
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the federal
2 government exempts nonprofit organizations from federal income
3 tax because these organizations provide communities with
4 critically needed programs, goods, and services, many of which
5 would otherwise be provided by government agencies and,
6 therefore, by taxpayers. However, the federal government does
7 not exempt any income of nonprofit organizations that is
8 generated by an unrelated business activity not substantially
9 related to the nonprofit organization's tax exempt purpose.

10 The legislature further finds that, like the federal income
11 tax law, the State provides an exemption from the general excise
12 tax for income generated by a nonprofit organization's
13 charitable activities. Similar to the federal "unrelated
14 business income" tax provision, state general excise tax law
15 does not exempt any income of nonprofit organizations that is
16 generated by activity "the primary purpose of which is to
17 produce income even though the income is to be used for or in



1 furtherance of the exempt activities" of the nonprofit
2 organization.

3 The legislature also finds that because the State's general
4 excise tax law referring to "the primary purpose of which is to
5 produce income" does not align with the federal "unrelated
6 business income" provision, nonprofit organizations have
7 additional burdens in accounting for income in disparate ways.
8 While the federal law is clear with an extensive body of
9 interpretation, there remains ambiguity with the state general
10 excise tax provision. More significantly, federal income tax
11 law does not consider fundraising income as unrelated business
12 income and, therefore, fundraising income is not subject to
13 federal income tax. However, state law has been interpreted to
14 regard fundraising income as subject to the general excise tax.

15 The legislature additionally finds that imposing the
16 general excise tax on a nonprofit organization's fundraising
17 income deprives the nonprofit sector of needed financial support
18 for the delivery of program services. Since the general excise
19 tax is imposed on gross income, nonprofit organizations are
20 taxed on fundraising income without deduction for any costs
21 related to those fundraising activities, such as room rentals,



1 food and beverage service, marketing, and other expenses,
2 resulting in a financial "double whammy" on nonprofit
3 organizations.

4 The purpose of this Act is to align the state general
5 excise tax law with the federal income tax law by exempting from
6 the State's general excise tax, the fundraising income generated
7 by a tax-exempt nonprofit organization, while retaining the
8 general excise tax for gross income derived from any "unrelated
9 trade or business", as defined by the Internal Revenue Code.
10 This Act expands the general excise tax exemptions available to
11 charitable, religious, and educational organizations and is not
12 intended to limit or restrict any currently available tax
13 exemptions. Furthermore, this Act does not affect rental income
14 generated by an unrelated trade or business which will continue
15 to be subject to the general excise tax.

16 SECTION 2. Section 237-23, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
17 amended by amending subsection (b) to read as follows:

18 "(b) The exemptions enumerated in subsection (a) (3) to (7)
19 shall apply only:

20 (1) To those persons who shall have registered with the
21 department of taxation by filing a written application



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1 for registration in such form as the department shall
2 prescribe, shall have paid the registration fee of
3 \$20, and shall have had the exemption allowed by the
4 department or by a court or tribunal of competent
5 jurisdiction upon appeal from any assessment resulting
6 from disallowance of the exemption by the department;

7 (2) To activities from which no profit inures to the
8 benefit of any private stockholder or individual,
9 except for death or other benefits to the members of
10 fraternal societies; and

11 (3) To the fraternal, religious, charitable, scientific,
12 educational, communal, or social welfare activities of
13 such persons, or to the activities of hospitals,
14 infirmaries, sanitarium, and potable water companies,
15 as such~~[, and not to any activity the primary purpose~~
16 ~~of which is to produce income even though the income~~
17 ~~is to be used for or in furtherance of the exempt~~
18 ~~activities of such persons.]; provided that gross
19 income derived from any "unrelated trade or business",
20 as defined in section 513 of the Internal Revenue Code
21 of 1986, as amended, shall not be exempt under this~~



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Report Title:

Nonprofit Organizations; GET; Exemption; Unrelated Trade or Business Activities

Description:

Clarifies the GET exemption for unrelated trade or business activities of nonprofit organizations.

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