STAND. COM. REP. NO. 523

Honolulu, Hawaii

Fz 4 20, 2009

RE: H.B. No. 1362

H.D. 1

Honorable Calvin K.Y. Say Speaker, House of Representatives Twenty-Fifth State Legislature Regular Session of 2009 State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce, to which was referred H.B. No. 1362, H.D. 1, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO GENETIC COUNSELORS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to establish a licensure program for genetic counselors within the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs to ensure that individuals seeking genetic counseling receive the highest degree of quality services and professional conduct from licensed genetic counselors. The measure also provides penalties for non-compliance.

Two professors of pediatrics, of the University of Hawaii John A. Burns School of Medicine, Neonatology Division, and Kapiolani Medical Specialists, the Hawaii Chapter of the March of Dimes, and numerous medical professionals including many physicians, genetic counselors, and other health care providers in the genetic counseling arena provided comments in support of the measure. The Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs submitted testimony in opposition to the measure.

Genetic counselors are frequently the primary providers of genetic information and counseling to pregnant women whose babies may be at risk for birth defects or other genetic conditions. They also are the primary providers of risk assessment for men and women with cancer or a family history of cancer. Genetic

counselors assist in the evaluation and management of both children and adults with heritable conditions.

Currently, genetic counselors have a difficult time being supported by hospitals and clinics. Although the American Medical Association approved a Current Procedural Terminology code for genetic counselors, the code can only be used by licensed professionals. Thus, genetic counselors and health care providers who employ them cannot be reimbursed by third party payors for the services they provide to patients. This threatens the availability of genetic counseling services in the State.

Establishing a licensure program will ensure that genetic counselors are highly skilled and also allow them to be reimbursed for their services as an integral part of a patient's healthcare team, similar to physicians and nurses. In addition, a licensing program would help attract new genetic counselors to practice in the State, where there are currently not enough physicians who are trained in genetics to provide the genetic services and counseling needed by Hawaii's people.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 1362, H.D. 1, and recommends that it be referred to the Committee on Finance.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the members of the Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce,

ROBERT N. HERKES, Chair

HB1362 HD1 HSCR LRB 09-2186.doc

State of Hawaii House of Representatives The Twenty-fifth Legislature

HSCB 253

Record of Votes of the Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Bill/Resolution No.:	Committee Referral:		Date:		
HB 1362 HD1	HLT, CPC, FIN		2/18/09		
☐ The committee is reconsidering its provious decision on the measure.					
The recommendation is to: Pass, unamended (as is) Pass, with amendments (HD) Hold Pass short form bill with HD to recommit for future public hearing (recommit)					
CPC Members	Ayes	Ayes (WR)	Nays	Excused	
1. HERKES, Robert N. (C)					
2. WAKAI, Glenn (VC)					
3. BELATTI, Della Au					
4. CABANILLA, Rida					
5. CARROLL, Mele					
6. ITO, Ken					
7. KARAMATSU, Jon Riki	\ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \				
8. LUKE, Sylvia					
9. McKELVEY, Angus L.K.				V /	
10. MIZUNO, John M.					
11. MORITA, Hermina M.					
12. SOUKI, Joseph M.					
13. TSUJI, Clift					
14. MARUMOTO, Barbara C.			AN AUGUST 75 C. T.		
15. THIELEN, Cynthia					
TOTAL (15)	12	Ø	Ø	3	
The recommendation is: Adopted If joint referral, committee acronym(s) If joint referral, committee acronym(s)					
Vice Chair's or designee's signature:					
Distribution: Original (White) – Committee Durlicate (Yellow) – Chief Clerk's Office Duplicate (Pink) – HMSO					