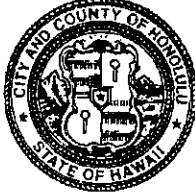


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AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE,
CONSUMER PROTECTION, AND HEALTH

THE HONORABLE JOSH GREEN, CHAIR
THE HONORABLE STANLEY CHANG, VICE CHAIR
AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

FROM: NALANI AKI, ~~COUNTY EXECUTIVE ON AGING~~
~~DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES~~

SUBJECT: ~~SUPPORT~~ FOR SB 536, RELATING TO FALL PREVENTION

The Elderly Affairs Division (EAD) is Honolulu's designated Area Agency on Aging and operates in accordance with the Older Americans Act of 1965 to coordinate, advocate, and improve services to assist older persons in leading independent, meaningful, and dignified lives in their own homes and communities for as long as possible.

This bill includes funding for important programs that support the needs of the increasing population of elderly residents in Hawaii. The funding included in this bill is essential to maintain the health and welfare of our most vulnerable seniors and their caregivers. We strongly support funding for SB 536.

Falls are among the leading causes of hospitalization and severe injury among the elderly. This oftentimes preventable occurrence can seriously affect the quality of life for the elderly individual and also impacts healthcare costs for the community at large. The funds being requested will allow for the further development of fall prevention programs statewide. Through the efforts of the Department of Health, Injury Prevention Systems Branch and the Fall Prevention Consortium, efforts have been made to conduct balance screenings, perform medication reviews, and provide increased community awareness. However, more is needed to address this growing issue within the community.

We urge the committees on Commerce, Consumer Protection and Health and on Human Services to support funding for a full time coordinator for increasing programs and services directed towards fall prevention. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

LATE

The Twenty-Ninth Legislature
Regular Session of 2017

THE SENATE

Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health

Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair

Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Vice Chair

Committee on Human Services

Senator Josh Green, Chair

Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair

State Capitol, Conference Room 016
Wednesday, February 1, 2017; 2:45 p.m.

**STATEMENT OF THE ~~ILWU LOCAL 142~~ ON S.B. 536
RELATING TO FALL PREVENTION**

The ~~ILWU Local 142~~ **strongly supports** S.B. 536, which makes an appropriation to the Department of Health for a full-time equivalent fall prevention and early detection coordinator position established by Act 153, Session Laws of Hawaii, 2014.

When the elderly fall, the consequences are often catastrophic. Kupuna have weaker bones, and a fall usually means a break that requires hospitalization and rehabilitation. Falls are costly, not only financially but psychologically and emotionally. A fall can mean loss of independence and drastic changes to a person's lifestyle and quality of life.

Thus, fall prevention would seem to be a logical public health option. Indeed, programs already do exist to assist the elderly and their families to ensure that falls may be avoided. For example, Project Dana has a home safety program where professionals inspect the home for potential hazards and recommend remedies. But a coordinated effort is needed to reach a broader cross-section of the public and larger numbers of people.

S.B. 536 proposes a nominal appropriation to address this vitally important and needed program. A \$95,000 appropriation could help to save thousands of dollars more by preventing falls and the resulting medical services and inpatient admissions. We believe more money is needed, but the \$95,000 is a start and will be money well spent.

The ILWU strongly urges passage of S.B. 536. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.