



HB2555
RELATING TO VITAL STATISTICS FEES
 House Committee on Human Services

February 7, 2012

10:00am

Conference Room 329

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **OPPOSES** HB2555, which would raise the fees associated with vital statistics certified copy and expedited and correction services.

To be eligible to benefit from OHA and Department of Hawaiian Home Lands programs, applicants must verify their Native Hawaiian ancestry. In order to provide such verification, our beneficiaries are often required to use vital statistics certified copy and expedited and correction services. Raising the fees associated with these services will hinder our beneficiaries' ability to obtain much needed benefits through our programs.

Therefore, OHA urges the committee not to PASS HB2555. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.



To: Chair Yamane
Vice Chair Morikawa
Members of the Committee on Health

Fr: Nanci Kreidman, M.A.

RE: HB 2555

Good morning. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in relation to HB 2555. The increase in fees is an issue we would urge you to examine carefully, as currently there are many essential community programs and system initiatives that benefit from the fees collected from issuance and copying of birth, death and marriage records.

We would like to advocate for the continued distribution of funds collected to all accounts established under sections 346-7.5, 601-3.6, 321-1.3.

The fees have not been raised since the original enactment of the law creating the special accounts. Hawaii's legislation was modeled after efforts across the country and needs for public support of child and spouse abuse programs have certainly not abated-in fact, it can be asserted that requests for assistance from programs supported through the special accounts have increased exponentially, and government initiatives supported by these funds have also increased. There are many worthwhile programs funded with these dollars including: Fatality Review Team, Family Court Symposium Training for judges, teen dating abuse program, shelters, Family Strengthening Services, Child Death Review, Family Visitation Center, to name just a few.

Priority of funding for child and spouse abuse programs remains uncertain and undeniably wavers. This, in spite of the reality, that programs have suffered serious budget shortfalls, reducing the ability to serve those who need us. It must be emphasized we are a key feature of the safety net.

Please do not let this opportunity pass. It is essential to have your support as we continue to bring peace to island families.

Thank you.