



**Written Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance
Thursday, February 24, 2022 at 2:00 P.M.
by
Laura Reichhardt, APRN, AGPCNP-BC
Director, Hawai'i State Center for Nursing
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa**

Comments on HB 1758, HD2

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita, and members of the House Committee on Finance, thank you for the opportunity to provide **comments on HB 1758, HD2**.

Hawai'i is currently facing a nursing workforce shortage. Improving access to care by nurses is critical to ensuring the people of Hawai'i receive the healthcare when they are in need and by high-quality healthcare professionals. In 2021, the Center reported that the current workforce shortage has several contributors including the pandemic's impact on the workforce, pre-existing challenges including nursing faculty shortages, efforts in new-graduate nurse recruitment, as well as other factors including difficulty in recruiting travel nurses, cost of living and housing availability in Hawai'i, and other issues. The problem is complex so there is a need to address nursing workforce supply using a multifaceted approach. The Center recognizes a long history of recruitment of internationally trained nurses. In addition, the Center acknowledges the important role of the legislature in supporting local and foreign graduates of nursing to pass the entry to practice licensing exams and enabling nurses who are licensed and in good standing under the laws of another state, territory, or foreign country to become licensed by endorsement in Hawai'i.

The Center defers to the Board of Nursing and the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs as it relates to the processing and reviewing eligibility of applications by endorsement for temporary permitting.

We commend the State Legislature for identifying solutions address access to healthcare in Hawai'i. Thank you for providing opportunities to comment on this measure.

The mission of the Hawai'i State Center for Nursing is that through collaborative partnerships, the Center provides accurate nursing workforce data for planning, disseminates nursing knowledge to support excellence in practice and leadership development; promotes a diverse workforce; and advocates for sound health policy to serve the changing health care needs of the people of Hawai'i.

HB-1758-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/22/2022 12:19:46 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Elena Cabatu	East Hawaii Region of Hawaii Health Systems Corporation	Support	No

Comments:

The East Hawaii Region of Hawaii Health Systems Corporation, consisting of Hilo Medical Center and nursing homes of Hilo Medical Center's Extended Care Facility, Yukio Okutsu State Veterans Home, Hale Ho`ola Hamakua in Honoka`a, and Ka`u Hospital, and our East Hawaii Health Clinics, is in **strong support of HB1758 HD2**. During this pandemic, our facilities have been straddled with extreme labor shortages and our employees have been pushed to their maximum to cover shifts. This bill, allowing for temporary permits to be issued to registered nurses and licensed practical nurses from a territory or foreign country that are seeking a state license by endorsement, would be of great relief to our strained and stressed labor force. Please support **HB1758 HD2** so we may provide the best possible care for our community.

Testimony of the Board of Nursing

**Before the
House Committee on Finance
Thursday, February 24, 2022
2:00 p.m.
Via Videoconference**

**On the following measure:
H.B. 1758, H.D. 2, RELATING TO NURSES**

Chair Luke and Members of the Committee:

My name is Chelsea Fukunaga, and I am the Executive Officer of the Board of Nursing (Board). The Board appreciates the intent of and offers comments on this bill.

The purpose of this bill is to allow for temporary permits to be issued to registered nurses and licensed practical nurses from a territory or foreign country that are seeking a State license by endorsement.

The Board appreciates the bill's intent to expand the eligibility for a temporary permit to certain registered nurses and qualified licensed practical nurses from other territories and foreign jurisdictions to allow more qualified healthcare professionals to quickly find employment and enter the State's healthcare industry.

For the committee's information, all applicants for temporary permits by endorsement are required to meet all licensing requirements, which includes, but is not limited to: (1) satisfactory evidence of passing a professional licensing examination recognized by the Board; (2) proof of authorization to work in the United States; (3) fingerprinting for criminal history checks; and (4) proof of graduation from a nursing program at an educational institution in the United States or any territory or possession under the jurisdiction of the United States or proof of graduation from a nursing program at an educational institution in a foreign jurisdiction and have had their transcripts evaluated by professional evaluators designated by the Board and are considered qualified as determined by the Board.

As such, the amendments proposed in this bill will expand the pool of qualified applicants without undermining the strength of the Board's current screening process.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



February 22, 2022

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
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Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair

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Hearing Date: February 24, 2022, 2:00 pm
Via Videoconference; Conference Room 308

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 1758, HD 2
Relating to Nurses**

Chair Luke, Vice-Chair Yamashita, and Members of the Committee:

The Legal Clinic (“TLC”) submits this testimony in support of HB 1758, HD 2, which would allow for temporary permits to be issued to registered nurses and licensed practical nurses from a territory or foreign country that are seeking a state license by endorsement.

TLC provides legal and related services to Hawai'i's low- and moderate-income immigrant community. In the course of our work, we have learned first-hand of what is well publicized throughout our community—that there is a severe shortage of nurses, exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic—and its tragic impact particularly on our marginalized communities. HB 1758, HD 1, would help alleviate this shortage by allowing immigrant nurses and nurses from the territories to obtain temporary permits while they are in the process of seeking licenses by endorsement, which right is currently granted to nurses from other U.S. states.

In his recent state of the state address, Governor Ige highlighted the “critical shortages of doctors and nurses” and the need to expand the University of Hawai'i's program for educating nurses. HB 1758, HD 1, would help address this shortage in the near term by expanding the pool of qualified nursing applicants without affecting the state's screening process.

We urge you to pass HB 1758, HD 2, out of committee to help address the severe shortage in nurses in our community.

Thank you.

Corey Park
President, Board of Directors
The Legal Clinic



February 24, 2022 at 2:00 pm
Via Videoconference

House Committee on Finance

To: Chair Sylvia Luke
Vice Chair Kyle T. Yamashita

From: Paige Heckathorn Choy
Associate Vice President, Government Affairs
Healthcare Association of Hawaii

Re: **Testimony in Support**
HB 1758 HD 2, Relating to Nurses

The Healthcare Association of Hawaii (HAH), established in 1939, serves as the leading voice of healthcare on behalf of 170 member organizations who represent almost every aspect of the health care continuum in Hawaii. Members include acute care hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, home health agencies, hospices, assisted living facilities and durable medical equipment suppliers. In addition to providing access to appropriate, affordable, high-quality care to all of Hawaii's residents, our members contribute significantly to Hawaii's economy by employing over 20,000 people statewide.

We write today in **support** of this measure, which seeks to allow temporary permits for licensed practical nurses (LPNs) and registered nurses (RNs) that are seeking a state licensure in Hawaii by endorsement. Staffing shortages have become a major issue for our healthcare providers due to the pandemic. Many staff are retiring or leaving the healthcare profession due to burnout, and the increasing contagiousness of variants of COVID-19 have caused massive staff absences during community outbreaks. This affects all types of healthcare organizations, from the state's largest hospitals, to long-term care facilities caring for vulnerable residents, to small hospice agencies providing compassionate care at the end of life.

We appreciate any efforts to expand the pool of potential qualified workers to help rebuilt and reinforce the pipeline of essential healthcare workers in the state. Creative solutions, systemic investments, and continued focus on promoting the healthcare sector's workforce pipeline will be needed to ensure that Hawaii residents continue to have access to high-quality, affordable care. We look forward to continuing our collaborations with many different community partners on a long-term solution for this staffing crisis, and appreciate the opportunity to support this measure.



February 22, 2022

The Honorable Sylvia Luke, Chair
The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

Re: HB 1758 HD2 – Relating to Nurses

Dear Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita, and Committee Members:

Hawaii Medical Service Association (HMSA) appreciates the opportunity to testify on HB 1758, HD2, which allows for temporary permits to be issued to registered nurses and licensed practical nurses from a territory or foreign country that are seeking a state license by endorsement. Effective 1/1/2050.

HMSA believes in expanding access to quality health care for the people of Hawaii. Nurses provide an important key role in patient care. We support the legislature's intent to address the shortage of these invaluable health care workers in the state of Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 1758 HD2.

Sincerely,

Matthew W. Sasaki
Assistant Vice President
Government & External Relations



**Testimony to the House Committee on Finance
Thursday, February 24, 2022; 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 308
Via Videoconference**

RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 1758, HOUSE DRAFT 2 RELATING TO NURSES.

Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Tam, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Primary Care Association (HPCA) is a 501(c)(3) organization established to advocate for, expand access to, and sustain high quality care through the statewide network of Community Health Centers throughout the State of Hawaii. The HPCA **SUPPORTS** House Bill No. 1758, RELATING TO NURSES.

By way of background, the HPCA represents Hawaii's Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). FQHCs provide desperately needed medical services at the frontlines to over 150,000 patients each year who live in rural and underserved communities. Long considered champions for creating a more sustainable, integrated, and wellness-oriented system of health, FQHCs provide a more efficient, more effective and more comprehensive system of healthcare.

This bill, as received by your Committee, would allow the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs (DCCA) to issue temporary permits for registered nurses and licensed practical nurses from a territory or foreign country that are seeking a state license by endorsement. This bill is part of the Filipino Caucus legislative package.

This bill would take effect on January 1, 2050.

No event nor circumstance in recent memory has placed such enormous demands on Hawaii's health care infrastructure than the COVID-19 pandemic. Never before had our Nation (or the entire world for that matter) had to mobilize resources to vaccinate the entire population in such a short time while millions of our friends and family members were sick or in many cases, dying. Health workers have had to risk their personal wellbeing on a daily basis to meet the needs of the ill. Cases of infection would spike placing enormous pressure on Hawaii's limited capacity of hospital beds, emergency rooms, and primary care providers.

Testimony on House Bill No. 1758, House Draft 2
Thursday, February 24, 2022; 2:00 p.m.
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Even before COVID-19 hit our islands, Hawaii experienced a severe shortage of qualified health care providers. This shortage became even more evident with COVID requiring staff to work consecutive double- and triple-shifts to meet the ever present demand. The situation became so pronounced that health care workers from other states had to be brought in to keep our health care facilities open.

To facilitate this influx of health workers, DCCA scrambled to permit these workers under Hawaii's professional licensure laws. In particular, the huge number of nurses brought in to Hawaii forced DCCA to shift employees from other Boards to assist the Board of Nursing to permit these nurses to work here. Yet despite these heroic efforts, it took much time and resources for these nurses to have their professional licenses verified through endorsement. So instead of treating patients, these nurses had to wait.

This bill would remedy the problem by allowing registered and licensed practical nurses from territories or foreign countries to be issued temporary permits while they seek license by endorsement. That way, should the need arise again for a large number of nurses to be brought to the State, these qualified professionals would be allowed to work immediately to address the situation that brought them here.

For this reason, the HPCA supports this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Public Affairs and Policy Director Erik K. Abe at 536-8442, or eabe@hawaiiipca.net.



HAWAII FRIENDS OF CIVIL RIGHTS

February 24, 2022

TO: Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice-Chair

FROM: Amy Agbayani, Co-Chair & Pat McManaman, Co-Chair

SUBJECT: **HB1758, HD2 – RELATING TO LANGUAGE ACCESS**

HEARING: February 24, 2022, 2:00 PM
Conference Room 308 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

The Hawai'i Friends of Civil Rights submits testimony in **IN SUPPORT** of **HB1758, HD2**. The measure will allow temporary permits to be issued to registered nurses and licensed practical nurses from a territory or foreign country seeking a state license through endorsement.

Hawai'i's capacity to meet the state's demand for nursing care may already be at a critical tipping point as the pandemic extends into its third year and exhausted health care providers retire or leave the profession. According to the Hawai'i Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs, almost 5,000 nurses left the field between 2019 and mid-year 2021 shrinking the total active workforce from 33,410 to 28,548 in mid-2021. Hawai'i employers have turned to travel nurses, throughout the pandemic, to fill the gaps left by the nursing shortage and our increased pandemic-related health care needs.

An aging U.S. population will further increase the demand for nursing care across the nation and in Hawai'i. In its December 2021 report, *The Elderly Population in Hawaii: Current Living Circumstances and Housing Options*, the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism reports Hawai'i's percentage of elderly persons (ages 65 and over) at 19% in 2020 or approximately 1 in 5 persons. Accounting for aging baby boomers and increased life expectancy rates, Hawaii's percentage of elderly residents is projected to increase to 22.6% in 2030 and 23.7 % by 2040.

To obtain a work visa to enter the United States, foreign nurses must have at least a bachelor's degree from an accredited academic nursing institution and a minimum of two years relevant work experience. They also must pass rigorous background checks by the

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services. The largest groups of immigrant nurses are from the Philippines, India, and Canada.

Immigrants comprise 23.4% of Hawai'i's registered nurse workforce according to a May 2021 report published by the New American Economy. Their prior work experience brings added value to hospitals and other health care providers. Multi-lingual registered nurses may also be relied upon to communicate vital medical information to limited English proficient patients.

The same regulations governing U.S. citizen nurses seeking endorsement should be extended to immigrant nurses and nurses from U.S. territories. Equity demands it.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 1758,HD2.



www.hicir.org | Instagram @hicir
hicoalitionforimmigrantrights@gmail.com

**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 1758 HD2
RELATING TO NURSES**

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair

Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: 2/24/2022

Dear Committee Members,

The Hawai`i Coalition for Immigrant Rights (HCIR) SUPPORTS HB 1758 HD2, Relating to Nurses. HB 1758 HD2 allows for temporary permits to be issued to registered nurses and licensed practical nurses from a territory or foreign country that are seeking a state license by endorsement.

First, this bill fixes the inequitable treatment between registered nurses and licensed practical nurses from a territory or foreign country and those from non-Hawai`i U.S. states. All nurses without a Hawai`i-based license must obtain one to practice nursing in Hawai`i. Currently, for nurses who are licensed in other U.S. states, certain qualified applicants for licensure by endorsement are eligible for a temporary permit. This allows these nurses to begin practicing immediately as their application undergoes the verification and review process. For nurses licensed in a U.S. territory or foreign country, however, the otherwise similarly-situated qualified applicants for licensure by endorsement do not currently have this option for a temporary permit. There is no reason for the discrepancy in treatment of these experienced, qualified nurses.

Second, this bill is an important step in lowering the barriers for immigrant professionals to contribute to our economy and our community. Many immigrants end up leaving behind their professional careers when they come to the United States in search of a better life for their families. One HCIR member shares that her mother was a health care professional in their country of origin. When they moved to the United States, her mother gave up that career because of the practical and economic barriers in obtaining a new license. Immigrants should not be made to choose between their profession and their communities in the United States. Hawai`i is worse off if experienced, highly qualified nurses are unable to use their skills due to bureaucratic barriers. The passage of this bill will allow nurses to quickly find employment with the temporary permit while they wait for their permanent licenses to process, thus lowering the economic barriers to entering the nursing profession here in Hawai`i.

Finally, this bill is a critical piece in addressing Hawai`i's well-documented nursing shortage. It will allow qualified nurses to tackle Hawai`i's critical health care needs immediately. Even before COVID-19, the nursing shortage in Hawai`i was a prominent problem, and COVID-19



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hicoalitionforimmigrantrights@gmail.com

exacerbated that problem, straining Hawai`i's health care system to unprecedented levels.¹ The shortage leaves Hawai`i particularly vulnerable due to the remote location. This month, the effects of the shortages were acutely felt, as significant numbers were unable to work due to COVID-19 infections or exposures, with one day seeing 1,500 frontline caregivers out of work (10% of the workforce).²

As many have noted, we are heading into the next chapter of the fight to end COVID-19 and recover economically. This bill will allow registered nurses and licensed practical nurses from a territory or foreign country to more quickly and easily join that fight. That would be to the benefit of the whole Hawai`i community. We support HB 1758 HD2.

Thank you for your support and consideration,

Catherine Chen, Co-chair, Hawai`i Coalition for Immigrant Rights
Liza Ryan Gill, Co-chair, Hawai`i Coalition for Immigrant Rights

¹ Kirstin Downey, *Pandemic Hardships Have Made Hawaii's Nursing Shortage Even Worse*, HONOLULU CIVIL BEAT (Oct. 6, 2021), <https://www.civilbeat.org/2021/10/pandemic-hardships-have-made-hawaiis-nursing-shortage-even-worse/>.

² Allyson Blair, *Head of nurses union: Severe staffing shortage at hospitals is impacting patient care*, Hawaii News Now (Jan. 12, 2022), <https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/2022/01/13/head-nurses-union-severe-staffing-shortage-is-impacting-patient-care/>.



THE QUEEN'S HEALTH SYSTEMS

To: The Honorable Sylvia Luke, Chair
The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair
Members, House Committee on Finance

From: Jacce Mikulanec, Director, Government Relations, The Queen's Health Systems

Date: February 24, 2022

Re: Comments on HB 1758 HD2: Relating to Nurses

The Queen's Health Systems (Queen's) is a nonprofit corporation that provides expanded health care capabilities to the people of Hawai'i and the Pacific Basin. Since the founding of the first Queen's hospital in 1859 by Queen Emma and King Kamehameha IV, it has been our mission to provide quality health care services in perpetuity for Native Hawaiians and all of the people of Hawai'i. Over the years, the organization has grown to four hospitals, and more than 1,500 affiliated physicians and providers statewide. As the preeminent health care system in Hawai'i, Queen's strives to provide superior patient care that is constantly advancing through education and research.

Queen's appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on HB 1758 HD2, which would allow for temporary permits to be issued to registered nurses and licensed practical nurses from a territory or foreign country that are seeking a state license by endorsement. Queen's appreciates the intent of this measure which seeks to address the ongoing shortage of licensed nurses in Hawai'i. We are also optimistic that proactive efforts of the legislature to address workforce shortages in the healthcare industry will have a combined beneficial impact this Session.

Should this measure advance we would urge the Committee to ensure that adequate minimum education and training requirements are met or exceeded for any nurse or licensed practical nurse that would qualify under amended subsection (b).

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this HB 1758 HD2.

The mission of The Queen's Health Systems is to fulfill the intent of Queen Emma and King Kamehameha IV to provide in perpetuity quality health care services to improve the well-being of Native Hawaiians and all of the people of Hawai'i.

HB-1758-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/22/2022 3:15:35 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Christy MacPherson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita and members of the House Committee on Finance,

I am in strong support of HB1758 HD2.

Mahalo for your consideration.

HB-1758-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/22/2022 3:24:39 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Gerard Silva	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

They do not have the proper training for here in America . This should not be allowed. We the people Demand this not be allowed. Remember who you work for. We the people will be taking over in the Future!!

HB-1758-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/22/2022 10:27:16 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Thaddeus Pham	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita, and FIN Committee Members,

As a public health professional and son of refugee parents, I strongly recommend support for HB1758 HD2, which allows for temporary permits to be issued to nurses licensed in a territory or foreign country that are seeking a state license by endorsement.

These temporary permits are already issued to those licensed in non-Hawai'i states, so this bill makes it fair for immigrant nurses and allows them to start working immediately while waiting for permanent licenses to process. My mother first started work in the US as a nurse, so I can attest to the importance of accessible work options for trained, hard-working, and and eager immigrant communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Thaddeus Pham (he/him)

HB-1758-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/22/2022 11:41:14 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Brendon Friedman	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support this measure -thank you!

Brendon Friedman, DNP, APRN-Rx, FNP-BC, PMHNP-BC, CME

Family & Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Practitioner, Assistant Professor, Private Practice Owner

2838 East Manoa Rd

Honolulu, HI 96822

HB-1758-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2022 7:12:17 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
stephanie marshall	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

As a nurse for over 45 years, I fully support this bill

HB-1758-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2022 8:36:47 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
April Bautista	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I hope the Committee on Finance considers passing this legislation.

As a daughter of a Filipina nurse who arrived to the US in the 1970s, legislation similar to this is why I am here and able to submit testimony in strong support.

Thank you,

April Bautista

828 Puuhale Rd.

Honolulu, HI 96819

HB-1758-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2022 9:23:40 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Liza Ryan Gill	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

We fully support the intent of this bill.

HB-1758-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2022 11:22:01 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2022 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Taryn Amberson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Sylvia Luke, Vice Chair Kyle T. Yamashita and members of the House Committee on Finance,

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB1758, HD2 Relating to Nurses. As a local emergency nurse on Oahu and a member of Hawai'i - American Nurses Association, I believe the measures proposed by this bill will allow registered nurses and licensed practical nurses, regardless of their country of origin or place of nursing education, to seek a temporary permit to practice nursing in Hawai'i while meeting the same standards and requirements such as success with NCLEX examination, verification of equivalency of nursing education, etc. that are in place in HAR 457-7.

As a frontline health care worker, I can say with confidence the critical shortage of nurses has been painfully felt throughout our islands over the last 2 years of the COVID-19 pandemic. We must work together to address this workforce crisis, to ensure a continuing supply of highly educated professional nurses who are the bedrock of our healthcare system.

I respectfully request that HB1758, HD2 be passed out of this committee. Thank you for your continuing careful consideration of measures that address the nursing shortage and the health care needs of our community.

Mahalo,

Taryn Amberson, MPH, RN, CEN, NHDP-BC

amberson.taryn@gmail.com / 520.474.1812