

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

2416

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 15 2024

RE: S.B. No. 2538

S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Second State Legislature
Regular Session of 2024
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Health and Human Services, to which was referred S.B. No. 2538 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to require the Department of Health to prioritize full funding for services, programs, and staff positions under its jurisdiction on the island of Molokai.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from one member of the Maui County Council and two individuals.

Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of Health.

Your Committee finds that, due to the insufficient number of Department of Health staffing on-island and the lack of efficient and affordable transportation to neighbor islands for care, Molokai residents are at a disproportionate risk of having their mental health conditions worsen. This measure addresses this situation by ensuring funding for Department of Health programs and staffing for the island of Molokai.

Your Committee notes testimony by the Department of Health acknowledging the insufficient number of its staffing on Molokai



and requesting an appropriation for additional positions for substance abuse treatment and outreach to the community on Molokai as follows:

- (1) One Substance Abuse Specialist; and
- (2) Four social workers (HSP III), with at least one social worker trained to provide services for children and adolescents.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Clarifying that the Department of Health is required to fully fund services, programs, and staff positions under its jurisdiction on the island of Molokai;
- (2) Inserting language that makes an appropriation in an unspecified amount to the Department of Health for the establishment and implementation of a suicide prevention program grounded in Native Hawaiian cultural healing; and
- (3) Making a technical, nonsubstantive amendment for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Health and Human Services that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 2538, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 2538, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Health and Human
Services,



JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA, Chair



