

Beverly Gotelli  
6286 Opaekaa Road  
Kapaa, HI 96746

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Chair Sen. Donovan Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Gilbert Keith- Agaran

DATE: Tuesday, February 28, 2023

TIME: 10:00 AM

Support: SB 1592 SD 1 RELATING TO THE SENIOR MEDICARE PATROL PROGRAM

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and members of the Committee:

I am Beverly Gotelli, a 5 year member and Vice Chair of the Policy Advisory Board for Elder Affairs (PABEA), which is an appointed board tasked with advising the Executive Office on Aging (EOA). My testimony does not represent the views of the EOA but of PABEA. PABEA supports this measure to appropriate funds for additional positions to meet the demands for assistance caused by increased reports on fraud, healthcare billing errors and abuse. It is not only our vulnerable seniors that are affected by fraud but also their families and caregivers.

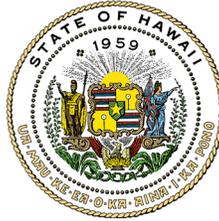
Residents with incorrect or false claims could be better served if SMP Hawaii had adequate staffing. More cases of suspected fraud or abuse could be resolved, with Medicare/Medicaid cost savings, recoveries or avoidance resulting. With only two full-time staff members for the past 25 years, we are grateful that SMP Hawaii has managed to-date, but it is really at a tipping point since the Baby Boomers, the largest population of our country, entered their “golden years” in 2011 here in Hawaii. This population will only increase through the next two decades. Scams on the phone and via email and social media have also risen. Now is the time to act to genuinely help our Kupuna, those most vulnerable to fraudsters.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify

Beverly Gotelli  
PABEA, Vice Chair

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII  
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII

**KENNETH S. FINK, MD, MGA, MPH**  
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**KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO**  
**EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON AGING**  
NO. 1 CAPITOL DISTRICT  
250 SOUTH HOTEL STREET, SUITE 406  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-2831

**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 1592, SD1**  
**Relating to the Senior Medicare Patrol Program**

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS  
SENATOR DONOVAN DELA CRUZ, CHAIR  
SENATOR GILBERT S.C. KEITH-AGARAN, VICE CHAIR

Testimony of Caroline Cadirao  
Director, Executive Office on Aging  
Attached Agency to the Department of Health

Hearing Date: February 28, 2023  
10:00 AM

Room Number: 211  
Via Videoconference

1 **EOA's Position:** The Executive Office on Aging (EOA), an attached agency to the Department  
2 of Health, strongly supports the intent of SB 1592, SD1, relating to Senior Medicare Patrol  
3 (SMP) Hawaii.

4 **Fiscal Implications:** This measure appropriates funds for SFY 2023 and the same sum for SFY  
5 2024 for one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) Program Specialist III position, one full-time  
6 equivalent (1.0 FTE) Program Specialist IV position, and one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE)  
7 Program Specialist V position and shall be expended by the EOA.

8 **Purpose and Justification:** The purpose is to appropriate funds for three (3) full-time  
9 permanent positions to further assist the EOA's SMP Hawaii program as well as expand the  
10 EOA's ability to protect the states kūpuna against the onslaught of multiple forms of frauds and  
11 scams being besieged upon them. These positions will strengthen and increase EOA's ability to

1 ensure that timely, reliable, and accurate services are provided to kūpuna, their families, and  
2 caregivers in need.

3 SMP Hawaii’s mission is to provide a “help net” to educate, assist, and refer residents to  
4 the proper authorities, and be a reliable source for accurate information and responsive assistance  
5 with Medicare, Medicaid, and other health-related scams, fraud, or abuse.

6 Unfortunately, scams and fraudulent behaviors against our kūpuna are not limited to  
7 Medicare, Medicaid, and other health-related scams. As a community, we have all experienced  
8 the increase of other types of scam behaviors on our phones, social media accounts, emails and  
9 even the television ads that harangue us with enticing offers that are “too good to be true!” Our  
10 shorelines no longer protect us from the barrage of scams that inundate us due to our growing  
11 reliance on the internet and social media in our daily lives.

12 Hawaii ranks number one nationwide in longevity at 81.3 years of age! As the population  
13 of those age 65 and over is projected to grow, so has the incidence of scams that target this  
14 vulnerable group. The frequency and complexity of scams have grown significantly as con  
15 artists know that Hawaii’s people are very giving and trusting of others by nature and the  
16 potential for harm to this targeted group continues to rise disproportionately.

17 SMP Hawaii receives various statewide inquires on our dedicated Helpline and our  
18 interactive website from kupuna calling for assistance and are too ashamed and embarrassed to  
19 reach out to their own loved ones. SMP provides a clearing house for our kūpuna, their families,  
20 and caregivers to call for help.

21 SMP Hawaii operates statewide providing a toll-free helpline, provides 1:1 counseling and  
22 referrals and conducts community outreach to underserved groups and communities to expand  
23 access and assistance for Medicare, Medicaid, and other health-related scams, fraud, or abuse as  
24 well as many other types of scams and fraud against our islands kūpuna.

25 In response to the rise in scams, SMP Hawaii has established a network of partnerships  
26 across the finance, technology, legal, and retail industries to triage non-health related fraud cases

1 to the proper authority to provide timely assistance with gift card and charity schemes, romance,  
2 caregiver, and imposter scams and ransomware that trick older adults into giving away their  
3 personal information and money.

4 Unfortunately, the prognosis for our kūpuna safety does not look promising. Annually,  
5 Medicare loses an estimated \$70 billion dollars to fraudulent claims. Criminals steal an average  
6 \$34,200 per victim. Hawaii reports over \$17 million lost annually to online scams. If our  
7 community is unable to increase awareness, educate our kūpuna regarding scams and fraud, and  
8 build stronger community resources, Hawaii is projected to lose more than \$53 million annually  
9 by 2035!

10 SMP Hawaii was established in 1997, and for twenty-five years, EOA has operated this  
11 program with two temporary full-time staff who recruit, train, and retain a cohort of volunteers  
12 statewide. The passing of this bill to establish three (3) critically needed permanent full-time  
13 positions will allow for the needed expansion of EOA's capacity to meet the demands for timely,  
14 accurate, and reliable services to kūpuna, family members, and caregivers in need.

15 EOA's mission is "To optimize the health, safety and independence of Hawaii's older  
16 adults and people with disabilities. We support kūpuna and their caregivers through planning,  
17 development, advocacy, and coordination of policies, programs, and services." Without an  
18 increase in staffing, EOA is limited in our ability to safeguard against further kūpuna  
19 victimization and preserve the Medicare program, thus jeopardizing EOA's directed mission.

20 These positions are direly needed to continue to build a stronger, wider, and safer "help  
21 net" for a most valued asset, our islands' kūpuna.

22 **Recommendation:** EOA strongly supports the intent of this measure provided that its enactment  
23 does not reduce or replace priorities with the Administration's budget request.

24 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



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**The State Legislature**  
**Senate Committee on Ways and Means**  
**Tuesday, February 28, 2023**  
**Conference Room 211**  
**10:00 a.m.**

TO: The Honorable Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair

RE: Support for S.B. 1592, SD1 Relating to Senior Medicare Patrol Program

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee:

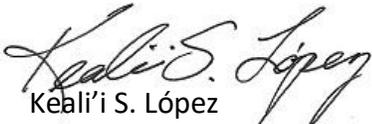
My name is Keali'i Lopez and I am the State Director for AARP Hawai'i. AARP is a nonpartisan, social mission organization that advocates for individuals age 50 and older. We have a membership of nearly 38 million nationwide and nearly 140,000 in Hawaii. We advocate at the state and federal level for the issues that matter most to older adults and their families.

**AARP supports S.B. 1592, SD1** which appropriates funds for additional positions within the State's Senior Medicare Patrol Program (SMP) to meet the rising demand for assistance caused by increased reports of health fraud, medical billing errors, and abuse.

SMP plays a vital role in advocating, educating, and protecting Hawaii's most vulnerable population. There are rising numbers of health-related scams and frauds targeting people especially older adults with Medicare coverage. Identity theft, gift cards, COVID test kits/vaccines/cures, durable medical equipment, genetic testing are common tactics that scammers use to defraud unknowing victims. Medicare loses \$70 billion of taxpayer dollars to false claims every year. There are approximately 279,000 Medicare beneficiaries in Hawai'i and the number continues to increase as the state's population ages. Additional SMP staff and volunteer support will be needed to meet the demand for outreach and counseling to kupuna.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of S.B 1592, SD1.

Sincerely,

  
Keali'i S. López  
State Director

# THE KŪPUNA CAUCUS



WAM\_02-28-23 10:00 AM Submitted on 2/26/23

TO: THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS  
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

CONCERNING SB1592 SD1 (SSCR315) Relating to senior Medicare Petrol Program  
POSITION: Strong Support

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committee

The Kūpuna Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i has an enrolled membership of more than 2,000 politically aware and active seniors. Our Caucus urges you to support SB 1592 SD1 (SSCR315).

The Medicare Patrol Program has been keeping seniors informed and as protected as possible from Medicare fraud, con people, and anyone who preys on seniors concerning their Medicare benefits.

Our islands are so spread out and so many Kūpuna do not live near government services or information offices. Many do not know who to call and if they do call they may not be able to follow all the prompts which are integral to so many information call centers. For myself and many Kūpuna friends who are educated and well informed, the challenges of recognizing the occasional scam or where to go for help if you need help or have a question remains challenging.

This program has already proven its value so providing funds for additional staff will only continue the help.

Martha E. Randolph for the  
Kūpuna Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i



Testimony to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Tuesday, February 28, 2023  
10:00 a. m.  
State Capitol Conference Room 211 and via videoconference

Re: SB 1592 SD 1 Relating to the Senior Medicare Patrol Program

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means.

I am Gary Simon, a member of the board of the Hawaii Family Caregiver Coalition, whose mission is to improve the quality of life of those who give and receive care by increasing community awareness of caregiver issues through continuing advocacy, education, and training.

The Hawaii Family Caregiver Coalition strongly supports SB 1592 SD 1, which appropriates funds for three program specialist positions within the Executive Office on Aging for the State's Senior Medicare Patrol Program (SMP).

SMP plays a vital role in advocating, educating, and protecting Hawaii's most vulnerable population. Health-related scams and frauds targeting people, especially older adults with Medicare coverage, are increasing. Additional SMP staff and are required to meet the demand for education and counseling for kupuna.

We urge you to support SB 1592 SD 1 and we urge you to recommend its passage.

Thank you for seriously considering the Bill.

Very sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Simon".

Gary Simon



Email [gsimon@aarp.org](mailto:gsimon@aarp.org)

**Senate Ways and Means Committee  
Chair: Senator Donovan Dela Cruz  
Vice Chair: Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran  
Hearing Date: February 28, 2023, 10:00am**

**Re: SB1592, SD1 - RELATING TO THE SENIOR MEDICARE PATROL PROGRAM**

**Aloha Chair Dela Cruz and Committee Members. My name is Linda Dorset, a senior resident of Wailuku, Maui. I thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony regarding the above referenced legislation. I strongly support SB1592 that will appropriate funds for three additional positions within the State's senior medicare patrol program.**

**SMP plays a vital role in advocating, educating, and protecting Hawaii's most vulnerable population, such as us seniors on Medicare. Health-related scams are on the rise, especially targeting us; and SMP Hawaii's mission is to be a reliable source for accurate information and responsive assistance with fraud, or abuse. This continues to be a tall order, not only because of the increase in scams but also because Hawaii ranks number one nationwide in longevity, and the population of those aged 65 and over is projected to continue to grow as the baby boomer generation becomes eligible for Medicare. And since many seniors are embarrassed to admit the scam, having a caring and knowledgeable person to talk to is an important factor.**

**With only two full-time staff members for the past 25 years, we are grateful that SMP Hawaii has managed to-date, however, additional SMP staff and volunteer support is needed to meet this increase in need for outreach and counseling to kupuna.**

**Linda Dorset  
Wailuku**

**SB-1592-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2023 10:34:29 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2023 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Esther Ueda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support SB1592, SD1 relating to the Senior Medicare Patrol Program.

Seniors need the program to support them in the event of Medicare Fraud, Medicare billing errors or other Medicare related issues.

Thank you for your support of this important measure.