

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

1420

Honolulu, Hawaii

, 2025

MAR 21

RE: S.B. No. 299
S.D. 2
H.D. 1

Honorable Nadine K. Nakamura
Speaker, House of Representatives
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2025
State of Hawaii

Madame:

Your Committee on Health, to which was referred S.B. No. 299,
S.D. 2, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO LOAN REPAYMENT FOR HEALTHCARE
PROFESSIONALS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to appropriate funds to the
Healthcare Education Loan Repayment Program to continue to provide
loan repayment assistance to health care workers in Hawaii.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure
from the Office of the Governor; Department of Health; State
Health Planning and Development Agency; University of Hawai'i at
Mānoa John A. Burns School of Medicine; one member of the Kaua'i
County Council; Healthcare Association of Hawaii; Hawai'i Pacific
Health; Hawaii Medical Association; Democratic Party of Hawai'i;
Hawai'i - American Nurses Association; Hawaii Substance Abuse
Coalition; Liberty Dialysis-Hawai'i; Hawai'i Primary Care
Association; The Queen's Health Systems; Hawai'i Nurses'
Association - OPEIU Local 50; Hawaii Medical Service Association;
Hawaii Association of Health Plans; Hawaii Dental Association;
Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i; AlohaCare; and two individuals.

2025-2786 SB299 HD1 HSCR HMSO



Your Committee finds that a persistent workforce shortage in Hawaii's health care industry has created difficulties for patients trying to access health care services, in part because of the combination of the State's high cost of living and the large amount of educational debt carried by many health care professionals. Your Committee further finds that the Legislature appropriated a total of \$30,000,000 over the 2024-2025 fiscal biennium to fund a Healthcare Education Loan Repayment Program (HELP), which assists health care professionals in Hawaii with repaying their health care education loans in exchange for a commitment to provide at least two years of health care service to patients in Hawaii.

In 2023, HELP awarded loan repayments to eight hundred ninety health care workers, including two hundred thirty-eight primary care providers and two hundred fifty behavioral health providers, and had approximately one thousand five hundred applicants waitlisted; these waitlisted applicants will be reviewed, and awards will continue to be provided to the extent that funding is available for 2024 applications. The program awarded grants to a wide range of health care providers, including case managers, certified nurse assistants, social workers, registered nurses, and physicians. Your Committee believes that continuing to fund this program will help the State address its health care workforce shortages, encourage health care professionals to remain in the State, and ensure Hawaii's residents receive timely access to health care services.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Requiring applicants for loan repayment assistance to commit to two years of full-time service in the State;
- (2) Changing the effective date to July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and
- (3) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

Your Committee respectfully requests your Committee on Finance, should it deliberate on this measure, to consider an appropriation amount of \$30,000,000.



As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Health that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 299, S.D. 2, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 299, S.D. 2, H.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Finance.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Health,



GREGG TAKAYAMA, Chair



