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Senate Committee on Ways and Means

**SCR25 SD1, CONVENING A TASK FORCE ON AGING TO STUDY THE NEED FOR
AND FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A DEPARTMENT OF AGING.**

**Testimony of Noemi Pendleton
Director of Executive Office on Aging
Attached Agency to Department of Health**

Friday, April 4, 2008

10:05 a.m.

- 1 **Department's Position:** The Department of Health and the Executive Office on Aging appreciate
2 the intent of this senate concurrent resolution but have serious concerns and respectfully oppose it.
- 3 **Fiscal Implications:** Unknown
- 4 **Purpose and Justification:** The purpose of SCR25 SD1 is to convene a Task Force on Aging to
5 study the need for, feasibility of, and preliminary plans for a the consolidations of publicly-funded
6 programs and services that would appropriately fall within the jurisdiction of a new Department of
7 Aging. The concurrent resolution states that "the Executive Office on Aging currently coordinates
8 some of the programs and services available to Hawaii's older population; however, the scope and
9 magnitude of issues facing the elderly necessitates department level attention. A departmental
10 agency could better focus resources and personnel to address the multi-faceted needs of Hawaii's
11 older population." It requests that the Task Force on Aging, with the assistance of the Executive
12 Office on Aging, submit its findings and recommendations, including proposed legislation, to the
13 legislature no later than 20 days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2009.

1 In order to accomplish what this concurrent resolution requests, any such task force would
2 need to gather extensive information and data, do an analysis of all programs for the elderly
3 offered by the State by all departments to determine what might be consolidated under the
4 proposed new department, study staff reassignments that would be necessary, determine what
5 programs would be possible to transfer to a newly-organized department, study how other states
6 have structured jurisdiction of elderly programs, study and propose staffing, operational budget,
7 organizational structure and all other items attending to creating a new executive department. It is
8 not possible for EOA to assist in the completion of the required report within the time period
9 proposed by this measure.

10 It is a priority of the Administration to effectively support Hawaii's elder population,
11 which is aging at 2.5 times the national rate. However, creating a new executive department is not
12 necessarily the most appropriate approach.

13 Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

testimony

From: Michael Sumja [michaelsumja@yahoo.com]
Sent: Wednesday, April 02, 2008 10:51 PM
To: testimony
Subject: In Support of SCR25 SD1

TO: Committee on Ways and Means

Hearing: Friday, April 4th, 2008
10:05AM,
Conference Room 211

RE: SCR25 SD1 CONVENING A TASK FORCE ON AGING TO STUDY THE NEED FOR AND FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A DEPARTMENT OF AGING.

Senator Baker, Chair and Senator Tsutsui, Vice Chair,

As Chair of the Policy Advisory Board for Elder Affairs, I am writing in full support of SCR25 SD1.

As each day passes, and our population ages, our need for a Department of Aging becomes more crucial. To delay forming a Task Force will only delay finding the solutions that are desperately needed for our Kupuna.

The issues facing our rapidly growing senior population are multifaceted and deserve cabinet level attention.

The Policy Advisory Board for Elder Affairs stands at the ready to assist the Executive Office of Aging in gathering information and believes this study to be imperative.

Michael B. Sumja
Chair, Policy Advisory Board for Elder Affairs

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OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION OF HAWAII

1360 S. Beretania St., Suite 301, Honolulu, Hawaii 96814

**Written Testimony by:
Virginia Tully, OTR, MBA**

**SCR25sd1, Convening a Task Force on Aging to Study the Need for and Feasibility of
Establishing a Department of Aging**

Senate WAM Committee

Friday, April 4, 2008

Room 211, 10:05 am

Position: Support Intent

Chair Sakamoto and Members of the Senate EDU Committee:

I am Virginia Tully, OTR, and President of OTAH. The Occupational Therapy Association of Hawaii (OTAH) represents 507 occupational therapists (OTs) licensed in Hawaii. OT's work in many settings throughout the State, including hospitals, schools, and prisons, to private facilities and community programs. We work with very young children, ages 0-3, as well as school aged children, adults, and the elderly, seeking to restore or develop social-emotional, physical, cognitive, communication and adaptive behavior challenges.

Through understanding of the effect of the consumer's disability, illness and impairment, the occupational therapist develops a program that will promote development and establish needed skills to be independent in daily living activities. Daily living skills include self-care such as bathing, dressing, and skills required for learning, work or social interaction. Often times, OTs must design/fabricate special devices or suggest modification to the home environment.

We note that there has been much legislation relating to programs for the aging population and consumers. It appears that many of the proposed programs are not part of a strategic plan but to meet specific identified needs. Thus, the proposed programs would reside or be managed by different departments within the State.

For these reasons, OTAH supports the intent of a Task Force and a coordinated approach via the exploration for the need of Department of Aging. We wholeheartedly support the wide representation of legislative and community leaders on the task force. In addition we offer the following suggestions:

1. The proposed Department of Aging is best placed under the Executive Office of Aging as this office should be aware of all state sponsored programs for the aged.
2. The services/programs that the task force identifies should be limited to those services/programs that the department will be able to fulfill in an expedient manner. Many aged individuals though relatively healthy, can't wait a few days or longer for a response. Many are fragile and their needs are immediate.
3. The task force should consider the development of a strategic plan to address the needs of the elderly. It will assist in prioritizing the needs of the elderly and the establishment of new programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. I can be reached at 544-3336 if further information is needed.

testimony

From: Carolyn Lancaster [carolyn96755@yahoo.com]
Sent: Wednesday, April 02, 2008 11:24 PM
To: testimony
Subject: I Support of SCR25 SD1

Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Rosalyn Baker, Chair
Senator Shan Tsutsui, Vice Chair

RE: SCR25 SD1 CONVENING A TASK FORCE ON AGING TO STUDY THE NEED FOR AND FEASIBILITY OF
ESTABLISHING A DEPARTMENT OF AGING

Friday, April 4, 2008
10:05AM, Room 211

Dear Chairs and Committee:

My name is Carolyn Lancaster, a member of the Kohala Senior Citizen's Club. As I sit here on the Big Island, unable to attend your meeting there at the Capitol, I am so thankful that you are considering this bill to form a Task Force on Aging to study the need and feasibility of establishing a Department of Aging.

I was born in 1946, officially the first year designated as the Baby Boomer Generation, and I see the rise in the senior population as a huge tsunami wave headed our way which will affect every aspect of our society from housing and healthcare to recreation and transportation.

This study must be done now, BEFORE the wave engulfs us and we are struggling to get to the surface for air. I wholeheartedly support SCR25 SD1 and thank the legislators for considering the needs of the Kupuna.

I appreciate this opportunity to submit my testimony.
Aloha,
Carolyn Lancaster
Concerned Senior Citizen and Active Community Volunteer

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