woo
Director of Research and Economic Policy

¹¹ <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/geographic-mobility/state-to-state-migration.html>

¹² "Benefit Cost Analysis," Prenatal to 3 Policy Impact Center, Vanderbilt University, https://assets.nationbuilder.com/goodbeginnings/pages/2485/attachments/original/1739242981/2025_PFML_BCA_PN3.pdf

¹³ "Analysis Model of Paid Family & Medical Leave Programs in Hawaii," Prenatal to 3 Policy Impact Center, Vanderbilt University, https://assets.nationbuilder.com/goodbeginnings/pages/2485/attachments/original/1738192053/2024_PFML_Analysis_PN3.pdf



**House Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce
February 12, 2025 at 2:00PM
Room 329**

Testimony in SUPPORT of HB755 HD1

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Chun, and members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Hawai'i Alliance of Nonprofit Organizations, I would like to offer our comments in **support of HB755 HD1**, which would establish a statewide paid family and medical leave program, providing essential support to workers while ensuring that businesses, including nonprofits, have the stability needed to thrive.

The Hawai'i Alliance of Nonprofit Organizations (HANO) is a statewide, sector-wide professional association of nonprofits that works to strengthen and unite the nonprofit sector as a collective force to improve the quality of life in Hawai'i. Since 2006, HANO has been a leading voice for the nonprofit sector, leveraging resources, educating and advocating for policies and practices that promote the professionalism, sustainability, and effectiveness of nonprofits and the communities they serve.

Nonprofit organizations in Hawai'i employ approximately 12% of the state's total workforce,¹ supporting workers who are deeply committed to public service and community care. HB755 would strengthen the sector's workforce pipeline by ensuring that employees can take time off to care for a new child, a sick loved one, or their own health without facing financial hardship. HANO believes paid family and medical leave would assist nonprofits in attracting and retaining talented staff and prevent looming workforce shortages that could impact essential community services.

Additionally, this bill includes thoughtful provisions for different-sized employers, including small nonprofits with limited budgets, who could actually save on employment costs through this program. Under HB755, small employers are responsible for remitting only 50% the amount of premiums that the large employers are required to remit, and they could elect to have employees pay all of this amount. In addition, this bill rolls Hawai'i's current private Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) program into paid family leave, so employers would no longer need to pay into TDI. HANO believes HB755 proposes a balanced solution to benefit both workers and employers, while considering the financial constraints of small nonprofits.

We urge the committee to advance HB755 and support the establishment of a statewide paid family and medical leave program that balances the needs of workers, employers, and the broader economy. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *The Economics Daily*, Nonprofits accounted for 12.8 million jobs, 9.9 percent of private-sector employment, in 2022 at <https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2024/nonprofits-accounted-for-12-8-million-jobs-9-9-percent-of-private-sector-employment-in-2022.htm> (visited February 10, 2025).

February 12, 2025

House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce
Representative Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair,
Representative Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair, Vice Chair

Wednesday February 12, 2025, 2:00 p.m.
Conference Rm. 329 and via Videoconference



Working together for Kapolei

RE: HB 755 HD1 – Relating to Family Leave

Dear Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Chun, and members of the Committee:

My name is Kiran Polk, and I am the Executive Director & CEO of the Kapolei Chamber of Commerce. The Kapolei Chamber of Commerce is an advocate for businesses in the Kapolei region including Waipahu, Kapolei, 'Ewa Beach, Nānakūli, Wai'anae and Mākaha. The Chamber works on behalf of its members and the business community to improve the regional and State economic climate and help West O'ahu businesses thrive. We are a member-driven, member-supported organization representing the interests of all types of business: small, medium or large, for profit or non-profit businesses or sole proprietorship.

The Kapolei Chamber of Commerce offers comments of concern and consideration on **HB 755**, which effective 1/1/2028 requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) to establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance payment of benefits; and by 1/1/2029, requires the Department to start receiving claims and paying benefits under the program; and specifies eligibility requirements and employee protections under the program.

While we appreciate the intent of this measure, the tumultuous economic climate for our small businesses and ***the timing of this measure*** brings concerns to the forefront. **Our small businesses, especially those with less than 100 employees, and our locally owned businesses may face unintended consequences as a result of this measure.**

Consider the existing conditions and the potential results:

The economic climate impact: Many of ***our small businesses are struggling financially to keep their doors open*** with the higher cost of goods and services, rising healthcare and employee benefit packages, inflationary impacts and future supply chain concerns are just some of the existing conditions.

Increased cost burden on the horizon: The small business loans doled out during the pandemic are soon reaching maturity and many small businesses are bracing for the minimum wage hike January 2026. Future tariffs along with other federal legislative changes will impact some. ***The Tax Cut and Jobs Act is scheduled to expire at the end of 2025. Congress has yet to extend or amend the pass-through legislation and per the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 38.6 percent of the employers in the State of Hawai'i are pass through businesses that currently receive a 20% tax cut.***

<https://www.uschamber.com/taxes/impact-of-the-20-percent-pass-through-deduction?state=hi>

This measure will mandate these businesses to offer the leave. Right now many small businesses offer PTO and other employee benefits such as free meals in restaurants as benefits that have a much lower cost margin.

The labor shortfall: Our restaurants and retailers especially have been forced to limit their hours of operations and close shop simply because they don't have the staff to cover shifts. ***In some situations, finding more temporary replacements due to the mandate will add to the burden and may lead to other disruptions to operations, reduced productivity and potential closure.***

Regulations force price increases: When a small business must take on additional cost burdens as a result of government mandates, they must pass on the cost to the consumer. There is a ripple-effect, and ***goods and services will be even more expensive than they are today where Hawaii has the highest cost of living in the nation.***

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully,

Kiran Polk
Executive Director & CEO

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 1:41:47 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dirk Koeppenkastrop	IL Gelato Hawaii	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Strong Opposition to H.B. No. 755 and H.B. 755_HD1

I write to express our strong opposition to H.B. No. 755 and H.B. 755_HD1, which propose the establishment of a state-run Paid Family Leave program funded by employer and employee payroll contributions. While the goal of supporting workers is commendable, this legislation would impose significant financial burdens on small businesses in Hawai'i, especially within the high-cost hospitality sector.

At IL Gelato Hawaii, a small family-run business with seven locations on Oahu, we already offer Paid Time Off (PTO) to our employees, giving them the flexibility to use it as they need. However, should this bill pass, we would be forced to make drastic cuts, including eliminating our PTO program and scaling back other valuable employee benefits, such as discounts and incentives, just to comply with the new mandate. This blanket government solution fails to account for the unique challenges faced by small businesses and undermines the ability of employers to offer tailored benefits that work best for their employees.

Rather than imposing a rigid, one-size-fits-all program, we believe businesses should have the freedom to structure benefits that align with their workforce's needs and the financial realities of the business. Employers should have the flexibility to offer the types of benefits that help them attract and retain employees, rather than being forced to comply with a state-run system that doesn't fit all business models.

Moreover, we believe employees should have the freedom to choose where they work based on the benefits offered. If a worker values a specific benefit, they should have the freedom to seek out an employer that provides it, without forcing all businesses to adopt the same government-mandated program. This allows both businesses and workers to make decisions that best suit their individual needs.

For the sake of Hawai'i's small businesses, employee retention, and the long-term health of our economy, we urge you to reject H.B. No. 755 and H.B. 755_HD1. Let businesses and employees decide what works best for them, rather than imposing a blanket government mandate.

As a University of Hawaii student I always wanted to build my own business here on the island of Oahu. My wife and I started IL Gelato Hawaii in 2010 and have now over 100 people employed. We care for our people and take care of our employees. We find that Hawaii

legislation is not helping small buisneses, but brings more and more hurdles to us to make it difficult to survife. Passing the minimum wage bill, as an example, was a big mistake as it makes it more and more difficult to run a small business and further drives inflation.

Thank you for taking our strong view on this matter into consideration.

Aloha,

Dirk Koeppenkastrop, Ph.D.



COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION AND COMMERCE
Rep. Scot Matayoshi, Chair
Rep. Cory Chun, Vice Chair

February 12, 2025, at 2:00 P.M.

RE: HB 755 HD1, Relating to Paid Family Leave

Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Chun, and members of the Committee:

The Society of Human Resource Management – Hawaii (“SHRM”)¹ respectfully opposes HB 755 HD1, Relating to Paid Family Leave.

While we appreciate the legislature’s overall goal in addressing the needs of our community, we have serious concerns that this measure is not a manageable or an affordable approach for either employers or employees in addressing those needs. As presented, the bill prematurely places burdens upon virtually all businesses and employees in the State in 2028 without an advance and full understanding of what the financial and operational impacts upon the businesses and employees would be.

Essentially, this bill would require the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions on January 1, 2028, to finance payment of benefits, one year prior to actually taking claims under the act commencing January 1, 2029. The proposal also specifies eligibility requirements and employee protections under the program.

Similar bills were proposed in prior sessions, the result of which was that the legislature determined that a study needed to be conducted to determine the impact of such a program, especially as to smaller employers.

¹ SHRM Hawaii serves and represents nearly 600 members and employers’ statewide and human resource management is a critical component to the success and survival of the many businesses that make up our local economy. HR professionals are responsible for evaluating and balancing the needs of both the employers and employees and caring for businesses’ most valuable asset: the working people of our state.



It is important to note that many businesses already offer paid time off and paid leave programs as a means of attracting and retaining their workforce, especially with the employment environment not yet recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, employers are already facing increased financial burdens from high inflation rates and the recent minimum wage increase.

Further, the proposed bill does not provide leave minimums. Rather, the leave may be taken intermittently and in any increment without regard to the employer's workplace needs. This could ultimately force local businesses to shut down operations or close permanently. With the way the pandemic has affected the economy, we need policies that will provide flexibility for businesses so they can help create more jobs for our economy. We need to be encouraging businesses to adopt their own innovative paid leave programs, rather than placing yet another mandate on employers, and employees.

We also have concerns about the impacts this bill will have on employees and small businesses that are struggling inasmuch as the bill requires half the contribution to come from the employees themselves. However, given the lack of substantiated data on the adverse impact of mandatory paid family and medical leave on Hawaii employers and employees, we respectfully request that the committee hold this bill and review the findings of the more recent study before enacting a one-size-fits-all policy.

We look forward to contributing positively to the development of sound public policy and continuing to serve as a resource to the legislature on matters related to labor and employment laws.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.

Erin Kogen and Rosanne M. Nolan
Co-chairs, SHRM Legislative Affairs Committee





Testimony to the House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Representative Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair
Representative Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 12, at 2:00PM
Conference Room 329 & Videoconference

LATE

RE: HB755 HD1 Relating to Paid Family Leave

Aloha e Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Chun, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Sherry Menor, President and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber"). The Chamber respectfully opposes House Bill 755 House Draft 1 (HB755 HD1), which mandates the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family and medical leave insurance program by January 1, 2028, and begin collecting payroll contributions to fund benefits. By January 1, 2029, the Department must start processing claims and issuing payments. The bill also outlines eligibility requirements and employee protections under the program.

The proposed Paid Family and Medical Leave Program presents significant challenges for businesses due to its cost, administrative burden, and impact on workforce management. Employers need greater flexibility to work with employees on scheduling solutions that balance business needs with employee leave, rather than a one-size-fits-all mandate that adds financial and operational strain. The bill mandates payroll contributions from both employers and employees to fund paid leave benefits, affecting businesses of all sizes—especially small businesses with limited resources. Employers with five or more employees must cover the full contribution amount, while those with fewer than five must still contribute half.

Additionally, the program requires job protection for employees on leave, which could further strain businesses already grappling with workforce shortages. The mandate to maintain continued health benefits during an employee's leave places additional financial pressure on employers, who must also manage temporary staffing gaps. These rigid requirements limit the ability of businesses to adjust schedules and staffing in ways that best meet both operational needs and employee well-being.

To implement the program, a Family and Medical Leave Trust Fund will be established, funded by payroll contributions and initial state funding. Benefits will be available starting in 2029, with a maximum of 12 weeks for family leave and 26 weeks for medical leave per year. While the bill aims to support workers needing leave, its broad scope and funding structure place a heavy burden on businesses. The Chamber respectfully opposes this bill due to its high cost, administrative complexity, and potential negative impact on business operations and economic stability.

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii is the state's leading business advocacy organization, dedicated to improving Hawaii's economy and securing Hawaii's future for growth and opportunity. Our mission is to

foster a vibrant economic climate. As such, we support initiatives and policies that align with the 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii that create opportunities to strengthen overall competitiveness, improve the quantity and skills of available workforce, diversify the economy, and build greater local wealth.

We respectfully ask to defer House Bill 755 House Draft 1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



ALOHACARE

LATE

To: The Honorable Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair
The Honorable Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair
House Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce

From: Paula Arcena, External Affairs Vice President
Mike Nguyen, Public Policy Manager
Sarielyn Curtis, External Affairs Specialist

Hearing: Wednesday, February 12, 2025, 2:00 PM, Conference Room 329

RE: **HB755 HD1 Relating to Paid Family Leave**

AlohaCare appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of HB755 HD1**. This measure requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance payment of benefits by 1/1/2028; requires the Department to start receiving claims and paying benefits under the program 1/1/2029; and specifies eligibility requirements and employee protections under the program.

Founded in 1994 by Hawai'i's community health centers, AlohaCare is a community-rooted, non-profit health plan serving over 70,000 Medicaid and dual-eligible health plan members on all islands. Approximately 37 percent of our members are keiki. We are Hawai'i's only health plan exclusively dedicated to serving Medicaid and Medicaid-Medicare dually-eligible beneficiaries. Our mission is to serve individuals and communities in the true spirit of aloha by ensuring and advocating for access to quality, whole-person care for all.

AlohaCare's commitment to whole-person care and health equity includes addressing social determinants of health, including housing, nutrition, and economic stability. Many families locally and nationally are unable to take care of medical and life circumstances due to the lack of paid leave and economic instability. In 2024, about 11.1 million workers experienced a life event that they needed to take leave for but didn't. Two thirds of those workers, 7.3 million people, couldn't take leave because they couldn't afford it.¹ Working people need to be able to take time off to attend to their health, the health of family members, and other caregiving responsibilities without losing their wages or jobs.

Evidence of the health benefits linked to paid family and medical leave are well established. Rigorous U.S. and international studies find that adequate periods of

¹ nationalpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/key-facts-the-family-and-medical-leave-act.pdf



paid leave have positive effects on low-income families and their financial stability.² Providing the option of paid leave to families will decrease stress on families, specifically reducing intimate partner violence, decreasing maternal stress, and improving maternal physical and mental health.³ Studies have shown that providing new parents with paid time off to care for their newborn or recently adopted children contributes to healthy growth and development for infants and toddlers.⁴

Providing paid family leave will support individual and family health through the most significant medical and life altering experiences when it is truly needed the most.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in **support of HB755 HD1.**

² <https://news.stanford.edu/2022/03/09/real-benefits-paid-family-leave/>

³ <https://www.newamerica.org/better-life-lab/reports/paid-family-leave-how-much-time-enough/maternal-health-and-wellbeing/>

⁴ <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hpb20190301.484936/full/>



February 11, 2025

TO: Hawai'i House Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce

RE: House Bill 755, Relating to Paid Family Leave- SUPPORT

Chair and members of the Committee.

I am Adam Zarrin, the Director of State Government Affairs for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. Our organization's mission is to cure blood cancers and improve the quality of life of patients and their families.

We support HB 755, on behalf of blood cancer patients and their families.

Paid medical leave helps blood cancer patients pursue medical treatment earlier without fearing job loss or financial disaster. And for parents of children with cancer, they can focus on their child's care without additional financial stress.

Without access to job-protected paid medical leave, cancer patients and caregivers can face crushing choices between their physical and emotional health and well-being. A 2021 American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network survey found that the following experienced financial hardship resulting from lack of paid leave access:

- 1 in 2 cancer patients,
- 1 in 3 cancer survivors,
- 1 in 2 caregivers.ⁱ

It is estimated that more than 40% of working cancer survivors have had significant changes in employment because of their condition, including switching to part-time status or retiring early. These changes are more likely to happen to women and minority individuals.ⁱⁱ Comprehensive paid leave policies would help to relieve these pressures.

We appreciate your consideration of this important policy, and urge your support.

Thank you.

ⁱ American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network. (n.d.). Paid Leave is an Important Component of Cancer Care for Working Patients, Survivors and Caregivers. *Fightcancer.Org*. Retrieved September 10, 2021,

from <https://www.fightcancer.org/sites/default/files/Paid%20Leave%20External%20Factsheet%20Final%2010-23-20.pdf>

ⁱⁱ De Moor JS, et al. Employment Outcomes Among Cancer Survivors in the United States: Implication for Cancer Care Delivery. *J Natl Cancer Inst*. Mary 2021; 113(5): 641-644. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jnci/djaa084>

LATE



February 27, 2024

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Re: S.B. 2474 S.D.1 Relating to Family Leave

Hearing: Wednesday, February 28, 2024, 10:01 a.m., CR 211 & Videoconference

Dear Senators Dela Cruz and Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

Hawaii Women Lawyers (“**HWL**”) is a lawyer’s trade organization that aims to improve the lives and careers of women in all aspects of the legal profession, influence the future of the legal profession, and enhance the status of women and promote equal opportunities for all.

HWL supports the intent of S.B. 2474 S.D.1 to require the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program that pays family leave insurance benefits and extends the period of family leave to 16 weeks for certain business employees under specified terms.

HWL supports efforts to expand paid family leave. The majority of Hawaii’s workforce cannot afford to take unpaid leave, and women, who are often the primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents, are affected disproportionately by the absence of paid family leave. The development and advancement of women in the legal profession, as well as in other careers, is impeded by the lack of affordable caretaking options. The amendments proposed by S.B. 2474 are reasonable and sound.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this measure.

LATE

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 7:44:52 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Thomas Jones	Gyotaku Restaurants	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

February 11, 2025

Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair

Rep. Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair

Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

RE: HB755 Relating to Paid Family Leave - In Opposition

This additional payroll tax is more than our restaurants and other restaurants can bear. The post COVID economy is still very challenging for us. Minimum wage increases, madatory compostable take out packaging, property insurance premiums, labor shortages, water/sewer fee increases, and the list of increasing expenses goes on.....

We do provide paid sick leave and vacation pay to our staff as well as free meals and other benefits which would likely need to be reduced if we have to add new payroll taxes.

Paid Family Leave is a very attractive benefit and might be manageable for some types of businesses. However, it would be a very very difficult expense and program for restaurants to deal with in this economy.

Thomas Jones

President

Gyotaku Japanese Restaurants



LATE

Papa Ola Lokahi
677 Ala Moana Blvd
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Phone: 808.597.6550 ~ www.papaolalokahi.org

House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Representative Scot Matayoshi, Chair

Representative Cory Chun, Vice Chair

February 12, 2025, 2:00 p.m.

Re: HB755 HD1 – Relating to Health

Position: Support

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and members of the committee,
Papa Ola Lōkahi testifies in **support of HB755 HD1**, which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance payment of benefit, requires the Department to start receiving claims and paying benefits under the program and specifies eligibility requirements and employee protections under the program. The ability for local families to remain in Hawai‘i can be strengthened through various measures, including this one, and we appreciate the Legislature’s commitment to build and strengthen programs that serve our islands’ ‘ohana.

Reports from various federal, state and local resources find that Native Hawaiians are likely to live in multi-generational households, which often puts them at the crux of balancing familial care needs with providing stable income. In addition, Native Hawaiians are one of the ethnicities found to be more likely as Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) or under the federal poverty line in Hawai‘i according to a 2022 Aloha United Way report. Caring for a family member—be it a new child or a kupuna or another loved one—can be an ‘ohana’s greatest source of financial vulnerability. Creating a paid family leave program in Hawai‘i not only allows kānaka maoli the ability to remain culturally grounded by supporting our ability to care for ‘ohana. It also helps to address financial stability for whole communities. **We strongly urge this committee to pass this measure.**

Mahalo for the opportunity to **support HB755 HD1**. If you have any further questions, please contact our Director of Policy & Strategy, Ke‘ōpū Reelitz at kreelitz@papaolalokahi.org.

Papa Ola Lōkahi, the Native Hawaiian Health Board, authorized by the federal Native Hawaiian Health Care Improvement Act, is charged with raising the health status of Native Hawaiians to the highest possible level, which we achieve through strategic partnerships, programs, and public policy.

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 1:46:00 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessie L Gonsalves	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I strongly support HB755!

Paid Family and Medical Leave data from other states shows that these policies increase productivity and businesses benefit. We need paid family leave so hardworking people in Hawai'i can take care of family needs without struggling to make ends meet.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony!

Jessie Gonsalves

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 1:46:24 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cynthia J. Goto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 1:49:46 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mariely Estoque	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I strongly support HB755!

Paid Family and Medical Leave data from other states shows that these policies increase productivity and businesses benefit. We need paid family leave so hardworking people in Hawai'i can take care of family needs without struggling to make ends meet.

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 1:50:01 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rachel Ebert	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I strongly support HB755!

As a maternal mental health specialist I know firsthand how vital paid family leave is for the families in our communities. We need paid family leave so hardworking people in Hawai'i can take care of family needs without struggling to make ends meet. Not only does this directly support the families, but has the potential of helping to prevent postpartum and depression and anxiety and further costs for our community. Please consider moving forward with HB755!

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony!

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 1:55:18 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Kunitake	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support 755 HD1.

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 1:56:19 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lynn Otaguro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

While families have difficulty making it with our cost of living, adding onto that the need to care for a family member and to take some time off from work makes things even more stressful and hard. Please support this bill to provide our families with some avenue of support and relief.

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 1:57:37 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patrick Chee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support paid family leave.

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 2:03:06 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Suzanne Holmes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Matayoshi, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Suzanne Holmes and I am a former family caregiver. . I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of **HB 755, HD 1** which establishes a family and medical leave insurance program for working family caregivers.

My father was afflicted with ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease). He slowly lost all motor function eventually being bed ridden and on a ventilator. My mother, siblings and I did our best but we needed more help than Medicaid would provide. We had to hire outside help at our own expense to help fill in the gaps as at least two individuals had to be available 24/7 to accomodate his many needs.

If just one of us could have had paid family leave we would not have to leave our mother with no assets, which were depleted for his care, after our father passed away from this devastating illness. Please support this bill.

Mahalo,

Suzanne Holmes

Lihue, HI 96766

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 2:05:48 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary Mostafanezhad	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Members of the Hawaii State Legislature,

I am writing to voice my strong support for the proposed bill on paid maternity leave. As a Hawaii resident and mother of three young children, I firmly believe that offering paid maternity leave is both an economic necessity and a moral obligation that aligns with our community values. Instead of questioning if we can afford paid maternity leave, we should be considering how we can afford not to implement it.

Paid maternity leave enables mothers to physically and emotionally recover after childbirth, leading to improved health outcomes for both mothers and their infants. Studies indicate that when mothers are able to bond with their newborns, it encourages healthier development and minimizes the risk of postpartum issues. In a state renowned for its dedication to family and community, it is crucial that we ensure every mother can care for her child without the added burden of financial insecurity.

Furthermore, introducing paid maternity leave can enhance workforce productivity. Companies that support their employees during this critical period experience lower turnover rates and higher employee satisfaction. This benefits not only families but also bolsters our local economy.

By passing this bill, Hawaii can lead the way in adopting family-friendly policies, ensuring that no mother has to choose between her career and her family. Let us invest in the future of our families and our state and pass this long overdue legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mary Mostafanezhad

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 2:07:44 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Karen L Worthington	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I strongly support passage of HB 755 relating to paid family leave. Our kupuna and keiki deserve to be cared for by family members in times of need, and 'ohana should not be forced to choose between income and caring for infants, the elderly, and other family members needing care during sensitive times.

Providing family and medical leave to more people, especially those in small businesses has significant, positive economic, social, and health benefits. Please support families and help our children be able to raise their children in Hawaii. Pass HB 755.

Sincerely,

Karen Worthington, Maui

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 2:12:21 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gerald Tokuno	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Matayoshi, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Gerald Tokuno and my wife and I were family caregivers her my mother & father for over 8 years. After going through wat it takes to be a caregiver, I am in **STRONG SUPPORT of HB 755, HD 1 which establishes a family and medical leave insurance program for working family caregivers.** My wife and I will not benefit from this proposed law, but hopefully it may help our children and grandchildren in the future.

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 2:14:38 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristy Arias	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support bill HB755!!!! I cannot count how many times I needed support from my work place due to unfortunate times. Help support your community by supporting bill HB755 now!!!! Mahalo nui loa!!!

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 2:56:11 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Iwalani Hall	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I strongly support HB755!

Paid Family and Medical Leave data from other states shows that these policies increase productivity and businesses benefit. We need paid family leave so hardworking people in Hawai'i can take care of family needs without struggling to make ends meet.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony!

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 3:12:17 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Natalie Graham-Wood	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

i support HB755 HD1. My name is Natalie Graham-Wood and I live at Sunset Beach, Oahu.

Hearing Date: Wednesday, February 12, 2025, 2:00 PM Conference Rm. 329

To: House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce
Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair
Rep. Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair

From: Jean Evans, (Individual)

Re: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 755, HD1, Relating to Paid Family Leave

Dear Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Chun, and Members of Committees,

My name is Jean Evans and **I am Strong support of HB 755, HD1 Relating to Paid Family Leave**

It is shocking to know that the United States is the **ONLY** developed country in the world that does not provide paid family leave. Currently 13 states and the District of Columbia do have such laws and all reports show they help to retain talented productive employees while increasing family well-being.

The proposed bill for family and medical leave is based on the successful insurance model which includes a large pool of companies and employees to make it affordable. The leave may be taken to care for a new child, a family member with a serious health condition, or a qualifying service member who is individual's next of kin. This leave may also be taken for self-care for victims of domestic abuse, sexual assault. In addition, an employee may take this leave if they are injured, sick or disabled and cannot perform their duties.

As well as benefiting employees and their families, paid family leave is good for businesses. Many companies are having significant difficulty recruiting employees who often initially choose to apply to a potential employer based their benefit package and, in particular, how they are seen to value and care for their staff. This benefit also has been shown to increase employee retention and loyalty.

Without paid family leave, it's been demonstrated that, workers and working families are relocating to areas that allow families to take paid time leave. This is true here in Hawaii where the cost of living is so high that workers cannot survive if they take unpaid leave or have to quit their job due to a family medical/health issue.

Please pass HB 755, HD1 for the sake of working families in Hawaii.

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony today and I encourage you to pass this important measure.



Jean Evans

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 3:36:58 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Molly Mamaril	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Chun, and Committee Members,

I am writing in **strong support of** HB755 HD1.

Paid Family and Medical Leave data from other states shows that these policies increase productivity and businesses benefit. We need paid family leave so hardworking people in Hawai'i can take care of family needs without struggling to make ends meet.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Molly Mamaril

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 3:50:09 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Naomi Yoshimoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony on House Bill No. 755, HD1

RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE

Wednesday, February 12, 2025 at 2:00 pm

Conference Room 329 & Videoconference

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

Chair Matayoshi, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Naomi Yoshimoto and I am a former caregiver. I am in **STRONG SUPPORT of HB 755, HD 1 which establishes a family and medical leave insurance program for working family caregivers**

On May 9 2014 after returning home from work I found my mother showing signs of a stroke. She was admitted to the hospital for a right pontine hemorrhagic stroke that left with sensory deficits on her left arm and leg; and with dizziness. On this day, not only did my mother’s life change but also my life. It marked the start of a 1.7 year journey of caring for my mother while working full-time as a home hemodialysis RN.

I was the sole caregiver for my mother. I had the ability to take care of my mother full-time at home. However, I also needed to work full-time to support myself being that I am single. It was not feasible nor safe for me to work 8+ hours a day five days a week, take after hour call from my patients, and come home and take care of my mother through the night. I needed help. After reviewing all the long-term care options for my mother, the best care option for my mother’s situation was to place her in a nursing home.

My daily routine was work – visit my mother: help her with dinner, provide mouth care after dinner, take her to the toilet, clean her up before bedtime; inventory her personal belongings; talk

with the nursing staff as needed. On non-work days, I would do my errands; buy needed care items for my mother; take care of my mother's finances; wash my clothing as well as my mother's clothing; then visit my mother: taking her around the facility or outside if the weather permitted; inventory and organize her personal belongings; assist her with meals; take her to the toilet, as needed; clean her up before bedtime; talk with the nursing staff as needed. On occasion, I had to talk with my mother's medical doctors, attend care meetings with the nursing home, or transport my mother to medical appointments – all during work time.

At this time, I had approved FMLA intermittent leave for my own chronic health issues; and was able to expand it to cover caring for my mother. However, FMLA hours are UNPAID leave hours. Fortunately, I had the maximum amount of vacation hours and sick hours accrued. Thus, I was able to use my vacation hours to cover the time needed to address my mother's medical and other care issues. I was also fortunate to have a job where I had more flexibility in managing my work hours so that I could visit / care for my mother in the evening time.

UNFORTUNATELY, after March 2015, after a change in management and less than a year before turning 65 years old, my work environment for the next 8 months became so hostile against me that, in the words of the State Unemployment Office, I was forced to quit my job at the end of November 2015. (This is a story left for another time.)

The fact that I lost my job worried my mother since I was using my funds to supplement her funds to pay for her nursing home care – even though, I kept telling my mother that I had another job starting in February 2016. However, I did not tell her that with this new job, my monthly income would be about 66% lower.

My mother died on January 10, 2016 after suffering another stroke in the early hours of the New Year – 2016.

Family caregivers are the backbone of Hawaii's long term care system. They provide countless hours of care that range from bathing, preparing meals and escorting loved ones for medical visits. Many are juggling their family responsibilities while working to pay for their household expenses and keep a roof over their heads. Some are the sandwich generation caring for both aging kupuna and younger keiki in school. This proposed paid leave would allow working family caregivers to care for their loved without sacrificing their job and income. Please support these unsung heroes by passing HB 755, HD1. They all deserve our support.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify!

Naomi Yoshimoto, MS, RN, eCNN, ACNS-BC-Retired

Honolulu, Hawaii

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 4:50:15 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sherrie Galdeira	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I strongly support HB755!

Paid Family and Medical Leave data from other states shows that these policies increase productivity and businesses benefit. We need paid family leave so hardworking people in Hawai'i can take care of family needs without struggling to make ends meet.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony!

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 5:01:02 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John A. H. Tomoso	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

02-10-25

RE:HB755HD1

Aloha,

I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of **HB 755, HD 1** which establishes a family and medical leave insurance program for working family caregivers. Like me, I don't know of anyone, in my relationships and/or sphere of influence who is **not**, directly or indirectly, a Family Caregiver!

You and I know that within the Aging Network, Family Caregivers are seen the backbone of Hawaii's long term care system. They provide countless hours of care that range from bathing, preparing meals and escorting loved ones for medical visits. Many are juggling their family responsibilities while working to pay for their household expenses and keep a roof over their heads. Some are the "Sandwich Generation" caring for both aging (respected) Loved Ones and younger keiki in school. This proposed paid leave would allow working Family Caregivers to care for their loved **without** sacrificing their job and income. Please support these unsung heroes by passing HB 755, HD1. They all deserve, and quite intimately so, our support.

Mahalo

John A H Tomoso+, MSW, ACSW

51 Ku'ula St., Kahului, HI 96732-2906

808-280-1749. john.a.h.tomoso@gmail.com

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE

Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair

Rep. Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair

NOTICE OF HEARING

DATE: Wednesday February 12, 2025

TIME: 2:00 pm

RE: HB 755 HD1 RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Chun, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Linda Dorset, and I am in STRONG SUPPORT of HB 755 HD1. The bill establishes a family leave insurance program that provides insurance benefits for working caregivers who need some paid time off to care for a loved one at home.

Family caregivers are the backbone of Hawaii's long term care system. They provide countless hours of care that range from bathing, preparing meals and escorting loved ones for medical visits. They lovingly perform these daily tasks so that the family member can remain in the home and age in place; but they sacrifice income, job security, and savings. Family caregivers often pay as much as \$7,200/Year out of their own pockets for needed supplies such as incontinent supplies, medications, and additional in-home assistance. It is estimated that there are 154,000 Caregivers giving 144 Million Care Hours/Year which amounts to \$2.6 Billion of Unpaid Labor/Year. Many must also balance work and caregiving or leave the workforce altogether. With Hawaii's high cost of living, few can afford to quit their jobs. They shouldn't have to choose between their own financial security and caring for a loved one.

Please support SB2474 SD2. Caregivers deserve this help. We know probably all of us will be needing this help.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify!

**Linda Dorset
Wailuku, Maui**

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 6:00:30 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
maureen Langberg	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo for your help! Please show you care for Hawaii families. 🙌😊

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 6:04:45 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jordan Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I strongly support HB755!

Paid Family and Medical Leave data from other states shows that these policies increase productivity and businesses benefit. We need paid family leave so hardworking people in Hawai'i can take care of family needs without struggling to make ends meet.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony!

February 12, 2025

To: Representative Scot Matayoshi, Chair
Representative Cory Chun, Vice Chair and
Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

From: Jeanne Y. Ohta

RE: HB 755 HD1 Relating to Paid Family Leave

POSITION: STRONG SUPPORT

I am writing in strong support of HB 755 HD1 Relating to Paid Family Leave. Paid Family Leave is essential for families, employers, our workforce, and the health of our communities.

The United States is the only developed country without national paid family and medical leave. Thirteen states and the District of Columbia have passed paid family and medical leave laws. Current federal and state leave is unpaid and applies only to large employers with more than 100 employees.

Paid family leave is good for business because employees are more productive when they have a benefit that helps to protect their families. Employers do not pay employees while they are on leave since they are paid from the state fund. Employees are more able to stay in the workforce rather than making the difficult decision to leave so they may care for their loved ones, leading to a shortage of workers.

Women, as the primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents, are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family and medical leave.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide my testimony in strong support of Paid Family Leave. I ask that the committee pass this measure.

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 7:47:25 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nadine NEWLIGHT	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Matayoshi, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Nadine NEWLIGHT, and I am in **STRONG SUPPORT of HB 755, HD 1 which establishes a family and medical leave insurance program for working family caregivers**

Family caregivers are the backbone of Hawaii’s long-term care system. They provide countless hours of care that range from bathing, preparing meals and escorting loved ones for medical visits. Many are juggling their family responsibilities while working to pay for their household expenses and keep a roof over their heads. Some are the sandwich generation caring for both aging kupuna and younger keiki in school. This proposed paid leave would allow working family caregivers to care for their loved ones without sacrificing their jobs and income. Please support these unsung heroes by passing HB 755, HD1. They all deserve our support.

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 7:53:56 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janet Berreman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hardworking families need paid family leave to take care of themselves without losing financial stability. This bill will enable young families to stay in Hawaii, raising their families here and caring for their kupuna.

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 8:10:42 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Annette Mente	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Rep. Matayoshi and Committee Members, Please support this critical legislation needed to support hard working families address the difficult cost of living challenges and remain in the state. Too many people, particularly those with children, are choosing more and more to find homes in more affordable states to raise their families. Paid family is also shown to help families raise healthier children, increasing rates of breastfeeding, immunizations, and recommended medical visits. Paid family leave also helps families care for elders, family members with disabilities or special needs. Stress on families are now at a crisis point. This evidence based policy solution can help improve the quality of life for Hawaii's families. Please pass HB 755.

Annette Mente

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 8:21:42 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sara Harris	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a mother and OBGYN, I strongly support paid family leave.

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 9:08:56 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alex Tam	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a public school teacher and I support paid family leave because I know many of my colleagues who have gone through childbirth during the school year and had to use up their sick days to take the necessary time off to rest their bodies. We do not have paid family leave as teachers and while we do accumulate sick days over time, for those of us in our early career it is simply not enough to cover a reasonable parental leave. I know a teacher who had to return to work while she was still bleeding after childbirth. Another teacher who took off all her days after giving birth and got sick later in the year and had to take unpaid leave in order to stay home in rest. Yet another teacher had to use up nearly all of her leave in her first year teaching. Being a first year teacher is challenging enough, but while raising a newborn and having only 3 sick days for the rest of the year is really tough.

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 9:25:56 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dawn Poiani	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB755 HD1

Finally a bill that looks after the health of the family.

Dawn P.

Honolulu, HI 96813

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 9:40:45 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alexandra Chou	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB755 HD1 requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family and medical leave insurance program that includes safe leave for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance the payment of benefits by 1/1/2028. The Department must also start receiving claims and paying benefits under the program by 1/1/2029.

This critical policy is not only beneficial for Hawai‘i’s caregivers and families but also to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking (all forms of gender-based violence) who need to take time off to receive victim services, make court appearances, seek medical services, or relocate themselves and family. Rhode Island, Connecticut, Oregon, Colorado, Minnesota, and Maine currently include safe leave in their paid family leave laws.

Paid safe leave provides survivors of violence with options:

- ways to navigate safety;**
- time to maintain their economic security; and**
- the chance to find healing without fear of job loss, leading to increased abuse and homelessness.**

Survivors who have already faced immense trauma should not be forced to choose between personal and family physical safety or financial stability. Survivors and their loved ones in Hawai‘i need paid safe leave to manage their safety, care for their families, and remain in the workforce.

Maintaining economic independence is critical to survivors’ immediate, intermediate, and long-term safety and ability to recover from trauma. However, many survivors struggle to

remain connected to the workforce as they face numerous challenges in obtaining and maintaining employment as a consequence of the abuse or violence.

A safe leave policy, as proposed in HB755 HD1, allows survivors to take paid time away from work to heal, recover, and make themselves and their families safe promises to strengthen survivors' ties to the workforce and allow them to meet critical needs in the wake of violence. Gender-based violence presents a concern for public health and safety, as well as for the economy, and victimization has serious repercussions for workers.

- **More than half of survivors of all types of violence report difficulty with work or school as a result of victimization.[1]**
- **Survivors and their loved ones miss over 6.7 million work days yearly.[2]**
- **A 2022 national survey of victims of all types of violence found that one in six violence survivors reported losing a job or being demoted when they needed time off from work due to victimization.[3]**
- **An overwhelming 83% of survivors of domestic violence report an abusive partner has disrupted their ability to work; of those, more than half have lost their jobs because of abuse.[4]**

By creating pathways to remain in the workforce and adequately support survivors of violence, Hawai'i's economy benefits from a reduction in lost productivity and retains talented and innovative workers.

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 9:45:07 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anne Weber-Yarbrough	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

As a new mom speaking as an individual, it is imperative that we support paid family leave to retain residents and make Hawaii a more affordable place to raise kids and live a fulfilling life. There are so many hardships put on working families already, this is a minimum to keep our state competitive with our closest neighbor states that residents are moving to in high numbers. I would go much further by pushing an earlier start date but this seems like it will be a huge missed opp if legislators don't act now during this session. Trust is already deeply eroded in our democratic system, this can help restore some faith.

Mahalo,

Anne

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 9:53:01 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
pamela anderson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I strongly support HB755!

Paid Family and Medical Leave data from other states shows that these policies increase productivity and businesses benefit. We need paid family leave so hardworking people in Hawai'i can take care of family needs without struggling to make ends meet.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony!

Pamela Anderson

87-155 Waiolu street, Waianae 96792

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 9:53:52 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dr. Casandra Simonson, MD	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

2/10/25

In Support of HB755

Thank you to the Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee members.

My name is Dr. Casandra Simonson. I have been a pediatrician for over ten years in Maui and I'm here speaking on my own behalf. I am urging the legislature to support HB755 paid family and medical leave. We are now facing the threat of decreased federal funding for programs that help those most in need. One thing we can do right now to offset these funding cuts is to pass paid family leave in our state. In my job I see newborns and mothers just days after delivery. Which means I see mothers who arrive sometimes alone, carrying a heavy awkward car seat and diaper bag. I see moms who are bleeding, in pain, with stitches, struggling to walk at all, and they are often alone. Not usually are they alone because they don't have family or a partner that cares but because their loved ones absolutely have to work. These moms haven't slept since they went into labor and in case you haven't heard Babies are hard. Sometimes they are sick, and sometimes there are complications for mom or baby. Raising a child in most of the world is a team effort. In the US, we expect a bleeding, in pain, exhausted mom to do it all, often alone. This might mean trouble bonding or trouble breastfeeding, or worse, falling asleep holding the baby and accidentally smothering it. It could mean the baby doesn't get enough nutrition or affection during crucial brain development periods. It could lead to the mom becoming depressed. It could lead to short tempers and fights with partners, breakups, evictions, it could lead to relying on substances to cope, it could lead to child abuse. Unfortunately, I have seen all of these scenarios first hand.

Parents are facing agonizing choices in order to make ends meet. Imagine your child gets very sick. Imagine having to choose- stay by their side and risk losing your housing? Or in order to keep making enough money you leave your child alone, scared and hurting in a hospital wondering where you are? A better system is before you with HB755.

Paid Family and Medical Leave isn't even a small step in the right direction, it's a huge leap, one you can take right now. Please vote yes for paid family leave. I look forward to taking pride in our state thanks to your actions.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:11:24 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Renee Rabb	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB755 by Rep Sayama to establish paid family leave in Hawai'i. This is much needed for working families. If we want to maintain our workforce, we must look to establish programs that provide incentives for people to stay. Paid family leave will help.

Mahalo,

Renee Rabb

Keaau, HI 96749

Big Island

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 11:15:42 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joell Edwards	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I strongly support HB755!

Paid Family and Medical Leave data from other states shows that these policies increase productivity and businesses benefit. We need paid family leave so hardworking people in Hawai'i can take care of family needs without struggling to make ends meet.

As a small business owner, I fully support this bill and my workers

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony!

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 11:28:13 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kylee Waiaʻu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I strongly support HB755!

Paid Family and Medical Leave data from other states shows that these policies increase productivity and businesses benefit. We need paid family leave so our hardworking citizens in Hawai‘i can take care of ‘ohana needs without struggling to make ends meet.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to submit testimony.

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 2:15:43 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christy MacPherson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Chun and members of the House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce,

I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB755 HD1. It is high time that we finally pass Paid Family Leave legislation. Once and for all. We have been advocating this for years now and we need to do whatever is necessary to get it done, whether that's working with DLIR to figure things out and/or getting all of our lawmakers on board.

Our working families are desperately needing this and we all know it.

Mahalo nui to our champion PFL legislators who get it and to all the other supporters who have been advocating a Paid Family Leave policy for our people.

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 5:40:17 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Younghee Overly	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for hearing HB755. I support this measure because everyone should be able to give or receive care without having to decide between caring for loved one and a livelihood.

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 7:06:29 AM

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

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

Comments:

I support HB755. Please pass this bill.

Mike Golojuch, Sr.

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 7:09:40 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chloe Pua'ena Vierra-Villanueva	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

My name is Pua'ena and I believe Hawai'i families need paid family and medical leave.

I am testifying in strong support of HB755. In Hawai'i, where many families are living paycheck to paycheck, it is critical that Hawai'i implement programs like this so that families are able to thrive, not just survive.

I strongly support HB755 because it establishes a paid family and medical leave program in Hawai'i which data from other states shows that these policies increase productivity and businesses benefit. Working families don't get to choose when or how medical needs happen, but they need to preserve their incomes and work stability when issues arise. Our economy can be stronger if we support workers through programs that help them obtain and stay at their jobs while being able to care for themselves and their families.

This program is for working families and ALICE families like mine who struggle to provide care for our medically complex child and sick, elderly parent without leave. My son was in the NICU for over 5 months after his early birth and I only had 2 weeks of parent leave (which my employer did not need to provide) before I had to go back to work full time. I only saw my baby 4 hours every week day between work and my commute home. As a Hawaiian immersion toddler teacher in Kāne'ohe, I was spending 9 hours a day caring for other children and sacrificing bonding with my child for some sense of financial security. We lost our rental apartment and we were drowning in medical bills due to the high cost of living in Hawai'i. This program is not only for the economic stability of Hawai'i, but for better health outcomes for babies, growing keiki, parents, caregivers, and survivors.

As a parent, Early Childhood Education professional, and concerned community member, I hope that our legislators can do this to help all of the people working hard in Hawai'i for Hawai'i.

Mahalo,

C. Pua'ena Vierra-Villanueva

'Ohana Leadership Council

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 7:14:07 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michele Golojuch	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As an Early Childhood Professional it is imperative that we have paid family leave. At this point in time parents drug their children to meet attendance standards so they can keep a roof over their heads and food on the table. This means we end up with extremely sick children in care. They then end up spreading the illness to others. Some children are Immuno compromised and while some will just be sick and get better others end up in the hospital. If parents had a choice to keep their ill child at home and not worry about loosing pay or even their job we could avoid this. I have personally witnessed parents braking down and saying if don't go in there won't be a job tomorrow can't they just stay at least a few hours then call me and I will come? Why do families have to choose. This bill could change that.

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 7:23:19 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joan Johnson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML). PFML would allow workers to take time off and still receive part of their income when they need to care for a loved one, bond with a new child or have a serious health issue of their own. PFML would include parental, caregiving and medical leave.

If this measure was approved, the state of Hawaii would run the PFML benefit program funded by small employee payroll deductions and contributions from employers, similar to the way in which Social Security and Medicare are funded. Workers would apply when leave was needed and employers would not pay employees while they were on leave since a portion of their salary would be paid by the state PFML fund.

No one should have to choose between caring for a loved one or themselves and a paycheck to help support their family. Thank you in advance for supporting Hawaii's working families by supporting this measure.

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 7:56:15 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elisabeth Mather	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a mental health counselor, I support paid family, medical, & safe leave for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Trauma treatment, court, medical care, etc take time and focus and it is essential to provide people with the ability to access these resources, particularly in a state where the vast majority of people are living pay check to pay check.

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 8:45:24 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Wendy Dame	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure because everyone should be able to give or receive care without having to decide between care and a job.

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 8:50:59 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Nanea Lo, and **I am writing in strong support of HB 755 HD 1**, which would establish a statewide paid family and medical leave program in Hawai‘i. As the Executive Director of Native Stories and an advocate for the well-being of our communities, I believe this bill is essential to ensuring the health, stability, and economic security of working families across our islands.

Every worker deserves the ability to take time off to care for themselves or their loved ones without the fear of financial hardship. Too often, families are forced to make impossible choices between earning a paycheck and tending to serious medical needs, whether it be a new child, an aging parent, or their own health crisis. We do not get to choose when illness strikes, but we can choose policies that protect and uplift our workers when they need it most.

For many Native Hawaiian and local families, multi-generational caregiving is a cultural norm, and paid family leave is a necessity—not a luxury. This program would ensure that our people can fulfill their kuleana (responsibility) to their ‘ohana without sacrificing financial security. Investing in paid family leave strengthens our workforce, promotes community well-being, and affirms Hawai‘i’s values of aloha and mālama.

I urge you to pass HB 755 HD 1 and take a meaningful step toward supporting our working families.

me ke aloha ‘āina,
Nanea Lo
Mō‘ili‘ili, HI 96826
Sierra Club of Hawai‘i Executive Commission Member
Board Member, Hawai‘i Workers Center
Kanaka Maoli/Lineal Descendant of the Hawaiian Kingdom

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 9:18:37 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dan Gardner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Matayoshi and Members of the House Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce. My name is Dan Gardner and my wife Deborah and I are both in strong support of HB 755 HD1 which establishes a family and medical leave insurance program for working family caregivers. Family caregivers are the mainstay of Hawaii’s long term care system. They provide countless hours of loving care ranging from bathing, preparing meals and escorting loved ones for medical visits. Many must juggle their family responsibilities while working to pay for their household expenses and keep a safe roof over their heads. Some are even caring for both aging kupuna and younger keiki in school. This proposed paid leave initiative would allow working family caregivers to continue caring for their loved ones without sacrificing their job and income. Please support these dedicated hardworking members of our community by passing HB 755 HD1. They all deserve our support.

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 9:31:08 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julianna Davis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I am testifying in strong support of HB 755 HD 1 because we should not have to choose between a paycheck and caring for ourselves or our loved ones. It's time for us to prioritize Hawai'i's workers by passing paid family and medical leave.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Julianna Davis

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 10:19:34 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laurie Takeno	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I strongly support HB755!

I have worked in the education field for over 20 years and I see how the majority of our local families struggle to make ends meet. Having to choose between the demands of our jobs (which our family income depends upon) and caring for a loved one is not really a choice--either decision leads to painful consequences. This bill is about standing up for what's right and fighting for families who don't have the time and luxury to pay someone else to do it for them. That is the majority of our local, working class families here in Hawai'i. Paid Family and Medical Leave data from other states shows that these policies increase productivity and businesses benefit. PFML would be a payroll deduction from the employee, so it would not take any extra funding from employers and small business owners. This is a small investment with a long-lasting impact. We need paid family leave so hardworking people in Hawai'i can take care of family needs without struggling to make ends meet and minimize the trauma our families experience when they lose their jobs, or lose their loved ones.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony!

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 11:15:36 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janet Morse	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB755

During a recent conversation with my audiologist she commented that her mother now needed care and that her family expected her to step up. She expressed her unhappiness with this expectation speculating that it negated the 5 years of education required for her profession.

Women are the primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents.

They are the ones who are expected to take on the role no matter what position they hold or how long it took them to get there.

Additionally, women already experience a pay gap in Hawaii making \$0.84 for every dollar a man does. That gap increases to \$0.74 for women who are mothers and caregivers.

Women are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family and medical leave.

I support this measure because everyone should be able to give or receive care without having to decide between care and a job.

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 11:17:08 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vivian Pham	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of Paid Family Leave. Paid Family has benefits for everyone:

- Paid family leave **allows workers to take time off and still receive part of their income** when they need to care for their own serious health needs or those of a loved one, or to bond with a new child. We don't get to choose when medical needs arise, but we need to **ensure economic stability** for when they do.
- Paid family leave is **good for business**— employees are more productive (which can help increase profits) and loyal (which lowers turnover costs).
- States with paid family leave have seen **significant health, social, and economic benefits**.

As a mother of a 2-year old, I couldn't imagine time away from my newborn with the fear of no income coming in as I bond with my child. Fortunately, I had enough paid leave to cover most of my time off but it was not enough. I can't imagine the mothers that go back only after 2 weeks as they aren't fortunate enough to be able to take paid leave through their employer. And, we have an aging population where most of us are caretakers for our parents and having family paid leave will ensure all family members can be taken care of appropriately without the stress of finances. Thank you for the consideration.

02-11-25

RE:HB755HD1

To: Chair Matayoshi and Members of the Committee

Our names are Sara and Daniel Medeiros. We live on the island of Hawaii and are retired. We are in STRONG SUPPORT of HB 755, HD 1 which establishes a family and medical leave insurance program for working family caregivers.

Our island's aging population is growing and growing. Outside caregiving services to allow care in the home while family works is unaffordable, and the number of appropriate daycare and residential homes for elderly is very limited.

While my father/father in-law was very ill, my sister/sister in-law took unpaid time off to take care of him as he was dying. Luckily she was able to go back to her job upon his death. Needless to say, it was very difficult. She sacrificed a year toward retirement credits, promotion, sick leave and other benefits.

Family Caregivers are the backbone of Hawaii's long term care system. This proposed paid leave would allow working Family Caregivers, such as my sister/sister in-law to care for loved ones without sacrificing their job and income. Please support these unsung heroes by passing HB 755, HD1. They all deserve, and quite intimately so, our support.

Mahalo,

Sara and Daniel Medeiros

73-1786 Hao Street

Kailua Kona, HI 96740

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 12:07:55 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leilani Kailiawa	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha!

I am in strong support for HB755. My family and I could have benefited from this bill if it had been passed many years ago. My family is from Hawai'i Island. I was pregnant with my 3rd child and went through complications before and after my son was born at Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children. I needed to take off work, be on bed rest, and be closely monitored before my son was born. I was away from my family for an extended 7-month stay due to my son's medical condition. My husband took off from work without pay and traveled back and forth from Hawai'i Island to Oahu every two weeks during the weekend so that he could give me a break and bond with his first child. We both did not have the benefit of paid family and medical leave. We struggled financially, but it was important for us to stay near his bedside to help with his developmental changes and overall quality of life and well-being and to give me a break from taking care of our son.

Please pass HB 755. It is not just a policy. It is a way for families like mine to heal and thrive. Families should not have to choose between their health, family, and income.

Mahalo nui loa for your time

Leilani Kailawa

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 12:15:01 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nike-Michelle Tolentino	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I strongly support HB755 because of its positive impacts on families in Hawai'i. Paid Family and Medical Leave strengthens businesses and allows Hawai'i's families to care for their loved ones without the financial burden. As you know, the cost of living here in Hawai'i has reached new highs and hardworking parents like myself are working multiple jobs to continue putting nutritious food on the table and furthering our children's education. I can't imagine having to worry about food and financial security should someone happen to one of us. Paid Family and Medical Leave would help alleviate costs to families should they find themselves in that positions - and so many families do. Please support us by supporting bill HB755.

Me ka ha'aha,

Momi Tolentino

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 12:18:48 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noel Shaw	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Care for Hawaii's families is soooo sooo important. As a mother of three and as part of the end of life care team for my grandmother, I know the support that paid family leave creates space for us so do the important work of caring for ohana. Please pass and support this bill fully. This needs must be seen through and is a true indicator of a caring society. We must do better. The aloha spirit demands it.

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 12:19:16 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eileen M Gawrys DNP	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support

[HB755](#)

[SB852](#)

which state:

By 1/1/2028, requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance payment of benefits. By 1/1/2029, requires the Department to start receiving claims and paying benefits under the program. Specifies eligibility requirements and employee protections under the program.

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 12:30:43 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alice Luck	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Every worker may need leave to care for themselves, and the pandemic has demonstrated how the lack of paid and job-protected leave can place impossible demands on workers and families.

- The need for paid leave is growing as America’s population ages. By 2030, all baby boomers will be 65 or older, and many will require some form of care.⁴ Millions of adults provide unpaid care for older adults, and many of those caregivers also have paid jobs.⁵
- Some people’s caregiving responsibilities are so demanding that under the current system they have to give up paid work entirely or retire early. Paid leave for workers caring for older adults or seriously ill or disabled family members would reduce stress and financial strain on families, while helping workers maintain ties to the labor force.
- Need and access are two different things, and currently, access to paid leave is unevenly distributed by race and across industries and income levels.⁶ Having access to paid leave can ensure economic stability and provide critical support for workers and their families, employers and communities – as well as the economy at large.

HOW DOES PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE BENEFIT WORKERS AND THEIR FAMILIES?

- Paid family and medical leave can improve public health and reduce personal stress. The pandemic has underscored the need for policies that ensure people can care for their families without jeopardizing their economic security. The pandemic also showed the need for policies to help workers recover from their own unexpected or long-term illness without a drastic loss of income.
- Access to paid family and medical leave can increase equity. Currently, low-wage workers and people of color have less access to paid leave than high-wage and white workers, so their caregiving demands can result in lower earnings, wealth building and retirement security.

HOW DOES PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE BENEFIT U.S. BUSINESSES AND GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS?

- Paid family and medical leave is already working for several states, thousands of large and small businesses, and the federal government.
- The U.S. is the only OECD country without a national paid leave policy.⁷ A national paid family and medical leave policy could strengthen America’s global competitiveness, allow smaller businesses to be more competitive with larger ones, and help protect the U.S. economy against potential disruptions.
- It’s time for policies that reflect the realities of working families and fuel economic growth. Paid family and medical leave is linked to increased business productivity, higher employee

morale,

recruitment and retention of skilled workers, and reductions in costs associated with turnover.⁸

- Investing in care infrastructure is investing in America's future. Paid family and medical leave is a critical policy to support workers and their families with the continuum of care and financial security needed across their lifetimes. Workers can't fully participate in the economy if they and their loved ones aren't receiving the care that they need. That's why policies that reflect the realities of working families and fuel economic growth, like paid family and medical leave,

benefit

workers and employers alike.

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 12:32:49 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Samantha Duhaylonsod	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Samantha Duhaylonsod. I am a Family Nurse Practitioner serving the families and community here on the Northshore. I strongly support Family and medical leave insurance. Research indicates family maternity leave, particularly when paid is associated with positive impacts on maternal health and improving child development and outcomes. This overall improves general health for the whole family and overall society. Please highly consider approving both Bills SB852 and HB755. Mahalo

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 12:56:23 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Molly Takagi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I strongly support HB755!

Paid Family and Medical Leave data from other states shows that these policies increase productivity and businesses benefit. We need paid family leave so hardworking people in Hawai'i can take care of family needs without struggling to make ends meet.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony!

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 1:33:17 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Olivia Manayan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Esteemed Committee Members,

My name is Olivia Manayan and I am an OB/GYN practicing in Honolulu. I testify as a concerned citizen, who is very much in support of the establishment of a paid family leave policy. Compared to other nations, the United States has some of the worst (often times, a complete lack of), paid parental leave policies; the US is the only OECD country that does not have a federal paid family leave policy [1]. It is time that we as a country, even if that means one state at a time, catch up to the rest of the world and provide an environment that is supportive of growing families.

In addition to improved maternal health outcomes, the enactment of paid family leave policies has also been linked to improved infant outcomes, including decreased rates of low birthweight, preterm birth, and infant hospitalization rates [1]. As early life environment has been shown to significantly affect both economic and health outcomes throughout one's life cycle, it is imperative that we as a society focus on policies which will help in optimize early life environments, like paid family leave.

As an aside, I will also point out that not having a paid family leave disproportionately, poorly affects new parents, particularly women, in the workforce. This has several detrimental effects, including:

- Discouraging young, working professionals from starting families for fear of falling behind in their careers or losing their positions
- Encouraging young professionals to put off having children until they are older, increasing their risks associated with pregnancy and delivery
- Not allowing new parents time to adequately bond with their new babies

I hope that you will continue to prioritize policies like these, which help to advance society and to make for a more equitable and empowered community.

Thank you for your time,

Olivia Manayan, MD MPH
University of Hawaii OB/GYN

Works Cited

1. "Paid Family Leave Policies And Population Health, " Health Affairs Health Policy Brief, March 28, 2019 .DOI: [10.1377/hpb20190301.484936](https://doi.org/10.1377/hpb20190301.484936)

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 1:41:32 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patricia Bilyk	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

TO: Rep Scot Matayoshi, Chair, Rep Cory Chun, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection

FROM: Patricia Bilyk, RN, MPH, MSN, IBCLC (Retired)

RE: HB 755 HD1 Paid Family Leave

DATE: Wednesday, February 12, 2025

TIME/PLACE: 2:00pm Room 329

Good Afternoon. I am Patricia Bilyk an advanced practice registered nurse specializing in Maternal Infant Nursing and Breastfeeding. I stand in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB 755 HD1 Paid Family Leave. I support a Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program for the families in the state of Hawai'i!

I've been a Registered Nurse in the State of Hawai'i for 53 years primarily working with families having newborn or adopted infants. I've cared for and assisted them to to learn about/ care for and breastfeed their infants. Also I've counseled them on returning to work issues. I feel it is important for these families to have as much early time together as possible w their infants. It is a corner stone of our Society to protect and provide for our families at this vulnerable developmental time in an Ohana's existence.

I also feel they need to have wage replacement while out of work. Wage replacement is an important issue causing many women to return to work early to provide needed income for their families. I further support the 12 weeks of paid leave for newborn infant and 24 weeks for medical leave parts of this bill. I know from my nursing practice experience, postpartum women who have medical conditions making them unable to return to work by 12 weeks.

Last, I agree with the employee contribution per paycheck into the insurance program. Also this program needs to be for all workers- public and private so as workers move to other jobs in the State, they continue to have this important benefit if needed.

it is **TIME** for the State of Hawai'i and specifically the Department of Labor, to help and support the hard working families of Hawaii!

I encourage this Committee to favorable pass HB 755HD1 out of Committee.

Mahalo

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 1:48:40 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marcela Montalto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support for Paid Leave in Hawaii

Ensuring paid leave for workers in Hawaii is essential for fostering a healthier, more resilient workforce and supporting families across the state. Many employees face difficult choices between earning a paycheck and caring for a newborn, an ailing family member, or their own health. A strong paid leave policy would provide financial stability for workers during critical life moments, reduce economic insecurity, and promote workplace retention. Additionally, paid leave has been shown to improve public health outcomes and contribute to overall economic productivity by reducing turnover costs and increasing employee engagement. Given Hawaii's high cost of living, implementing paid leave is not just a moral imperative but also an economic necessity, ensuring that workers do not have to sacrifice their well-being for financial survival.

LATE

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 2:06:24 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Heather Desensi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Heather], and I am both a mother and a licensed therapist in Hawaii. I am here today to strongly support the establishment of ****paid family leave**** in our state. As both a professional who works closely with families and a mother who has personally experienced the challenges of maternity leave, I can attest to the profound need for policies that ****prioritize the well-being of parents, children, and our workforce as a whole****.

When I gave birth, I was faced with an impossible choice: ****prioritize financial stability or my own health and my newborn’s well-being.**** Like so many parents, I had to navigate the early weeks of recovery and bonding with my child while also worrying about the economic consequences of taking unpaid time off. No family should have to choose between their livelihood and their baby’s critical first months of life.

As a therapist, I have seen firsthand how ****the lack of paid leave impacts mental health****—especially for new mothers who are already at risk for postpartum depression and anxiety. When parents return to work too soon, it disrupts the essential bonding period that supports infant development and maternal well-being. The stress of unpaid leave often leads to ****increased mental health struggles, higher rates of burnout, and even long-term consequences for both parents and children****.

Paid family leave is not just a ****compassionate**** policy—it is a ****public health necessity****. Studies consistently show that ****paid leave leads to better maternal health outcomes, lower infant mortality rates, stronger family bonds, and greater economic security****. It allows parents to recover from childbirth, establish crucial early attachment with their babies, and return to the workforce healthier, more focused, and more productive.

Hawaii has the opportunity to be a leader in ****supporting working families****. Paid family leave is not just about parents—it’s about ****creating a stronger, healthier, and more resilient community**** for generations to come. I urge you to support and pass legislation that provides ****meaningful, accessible, and comprehensive paid family leave for all families in our state****.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Heather Desenis

LATE

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 3:01:58 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Allison Mikuni	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB 755 to ensure a strong and robust economy. This legislation for paid family and medical leave will allow employees to maintain their financial viability during time off to care for newborn children, elderly parents, and more. This program would be fully employee-supported with small payroll deductions going into a state fund. The need for this program at the state level is particularly urgent now with labor protection programs being rolled back at the federal level. States must now become more self-reliant, and Hawaii can do it, with sensible measures like this which allow all of us to take part in being the solution. Thank you for supporting HB 755.

LATE

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 3:01:58 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Allison Mikuni	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB 755 to ensure a strong and robust economy. This legislation for paid family and medical leave will allow employees to maintain their financial viability during time off to care for newborn children, elderly parents, and more. This program would be fully employee-supported with small payroll deductions going into a state fund. The need for this program at the state level is particularly urgent now with labor protection programs being rolled back at the federal level. States must now become more self-reliant, and Hawaii can do it, with sensible measures like this which allow all of us to take part in being the solution. Thank you for supporting HB 755.

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Chun and Committee Members,

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in **strong support** of HB755 HD1.

LATE

My name is Gail Abrena-Agas.

I am an advocate in our community for different issues, but the views I am expressing here are as a 40-something year old working mom raising two young kids with my working wife while I juggle a full-time job and part-time law school. Like many Hawai'i 'ohana, we have a lot going on any given day, mostly because "a lot" is what we have to do to afford living in Hawai'i. It is absolutely exhausting, but this is home. There is nowhere else I want to raise my kids and settle as an 'ohana.

Our family is in decent health today, but I understand that there will come a day when the health needs of a family member, perhaps one of our aging parents, will demand our attention. Nearly ten years ago, I got a glimpse of that need when my mother suffered a massive heart attack and received triple bypass surgery, and I moved home so my wife and I could help with her care. One of us got a job and the other focused on staying home to help my mother recover and care for our baby son. We moved in with my parents to make it work financially. Could we do it today? Not a chance.

Paid family leave is a necessity for so many 'ohana that include working families like ours, but especially for those that earn low wages or are asset limited, income constrained and employed. Many of us are in a sandwich generation that will step into caring for our aging parents in a heartbeat, but we do not feel prepared. FMLA will not pay our bills and take care of our keiki in a state with one of the highest childcare costs. Exhausting vacation and sick time are not enough, as most qualifying medical conditions require more time for adequate treatment.

When my wife gave birth to my now 3-year-old daughter, I exhausted my vacation to bond with my child. In LGBTQ+ households that are starting families, it is one of the most important things you can do to connect deeply with your child if he/she/they do not have a biological connection with either or both parents. (Common for LGBTQ+ households that adopt, use assisted reproductive technology, etc.) My company has since rolled out a parental leave policy that I wish I could have benefited from, instead of taking an extended "vacation" and worrying about how extended leave by a non-birthing mom would be perceived by my company and coworkers.

I have spoken with some of you about paid family and medical leave. Rep. Kong, I am your constituent. As a parent advocate, I have dropped into some of your offices in recent years to tell you how much this would mean to Hawai'i families like mine. Instead of kicking this important measure to the curb for another year because of what employers are fearing—I say "another year" because we will not stop fighting for a necessity—please talk to those who have poured their energy, time and hearts into writing a bill that addresses a desperate community need and who have proposed sensible mechanisms to get it done. If you do not agree, please seek them out and have the conversations.

Working 'ohana in Hawai'i are counting on you.

Mahalo,



Gail Abrena-Agas

'Aiea resident and working mommy to two keiki

LATE

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 4:49:32 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Spencer Dehnavi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Paid family leave increases the physical and mental health of parents, keiki, kupuna, and by extension benefits the work environment by reducing attrition and sick calls.

LATE

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 4:57:47 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elizabeth Nelson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This seems like a reasonable bill. Families need to be able to take some time off for emergencies and not be faced with losing their job.

Please seriously consider passing this bill. Thank you so much.

Elizabeth Nelson

Kaneohe

LATE

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 8:28:41 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deanna Espinas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for supporting this bill which has tremendous impact for families who experience domestic violence.

LATE

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 8:34:04 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elizabeth Hansen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I support this measure because everyone should be able to give or receive care without having to decide between care and a job.

LATE

February 11, 2025

**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB755
RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE**

COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE

Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair

Rep. Cory M. Chun, Vice Chair

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Chun, and Members of the Committee,
My name is Tani Kalei Salazar and I'm a Social Worker, born and raised in Honolulu. I have seen many patients and their families in need of paid family medical leave. Life happens and we want to be able to care for our loved ones in a heart beat. But that decision becomes very difficult when that choice could impact our ability to buy food to feed our families, to pay for electricity and a home to live in. Hawai'i people need paid family leave.

My friends and family have personally experienced the negative effects of the lack of paid family leave. Through personal health crises and caregiving for kupuna, they've had to endure with less pay and their jobs on the line.

I support the amendments offered by the Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks! (HCAN) testimony.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Tani K. Salazar

Tani Kalei Salazar, LSW, MSW

LATE

LATE *Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

I support this Bill for the following reasons (list does not reflect order of priority or importance and is not exhaustive):

1. It puts into practice the Aloha Spirit Law of Hawai'i and specifically the iteration of reciprocity.¹ Here we have a situation of family taking care to their elders, keiki, and other members of their community in accordance with the Aloha Spirit and ensuring they are cared for. There must be buy-in and support for this by the legislature as such care benefits the stressed healthcare system. It also addresses issues of housing and various other necessities. It seems only fair that the legislature reciprocates with ensuring those family members are also taken care of and able to continue to care for their family;
2. Employment should not be contingent on sacrificing the well-being of the person employed or their family. This does not allow for anyone to be productive and is contrary to the goals of employment for both the employee and the employer;
3. Dissatisfaction with employment or the equity of the employment system and correlating factors such as healthcare will certainly drive people away from the State to ensure they can provide a decent standard of living for their family;
4. There is also uncertainty as to whether the government can be trusted to have the best interests of the people it governs or if it is merely a pawn of the wealthy and in this case employers who do not wish to abide by the Aloha Spirit and reciprocate with basic equity and Aloha;
5. Also entrenched within the 'Ohana of Hawai'i is the practice of Hānai, which also speaks to the Aloha Spirit. It is unconscionable if keiki hānai are not included as equal members of the family and their 'Ohana aren't allowed to effect the FCML in their favor. To also build upon that expression of family it is important to recognize members of the LGBTQ+ community and their expressions of family that align with the practices of hānai and 'Ohana. Has this legislative body properly consulted with the affected communities to ensure their needs are being protected and they are being provided with equitable workplace rights?
6. Whether through the expression of māhū or other expressions the LGBTQ+ community is not new to Hawai'i. Both with the Aloha Spirit Law and the constitutionally enshrined protection of culture the legislature has the obligation to protect and extend equitable rights to the LGBTQ+ community;
7. In emphasizing not just Aloha, but the importance of 'Ohana for which Hawai'i is well known it is important to ensure that parents, irrespective of their gender or sexual expression, are able to be parents and provide their keiki with the protection and support they need to become engaged members of society;
8. The best way to think about treating people with humanity and decency, which is what this Bill will take a strong step towards, is that you are actively reducing future harm

¹ <https://www.civilbeat.org/2021/08/peter-apo-aloha-is-hawaii-law-a-global-brand-and-a-system-of-positive-behavior/>

such as suicidal ideation for both the parents and the children – this is not an exhaustive list;

9. You will also be contributing to ensuring that fewer families have to choose between losing their jobs or being homeless, which is the position people are put in when they don't have guaranteed options to family care and medical leave;
10. Not moving forward with an equitable version of this Bill is a vote against families. It is a vote against healthy children. It is a vote in favor of increasing medical issues, neglecting vulnerably family members and exploitation of the workforce that is not sustainable and has resulted in various societal ills that are overt and obvious in Hawai'i with the many homeless and struggling to survive families;
11. Aloha is not something that only tourists or those visiting Hawai'i should get to experience. Those who live here and give so many visitors the wonderful feeling of aloha should be the foremost beneficiaries of the Aloha Spirit;
12. I conclude with a warning that continuing to deprive people of equity will only lead to dying communities and loss of economic progress as is happening in nearby Japan and South Korea with people refraining from marriage, having children and moving away for better economic and health opportunities;
13. An equitable version of this Bill will be a milestone towards ensuring the economic future of Hawai'i and failing to do so will have a marked negative impact on the legislature as much as anyone else. How can people have faith in those who govern them when they don't care about their well-being or their family's well-being?
14. This is an easy measure to support because it is a win-win-win for everyone involved.

LATE

HB-755-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 12:23:26 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elba	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Family need to be able to heal when sick or Family dick & not have to worry about losing their job.