

LATE

TO: The Honorable David Ige, Chair, Senate Committee on Health

FROM: Sheryll Bonilla

HEARING DATE: February 13, 2009, 2:40 pm, Room 016

RE: SB 567, strong support

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My name is Sheryll Bonilla, and I am a second generation blood donor raising third generation blood donors. I speak in strong support of SB 567.

My father Ernesto Bonilla, is one of those quiet, unspoken heroes who regularly donated blood throughout his life. I will always remember how deeply touched my father was when the Blood Bank presented him with the "Century" crystal, given to those who have donated 100 pints of blood. My father's unselfish donations of time to give his blood have helped saves hundreds of lives. He continues to donate, and will be 70 years old this year.

It's ironic for me to be testifying in support of this bill this week, because my week started with a familiar phone call from the Blood Bank reminding me that I again eligible to donate and asking me when I would like to come in for an appointment. This week I will be donating my 77<sup>th</sup> pint of blood in Hawaii, and if my blood donations on the mainland were counted, I could be near a "crystal" myself. My children have accompanied me to these appointments all of their lives and already are committed to doing what mommy does and continuing with this family practice when they grow up.

Nearly every day I see and hear an ambulance driving past me on the freeway. It brings to mind another person who potentially needs the blood that all of us anonymous blood donors across the state give. The frequency of ambulances leads me to believe that the need for blood donations is frighteningly high, while the supplies may not be sufficient to meet these needs. It is not just victims of trauma who need blood. Without an adequate supply of blood, patients who need surgery may not be able to have surgery in time to treat their medical conditions. The lives of children and adults who need blood for their medical conditions may be at risk.

Blood is not a commodity that can be ordered and scheduled. Those in need rely on the good neighbors they will never meet, who take the time and make the effort to go to a blood donation center. It is critical that local blood supplies be available so that all patients in our state who need it will have it. This is an issue of life and death.

SB 567 will enhance the ability of the Blood Bank to reach those requirements . By lowering the age of blood donation to 16, the Blood Bank will be able to increase the pool of potential donors. Our young people are increasingly idealistic and service oriented. Being able to donate blood will provide them one more avenue to show their spirit of helpfulness to others. We allow 16-year-olds to drive, to pump gas, to get jobs. We can certainly extend to them the opportunity to unselfishly serve others through this life-giving means by passing this bill.

Thank you for your time.

February 12, 2009

## LATE TESTIMONY

TO: CHAIR DAVID IGE,  
SENATE HEALTH COMMITTEE

FROM: MAYETTE SMITH

I would like to voice my support for Senate Bill 567 which allows 16 year olds to donate blood as long as they have parental consent. There have been times when the blood bank has had a shortage of blood and a public call for more donors was made. This measure could increase the blood supply by allowing 16 year olds to donate. Some states have already lowered the age to 16.

This is also a good age for teenagers to be civic-minded and be involved in helping society with an important matter such as blood donations.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my late testimony.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mayette Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mayette Smith  
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