



To: The Honorable Della Au Belatti, Chair
The Honorable Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
House Committee on Health & Homelessness

From: Paula Arcena, External Affairs Vice President
Mike Nguyen, Public Policy Manager

Hearing: Wednesday, March 30, 2024, 10:30 AM, Conference Room 329

RE: **HCR5/HR1 – Urging retail stores and pharmacies doing business in the state to adopt a policy on a national and local level guaranteeing an individual's unhindered access to all United States Food and Drug Administration-approved contraceptives.**

AlohaCare appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of HCR5 and HR1**. This resolution urges retail stores and pharmacies doing business in the State to adopt policies on a national and local level to guarantee an individual's unhindered access to all United States Food and Drug Administration-approved contraceptives.

Founded in 1994 by Hawai'i's community health centers, AlohaCare is a community-rooted, non-profit health plan serving over 84,000 Medicaid and dual-eligible health plan members on all islands. Approximately 40 percent of our members are keiki. We are Hawai'i's only health plan exclusively dedicated to serving Medicaid and Medicaid-Medicare dually-eligible beneficiaries. Our mission is to serve individuals and communities in the true spirit of aloha by ensuring and advocating for access to quality, whole-person care for all.

AlohaCare is committed to improving and advocating for access to care, including reproductive health care. We fully support this measure because people should be able to easily access contraceptives so they can make personal health choices. This measure would help to protect personal autonomy and contraceptive access for the residents of Hawai'i.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in **support of HCR5 and HR1**.



March 19, 2024

TO: Hawaii State House Committee on Health & Homelessness
FROM: American Association of University Women of Hawaii
Hearing Date/Time/Room: Wed., March 20, 10:30 am, Room 329
RE: Testimony in Support of HR 1/HCR 5

Dear Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the committees:

Members of AAUW of Hawaii thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HR 1/HCR 5 Urging Retail Stores and Pharmacies Doing Business in the State to Adopt a Policy on a National and Local Level Guaranteeing an Individual's Unhindered Access to All United States Food and Drug Administration-Approved Contraceptives.

In many of our neighborhoods, the local community pharmacy is the only place to access contraceptive care. Promoting access to reliable FDA approved-contraceptive care is the first line of defense in preventing unintended pregnancies and ensuring positive health outcomes for women. Pharmacies can take simple steps to decrease barriers to this essential health care by adopting policies banning pharmacist refusal of prescribed contraceptive care, and making over-the-counter contraceptives available and unlocked for easier access within their stores.

Thank you for support of this important resolution.

Sincerely,
/s/ Sonya Toma
Public Policy Committee, AAUW of Hawaii
publicpolicy-hi@aauw.net

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) of Hawaii is an all volunteer, statewide chapter of a national organization and is made up of six branches: Hilo, Honolulu, Kaua'i, Kona, Maui, and Windward Oahu. AAUW's mission is to advance gender equity for equal opportunities in education, at workplace and for economic security, and in leadership. AAUW's vision is Equity for All.



TESTIMONY FROM THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAII

COMMITTEE REFERRAL: HLT

MARCH 20, 2024

HCR 5/HR 1, URGING RETAIL STORES AND PHARMACIES DOING BUSINESS IN THE STATE TO ADOPT A POLICY ON A NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVEL GUARANTEEING AN INDIVIDUAL'S UNHINDERED ACCESS TO ALL UNITED STATES FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION-APPROVED CONTRACEPTIVES.

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Democratic Party of Hawaii supports HCR 5/HR 1, which urges retail stores and pharmacies doing business in the state to adopt a policy on a national and local level guaranteeing an individual's unhindered access to all United States Food and Drug Administration-approved contraceptives.

Reproductive care is an essential form of health care. In March 1970, Hawaii became the first state to legalize abortion, three years before the landmark *Roe v. Wade* decision by the United States Supreme Court that protected access to abortion nationwide. By legalizing abortion access, the state recognized that preserving access to safe and legal reproductive care is a vital public health objective for the islands.

Furthermore, Hawaii's unique geography and high cost of living present barriers to obtaining reproductive care for patients and potential patients. As of 2022, only a few abortion providers host reproductive care clinics on two to three islands in the state. According to Planned Parenthood, the number of abortion providers in the State has been on the decline since the 1990s.

Studies show that access to abortion care is linked to financial well-being. According to The Turnaway Study conducted by Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health at the University of California San Francisco, people who were denied access to an abortion experienced an increase in household poverty lasting at least four years relative to those who received an abortion. In addition, women who lacked access to reproductive care were also found to be less able to pay for basic living expenses and had lower credit scores and higher rates of debt and eviction than those with access to abortion care.

The United States Supreme Court's ruling in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* overturned *Roe v. Wade* and ended the federal constitutional right to abortion care. In overturning *Roe v. Wade*, the Court erased nearly fifty years of legal precedent supporting the fundamental right to reproductive freedom, leading to a wave of abortion restrictions enacted by state legislatures across the country. The Supreme Court's decision disproportionately harmed Black, Latino, indigenous, and other people of color, for whom access to health care and economic opportunities have historically been impeded by systemic racism.

Sadly, anti-abortion activists are currently attempting to impose attempt to impose a nationwide ban on mifepristone, one of two medications in a regimen that accounts for more than half the abortions in the United States, as well as other forms of contraception. In August of 2023, a federal appeals court ruled that mifepristone should not be prescribed past seven weeks of pregnancy or via telemedicine. Numerous states have also introduced legislation to restrict access to mifepristone and contraception. If implemented, these restrictions may apply even in states where abortion is legal.

Following the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* ruling, it is imperative for our state to implement proactive measures to protect access to reproductive care. In the face of a growing and persistent threat to reproductive care, we must preserve the islands' long legacy of leading the nation on this issue.

Mahalo nui loa,

Kris Coffield

Co-Chair, Legislative Committee
(808) 679-7454
kriscoffield@gmail.com

Abby Simmons

Co-Chair, Legislative Committee
(808) 352-6818
abbyalana808@gmail.com

HCR-5

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 3:33:00 PM

Testimony for HLT on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Younghee Overly	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for this opportunity to submit a testimony in strong support of HCR5 to protect access to contraceptives.

HCR-5

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 4:33:10 PM

Testimony for HLT on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Thaddeus Pham	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and HLT Committee Members,

As a public health professional concerned with community equity, I write in strong support of HCR5 and HR1, both resolutions that would move to improve access to FDA-approved contraceptives.

Mahalo,

Thaddeus Pham (he/him)

HCR-5

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 12:20:31 AM

Testimony for HLT on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara Shimei	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

IN SUPPORT

HCR-5

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 2:33:08 PM

Testimony for HLT on 3/20/2024 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Catherine Rault	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am an OBGYN and complex family planning fellow. This means I am doing additional training after completing my OBGYN residency in abortion and contraception care. With all the threats to reproductive freedoms, I strongly support HCR5. With the current Alabama IVF supreme court decision, it is only wise for our state of Hawaii to start to protect our current reproductive freedoms on a state level. Protecting individuals right to FDA approved contraception in pharmacies is essential. We should support science and evidence. If the FDA has approved a medication (such as contraception), patients have the right to have access to this medication in retail pharmacies. I strongly encourage you to support HCR5 to protect the future attacks on reproductive freedoms.



March 20, 2024

TO: Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair and
Members of the Committee on Health and Homelessness

From: Jeanne Y. Ohta, Co-Chair
Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus

RE: **HCR 5/HR 1: URGING RETAIL STORES AND PHARMACIES DOING BUSINESS IN THE STATE TO ADOPT A POLICY ON A NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVEL GUARANTEEING AN INDIVIDUAL'S UNHINDERED ACCESS TO ALL UNITED STATES FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION-APPROVED CONTRACEPTIVES**

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus writes in support of HCR 5 and HR 1 urging retail stores and pharmacies doing business in Hawai'i to adopt policies that guarantee individuals' unhindered access to all U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved contraceptives.

Contraceptives have a wide range of benefits, including health benefits of pregnancy spacing for maternal and child health, women's engagement in the workforce, and economic self-sufficiency.

Lack of access to contraceptives, which include availability, affordability, insurance coverage, transportation, and convenience contribute to higher rates of unintended pregnancies. Pharmacists' refusal to fill contraceptive prescriptions or provide emergency contraception (EC), pharmacies that refuse to carry contraceptives, and pharmacies that lock condoms behind glass create barriers to an essential component of health care. Because they play such a large part in the health care of their customers and communities, these retail stores and pharmacies have the responsibility to adopt policies that ensure full, unrestricted access to contraception.

This is a priority issue for the Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus. The Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus is a catalyst for progressive, social, economic, and political change through action on critical issues facing Hawaii's women and girls.

We respectfully request that the Committee pass this resolution to support unrestricted access to contraception. Thank you for the opportunity to provide our testimony.