



STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
KA 'OIHANA PONO LIMAHANA

February 12, 2024

To: The Honorable Henry J. C. Aquino, Chair,
The Honorable Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair, and
Members of the Senate Committee on Labor and Technology

The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair,
The Honorable, Henry J. C. Aquino, Vice Chair, and
Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

Date: Monday, February 12, 2024

Time: 3:00 p.m.

Place: Conference Room 224, State Capitol

From: Jade T. Butay, Director
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR)

Re: S.B. 2474 RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE

I. OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION

The DLIR appreciates the intent of this measure to establish Paid Family Leave and offers comments. This measure would require the establishment and implementation of a program requiring significant staffing & information technology needs. This proposal contains some significant flaws and does not provide any staffing to carry out the program.

SB2474 proposes to amend the Hawaii Family Leave Law (HFLL), Chapter 398, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), to establish a paid family leave insurance program that includes:

- A family leave insurance fund supported by employer and employee contributions in accordance with the contribution rate to the temporary disability insurance fund.
- Employers opting to take an employee contribution of up to half of the cost of providing the family leave insurance premiums.
- Partial wage replacement to covered individuals, which includes self-employed and unemployed individuals, for up to 16 weeks per year.
- Benefits ranging from 50% to 90% of the employee's average weekly wage, capped at the state average weekly wage (current AWW=\$1,136).

- Eligibility covers the birth, adoption, or placement of a child, caring for a family member with a serious health condition, caring for a service member who is covered individual's next of kin or has a qualifying exigency.
- Reduces the threshold of covered employers from 100 to employers with one or more employees.
- Inserting five new definitions in the family leave law and amending three other definitions to broaden the familial definitions (e.g., hanai parent, grandchild, grandparent of a reciprocal beneficiary, etc.).
- Written notice by employees at least 30 days before taking the family leave, except under certain circumstances that require oral and written notice.
- Employment protection and restoration of benefits, pay, and other terms & conditions for eligible employees.
- The Department holding hearings and adjudicating disputes for wage withholdings and denial of family leave benefits.
- The Department using the fund to finance benefits, administration of the program, outreach, education, reporting to the Legislature, or to study family leave insurance.
- Appropriating an unspecified amount of funds to administer the program and conduct outreach and education.

II. CURRENT LAW

Chapter 398, HRS, (HFLL) provides four weeks of protected leave for employees of employers with 100 or more employees, for the birth or adoption of the employee's child, or to care for the employee's child, spouse, reciprocal beneficiary, sibling, grandchild, or parent with a serious health condition. The law does not provide leave for the employee's own serious health condition. In general, family leave is unpaid, unless the employee elects to substitute any of their accrued paid leaves, for any part of the four-week period.

III. COMMENTS ON THE SENATE BILL

This measure establishes a family leave insurance fund but does not specify what kind of fund nor does it appropriate any moneys into or out of the fund. The description of the fund also does not mention that the fund includes money appropriated by the State.

The rate of contribution to the fund is tied to the rate of contribution to a Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) fund, which does not exist. The Trust Fund for Disability Benefits (§392-61) was established in 1969 and funded by a .2% levy of covered wages from July 1 to Dec. 31, 1969 (§392-67). Since then, no levy has been assessed to support the trust fund. Moreover, the bill allows employers to withhold an employee contribution based on the cost of the insurance premiums (page 10,

line 5), however, there is no premium because the employer must contribute to the fund instead of paying a premium for an insurance policy.

This bill also does not include the contribution rate for self-employed people who opt to participate in the program. It would be very difficult to verify the self-employed persons' income even if the measure were amended to specify contribution rates for self-employed persons including sole proprietors, partners and joint venture partners.

The DLIR also notes:

- The proposed changes to §398-4 (Pg.16, line 15 to Pg. 17, line 13), may cause conflict for employers, like the State, that use sick leave to fulfill TDI requirements. While the amended §398-4 would permit the use of accrued paid leaves for any part of the 16 weeks of family leave, §392-41(b) limits the use of paid sick leave if the sick leave is part of the employer's TDI plan and the sick leave is being used for reasons other than the employee's own disability. Pursuant to §392-41(b) the employee would be allowed to use sick leave for purposes of Hawaii Family Leave Law only if the sick leave is in excess of the TDI minimum statutory equivalent.
- Moreover, if a covered individual elects to substitute any of their accrued paid leaves for any part of the 16-week period, the covered individual could be paid both accrued paid leave and benefits from the family leave insurance fund.
- The eligibility for payment of benefits section starting on page 7, line 15 seems to indicate that qualifying events (A) through (D) apply to unemployed covered individuals only.
- It appears that an unemployed covered individual may receive paid family leave benefits and unemployment insurance benefits during the same period.
- Page 4, lines 11-16 allow an "employee" to review information, files, and records obtained by the department but does not provide the same right to the unemployed applicant or the unemployed applicant's representative.
- The use of "employee" in the following lines could mean the provisions do not apply to unemployed claimants.
 - Page 7, line 10
 - Page 8, lines 13
 - Page 8, line 19
 - Page 19, line 3
 - Page 20, line 20.

- Disputes concerning wage withholding (Pg. 10, line 8 to 16) are settled pursuant to the TDI Law (§392, Part V) although the family leave law already provides a dispute resolution process (§398, Part II).
- The measure does not define “hanai” nor “stands in loco parentis.” Without definitions or the requirement that covered individuals provide proof of their relationship with the individual that they are caring for, the DLIR will have difficulties in processing and adjudicating claims.
- “Designated person” is defined but not used anywhere.
- The definition of family member includes the spouse of a sibling but not the sibling of a spouse.
- Changes are proposed to §398-4 but the title of the section remains “Unpaid leave permitted.” Also, in §398-4(b) “an employee” is being replaced with “a covered individual” which includes a person who is unemployed. It is unclear if the change in terminology is to allow an unemployed person to use paid leaves that had been accrued while employed although the person is not an employee at the time of the family leave event.
- The proposal amends §398-23 so if an employer violates the chapter and if family leave insurance benefits were wrongfully withheld, the DLIR is to order immediate payment. It may be more appropriate for the DLIR to make immediate payment since, under the proposal, benefits would be paid by the fund, not by the employer.
- The proposed changes to §398-26(b) state that remedies include payment of family leave insurance benefits, wages, salary, employment benefits, or other compensation but do not specify if these are to be paid by the fund or the employer. Additionally, §393-26(b)(2) refers to “the cost of providing care, up to a sum equal to four weeks of wages” instead of 16 weeks proposed in the bill.
- The calculation of the weekly benefit amount does not indicate the period over which the individual’s average weekly wage is determined.
- To be a covered individual, the person must meet the requirements of §392-25, which specifies that during the fifty-two weeks prior to the first day of disability the person must have work and earned specified amounts. Since the proposal covers periods of leave that may not be related to a disability, there may not be a first day of disability on which to base the 52-week period.
- Lastly, the DLIR notes that there is only an unspecified appropriation and no additional positions provided in the measure. The department estimates requiring 100 or more staff to establish and implement the proposal. Staffing is needed for employer account registration; contribution intake and processing; cashiering, delinquency, collection, monitoring, and compliance; fund monitoring and compliance; claims intake and adjudication; payment

processing and disbursement; complaint intake and processing; hearings and adjudication; information technology support; and administrative staff support in addition to the outreach & education and reporting requirements in the measure.

- The DLIR roughly estimates that the required information technology required to implement this program would cost \$60M over five years.



STATE OF HAWAII
Executive Office on Early Learning
2759 South King Street
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96826

February 11, 2024

TO: Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Labor & Technology

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

FROM: Yuuko Arikawa-Cross, Director
Executive Office on Early Learning

SUBJECT: **Measure:** S.B. No. 2474 – RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE
Hearing Date: Monday, February 12, 2024
Time: 3:00 p.m
Location: Conference Room 224

EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON EARLY LEARNING'S POSITION: Support

The Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) is committed to enhancing systems of support for families across the State with young children. Our office supports S.B. No. 2474 and defers to the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) regarding implementation.

We know that high-quality early learning experiences at the youngest years of a child's life are critical for their growth and development, contributing to life-long success and wellbeing. Bonding and fostering nurturing attachment between caregivers and children are a crucial aspect of these early learning experiences.

We also know many of Hawai'i's families either face economic hardship or are on the brink of doing so. When needing to care for a newborn or a family member, Hawai'i's families simply cannot afford to take unpaid leave.

Our office is committed to protecting early learning opportunities for families and their children, and as such, we strongly promote policies such as paid family leave, which allows families the ability to meaningfully connect with their keiki without interfering with their employment and ensuring financial stability.

EOEL appreciates the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.



SB2474

RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE

Senate Committee on Labor and Technology
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

February 12, 2024

3:00 pm

Conference Room 224

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) offers **SUPPORT** for **SB2474**, which would require the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program, provide family leave insurance benefits and extend the period of family leave to 16 weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees who meet the hourly qualifications. The measure also eliminates the previous threshold of 100 employees for employers to be subject to the family leave law. This legislation represents **a crucial step towards ensuring the well-being of working families in Hawai‘i, including Native Hawaiians and Native Hawaiian businesses.**

‘Ohana is a foundational value for the office of Hawaiian Affairs. Thus, OHA recognizes the importance of supporting working families during significant life events such as childbirth, adoption, or caring for a sick family member. The proposed family leave insurance program would provide much-needed financial support to individuals who need to take time off work to attend to their family responsibilities without the fear of losing their income or their job. This initiative aligns with the values of compassion, community and ‘ohana that are deeply rooted in Hawaiian culture.

Moreover, extending the period of family leave to sixteen weeks and eliminating the previous threshold of 100 employees would ensure that a broader range of workers and businesses have access to these vital benefits. This expansion would be particularly beneficial to Native Hawaiians, who often face unique challenges and barriers to accessing adequate family leave and support services. **Paid family leave allows Native Hawaiians to fulfill their cultural obligations and responsibilities, including caring for elders, supporting their children, and participating in family events and ceremonies thereby ensuring the preservation and celebration of cultural heritage.**



SB2474

RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE

Senate Committee on Labor and Technology
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

This assistance can come when families tend to be at their most financially insecure. Families with young keiki are often at the earlier end of their careers and have heavy housing burdens as well as student loan debt. Families using leave to care for kūpuna often face significant costs that far exceed that covered by health insurance plans on top of existing costs associated with other familial obligations, like caring for keiki. By prioritizing the well-being of Native Hawaiian families and businesses, this legislation would contribute to fostering greater equity and prosperity in our community.

While there may be concerns about the potential costs associated with implementing a family leave insurance program, it is essential to recognize that costs for both employer and employee shares are generally projected to be relatively minimal, with cost shared across the population. Additionally, the long-term benefits far outweigh any short-term expenses. Research has consistently shown that providing paid family leave leads to higher employee morale, increased productivity, and reduced turnover rates, ultimately benefiting businesses and the economy as a whole.¹ Moreover, A study conducted by the Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR)² found that providing paid family leave resulted in higher levels of employee engagement and job performance, leading to greater overall productivity in the workplace³ which would be a benefit to employers of varying sizes. Therefore, investing in family-friendly policies is not only the right thing to do ethically but also makes good economic sense by promoting a healthier and more resilient workforce.

In conclusion, the **Office of Hawaiian Affairs urges the committees to support this critical legislation** for the establishment of a family leave insurance program and the extension of family leave benefits in Hawaii. Paid family leave provides financial support during critical life events thereby reducing economic strain on Native Hawaiian families

¹United States Congress, Joint Economic Committee “The Economic Benefits of Paid Leave: Fact Sheet” https://www.jec.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/646d2340-dcd4-4614-ada9-be5b1c3f445c/jec-fact-sheet---economic-benefits-of-paid-leave.pdf

² Center for Economic Policy and Research, <https://cepr.net/> last accessed (February 9, 2024)

³ Leaves that Pay, Eileen Appelbaum and Ruth Milkman (2011) <https://www.cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>,



SB2474

RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE

Senate Committee on Labor and Technology

Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

and contributing to overall community well-being. By prioritizing the well-being of working families, Native Hawaiians and Native Hawaiian businesses, we can create a more just and prosperous society for all.

OHA asks that the committees pass SB2474. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important issue.



**TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA
THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE, 2024**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:
S.B. NO. 2474, RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE.

BEFORE THE:
SENATE COMMITTEES ON LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY AND ON
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

DATE: Monday, February 12, 2024 **TIME:** 3:00 p.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 224 and Videoconference

TESTIFIER(S): Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or
Jack W. Relf, Nelson T. Higa, or Chelsea C. Maja, Deputy
Attorneys General

Chairs Aquino and San Buenaventura and Members of the Committees:

The Department of the Attorney General provides the following comments.

This bill amends chapter 398, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), Hawaii's family leave law, to require the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish and administer a paid family leave insurance program. The bill also expands family leave from four weeks of benefits, which may be unpaid, to sixteen weeks of paid family leave benefits. The bill further eliminates the threshold of one hundred employees for employers to be subject to the family leave law, making the law apply to businesses that employ one or more employees. The bill also appropriates funds to administer the new program.

The Department of the Attorney General has identified the following areas of concern.

First, the bill appears to create a trust fund to be used exclusively to benefit "employee-beneficiaries" or "covered individuals." We therefore recommend that, wherever the wording "family leave insurance fund" appears, it be replaced with "family leave insurance trust fund" to properly identify the nature of the fund.

Second, it is unclear how the trust fund will be funded. On page 6, line 20, to page 7, line 4, the bill at first provides that the fund will consist of employer and employee contributions based on the employee's average weekly wage and that the

contribution rate will be in accordance with the temporary disability insurance fund contribution rate. But later, on page 10, lines 3-5, the bill provides that the employer may deduct and withhold contributions from each employee of up to one-half of the cost of providing family leave insurance premiums. Accordingly, we recommend the Committees clarify whether employers or the State are required to buy insurance using contributions from employees and employers.

Moreover, in considering whether to allow an employer to deduct up to one-half of the cost of providing family leave insurance premiums from each employee, we note that the temporary disability insurance statute, section 392-43, HRS, limits the amount an employer may deduct or withhold to “not more than .5 per cent of the weekly wages earned by the employee.”

Third, chapter 398, HRS, has already established procedures for determinations and appeals. We therefore recommend that the words “an officer of” on page 10, line 12, be deleted so the provision reads: “The matter shall be determined by ~~[an officer of]~~ the department” to be consistent with part II of chapter 398 and the implementing rules. For the same reason, the appeal provision referenced on page 10, lines 13-16, should be amended to read: “the aggrieved party may appeal the ~~[petition for]~~ determination ~~[pursuant to the procedure under part V of chapter 392.]~~ as provided in this chapter.”

Fourth, this bill includes a definition for “designated person” on page 12, lines 6-9. Because the term “designated person” is not used anywhere in the bill or in the existing provisions of chapter 398, HRS, we recommend deleting the definition. That said, if the “designated person” refers to the “employee’s representative” which appears on page 4, line 12, we recommend replacing “employee’s representative” with “designated person.”

Fifth, this bill uses terms that are not defined, such as “qualifying service member,” which appears on page 8, line 5, and on page 15, line 15; “next of kin,” which appears on page 8, line 6, and on page 15, line 16; “spouse,” which appears on page 12, line 14; and “reciprocal beneficiary,” which appears on page 12, lines 15-16, page 13, lines 19-20, and on page 14, line 15. Because these terms are necessary to

determine whether a covered individual is eligible for family leave insurance benefits, we recommend that the bill include definitions for these terms.

Sixth, the bill provides for paid family leave and section 5 on page 16 repeals the wording regarding unpaid leave. Therefore, we recommend removing the reference to unpaid leave in the title of section 398-4, HRS, and suggest the following: “[~~Unpaid leave permitted;~~] Paid family leave; relationship to [~~paid leave;~~ sick] other leave.”

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

LUIS P. SALAVERIA
DIRECTOR

SABRINA NASIR
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
Ka 'Oihana Mālama Mo'ohelu a Kālā
P.O. BOX 150
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ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT

WRITTEN ONLY

TESTIMONY BY LUIS P. SALAVERIA
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY
AND HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
ON
SENATE BILL NO. 2474

February 12, 2024
3:00 p.m.
Room 224 and Videoconference

RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

Senate Bill (S.B.) No. 2474, amends Chapter 398, HRS, to establish within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) a Hawai'i Family Leave Insurance (FLI) Program and a FLI Fund (FLIF). This measure provides FLI benefits, to be paid by DLIR from the FLIF as specified in the bill, and extends the period of family leave to 16 weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees who meet the hourly qualifications. The measure also eliminates the previous threshold of 100 employees for employers to be subject to the family leave law. S.B. No. 2474 also appropriates unspecified general funds for FY 25 for the purpose of administering the FLI Program, including the oversight of payroll deductions and administrative processes.

The bill directs DLIR to adopt rules pursuant to Chapter 91, HRS, to implement the purposes of this Act. DLIR is also required to submit an annual report to the Legislature beginning with the regular session of 2025 on any outreach efforts and

projected and actual program participation, including premium rates and fund balances under this program.

B&F defers to DLIR on the overall merits of this proposal; however, although an actuarial study was conducted in 2016, B&F strongly recommends first conducting an updated feasibility/actuarial study of the impact of this program. B&F also believes it would be prudent to conduct an operational study of the resources DLIR would need to implement it before going forward with program implementation.

In addition, as a matter of general policy, B&F does not support the creation of any special fund which does not meet the requirements of Section 37-52.3, HRS. Special funds should: 1) serve a need as demonstrated by the purpose, scope of work, and an explanation why the program cannot be implemented successfully under the general fund appropriation process; 2) reflect a clear nexus between the benefits sought and charges made upon the users or beneficiaries or a clear link between the program and the sources of revenue; 3) provide an appropriate means of financing for the program or activity; and 4) demonstrate the capacity to be financially self-sustaining. Regarding S.B. No. 2474, it is difficult to determine whether the proposed special fund would be self-sustaining.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.



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

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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KENNETH S. FINK, M.D., M.G.A., M.P.H.
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

**Testimony COMMENTING on SB2474
RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE.**

SEN. HENRY J.C. AQUINO, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY

SEN. JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Hearing Date: February 12, 2024

Room Number: 224

- 1 **Fiscal Implications:** Undetermined general fund appropriation.
- 2 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health (DOH) supports the intent of a family leave
3 program in the State of Hawaii but defers to the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations on
4 specifics.
- 5 The benefits of paid leave are well established. Providing new parents with paid time off to care
6 for newborn or recently adopted children contributes to healthy development, improves maternal
7 health, and enhances families' economic security. Paid medical and caregiving leave lets
8 workers care for themselves and loved ones when ill or injured and reduces financial insecurity
9 and stress during those times; and benefits businesses by improving retention and productivity
10 and boosting labor force participation.
- 11 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

1010 Richards Street, Room 118 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Ph. (808) 586-8121 (V) • TTY (808) 586-8162 • Fax (808) 586-8129

February 12, 2024

TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY, AND HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Senate Bill 2474 – Relating to Family Leave

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports Senate Bill 2474, Relating to Family Leave. This bill would provide employees with up to sixteen weeks of paid family leave during the first year after the birth, adoption, or fostering of a child, to care for a family member with a serious health condition, to care for a qualifying service member who is the employee's next of kin, due to a qualifying exigency, or to care for their own serious health condition.

The statistics show that only seventeen percent of workers in the United States have access to paid family leave through employers. This gap negatively impacts our residents and can lead to people making the difficult choice to quit their jobs in order to provide care. There is also a negative impact to businesses that must then recruit and train a new employee.

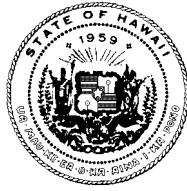
For the above reasons, we support Senate Bill 2474.

Thank you for considering our position.

Respectfully submitted,

KIRBY L. SHAW
Executive Director

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

February 9, 2024

TO: The Honorable Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Chair
Senate Committee on Labor & Technology

The Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senate Committee on Health & Human Services

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 2474 – RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE.**

Hearing: February 12, 2024, 1:00 p.m.
Conference Room 224, State Capitol & Video Conference

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the intent of this measure and provides comments. DHS defers to the Department of Labor & Industrial Relations regarding implementation and resource needs.

PURPOSE: This bill requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program. Provides family leave insurance benefits and extends the period of family leave to 16 weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees who meet the hourly qualifications. Eliminates the previous threshold of 100 employees for employers to be subject to the family leave law. Appropriates funds.

Currently, only one in four private sector workers have access to a single day of paid leave in Hawaii. Low-wage workers have the least access to paid leave and often struggle financially to provide care without losing employment. As we witnessed during the pandemic, working families need support and strong public policies to remain employed and self-sufficient

and care for their family members. DHS looks forward to the day when Hawaii will have a paid family leave program available to all residents.

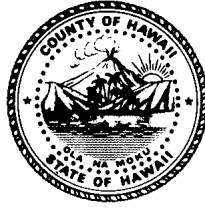
Women bear the disproportionate burden of caring for family members, from young children to elder care. A family leave program would help balance work and family responsibilities without negatively impacting productivity, engagement, and wellness. It will also ensure that Hawaii's working families receive appropriate caregiving while maintaining the ability to return to work after an absence. Sixteen states and numerous municipalities have passed and implemented paid family leave programs.

A [2020 report](#) of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries that had adopted paid family leave policies, amongst other things, showed improved health outcomes for children in that parents had more time to spend with them and to take them to health care visits, and paid paternity leave resulted in health benefits for mothers by decreasing mother's need to seek health care services for birth-related complications.

Passing an equitable state-paid family leave program to cover most workers will require robust investment so that workers know the benefits are available and that the income replacement is adequate. A good family leave program can help businesses thrive as employee satisfaction and loyalty improve, increasing the likelihood that parents and caregivers can return to work.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.

Jennifer Kagiwada
Council Member District 2 South Hilo



Office: (808) 961-8272
jennifer.kagiwada@hawaiicounty.gov

HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL - DISTRICT 2

25 Aupuni Street • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

DATE: February 9, 2024

TO: Senate Committees on Labor and Technology, and Health and Human Services

FROM: Jennifer Kagiwada, Council Member
Council District 2

SUBJECT: SB 2474

Aloha Chairs, Vice Chairs, and Committee Members,

I write in support of SB 2474 which will establish a family and medical leave insurance program. In 2018, only 17 percent of workers in the United States had access to paid family leave through their employers. Women, who are often the primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents, are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family leave. No one should have to sacrifice their financial well-being to care for their keiki or kupuna. The majority of Hawai'i's workforce cannot afford to take unpaid leave to care for a new child or assist a family member with a serious health condition. Hawai'i law only provides a four-week extension of unpaid leave to employees of large employers with more than one hundred employees.

All workers deserve access to family leave, which is essential in allowing parents to care for newborn keiki and family members who are seriously ill. Hawai'i has one of the fastest growing populations over the age of 65 in the nation. From 2020 to 2030, the percentage of people aged 65 and over is expected to increase to 22.5 percent of the state's population. Nearly one-third of workers who do not have access to family leave will need time off to care for an ill spouse or elderly parent. Multiple studies have shown that family leave programs can be established in a manner that is affordable for small businesses and our state. When medical emergencies arise, no one should be forced to choose between caring for their loved ones or earning a paycheck.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this bill.

Mahalo,

Jenn Kagiwada



HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION
AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

RANDY PERREIRA, Executive Director • Tel: 808.543.0011 • Fax: 808.528.0922

The Thirty-Second Legislature, State of Hawaii
The Senate
Committee on Labor and Technology
Committee on Health and Human Services

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association

February 12, 2024

S.B. 2474 — RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO opposes S.B. 2474, which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish and administer a family and medical leave insurance program.

While the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act allows employees up to 12 weeks of unpaid family leave each year, many employees cannot afford to survive without compensation for that long and are forced with a hard choice: take much needed time to care for yourself, your child or family member, or return to work. Paid Family and Medical Leave is a twenty-first century workforce benefit that employers can provide which can allow the employee personal and professional flexibility.

Although we appreciate the intention, we respectfully oppose this measure. It is our position that Paid Family and Medical Leave should be a 100% employer paid program and benefit. Employees should not be subject to mandatory payroll deductions to support this program. Additionally, government employees are already subject to hefty payroll deductions from the Employer-Union Health Trust Fund and the Employee Retirement System, among others. Adding an additional payroll deduction may cause financial constraint for our members and we cannot justify that for a program that all members may not take advantage of.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition of S.B. 2474.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira
Executive Director



To: Hawaii State Senate Committees on Labor and Technology & Health & Human Services
Hearing: February 12, 2024 3:00 PM
Re: Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of SB2474

Dear Chair Aquino, Chair San Buenaventura, and the Members of the Committees,

The Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus writes in strong support of SB2474 Relating to Family Leave which requires the establishment and administration of a family and medical leave insurance program within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations.

First, we note that companion measure, HB2757 HD1 passed the House Committee on Labor and Government Relations with amendments which we are generally in accord with.

We believe the timing of this comprehensive proposal is ripe. During the past six-seven years, two analyses of establishing paid family leave programs have been conducted. These reports include an economic analysis, Hawai'i-based eligibility modeling and cost breakdowns, a feasibility study, opinion polling and focus groups, options for compliance, and enforcement protocols.

It is time now to put the robust analyses, hard work, focus, and the valuable resources already expended by government entities and stakeholders alike, into real policy that gives actual relief to Hawaii's hardworking families in an increasingly challenging economy.

As we discovered during the pandemic, paid family leave is essential for families, employers, and our workforce. Paid family leave is good for business because employees are more productive when they have a benefit that helps to protect their families. In order for full participation in our economy, workers must have access to the benefits of paid leave otherwise, our businesses face a shortage of workers.

A paid family leave policy also helps even the playing field for small businesses. Currently, most small businesses cannot afford to offer adequate paid family leave to their employees, which puts them at a disadvantage when it comes to attracting and retaining the best workers. A recent survey showed that two-thirds of small business owners support paid family leave.¹

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.

A paid family leave policy is a priority of the Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus. We ask that the committees pass this important measure for Hawaii's working families; and we thank the committee for this opportunity to provide our strong support of SB2474.

¹ Survey: Small Businesses Support Tax Reforms to Pay for Robust Infrastructure Investments, Small Business Majority, June 8, 2021, www.smallbusinessmajority.org



2024 Network Members

City and County of Honolulu
County of Hawai'i
Department of Agriculture
Hawai'i Appleseed
Hawai'i Children's Action Network
Hawai'i Food Bank
Hawai'i Good Food Alliance
Hawai'i Public Health Institute
Kōkua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Health Center
Lanakila Pacific Mālama Kaua'i
Maui Nui Food Alliance
Parents and Children Together Supersistence
The Food Basket Inc.,
Hawai'i Island's Food Bank
The Pantry, by Feeding Hawai'i Together
UH Center for Indigenous Innovation/ Health Equity
Wai'anae Coast Comprehensive Health Center

Hawaiihungeraction.org

Senate Committees on Labor and Technology and Health and Human Services

Monday, February 12, 2024

RE: Support for SB 2474 – Relating to Family Leave

Dear Chairs, Vice Chairs, and members of the committees,

The Hawai'i Hunger Action Network, a coalition of more than twenty local organizations with the mission to advocate for food security for Hawai'i households, appreciates the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT of SB 2474**. This bill would establish a family leave program within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations.

Our network members understand that Hawai'i's rising rates of food insecurity are fundamentally rooted in economic inequality. Workers earning low wages struggle to meet their basic needs, and for this reason cannot afford to take time off of work in order to take care of a new baby, elderly parent, or sick family member. Working mothers have more difficulty breastfeeding, and working parents often do not have time to grocery shop or prepare meals for their children. Alternatively, if they forego pay, they may be forced to cut their grocery budget, skip meals, or rely on cheaper, empty calories to survive.

The impact of passing this bill would be truly profound, especially in Hawai'i, where nearly a third of children live in a household with just one parent, and two-thirds live in households where both parents work. Paid family leave is a proven tool—used in every developed country in the world except for the U.S—to ease the economic burden on working families and single mothers. In fact, thirteen states now have paid family leave programs in order to fill in this gap.

Mahalo for your consideration of this bill. Paid family leave will be a significant boost for Hawai'i's working families, bringing us one step closer to a more equitable economic future for all who call these islands home.



To: The Honorable Henry J.C. Aquino, Chair
The Honorable Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Labor and Technology

The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
The Honorable Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

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

Hearing: Monday, February 12, 2024, 3:00 PM, Conference Room 224

RE: **SB2474 Relating to Family Leave**

AlohaCare appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of SB2474**. This measure requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program; provides family leave insurance benefits and extends the period of family leave to 16 weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees who meet the hourly qualifications; eliminates the previous threshold of 100 employees for employers to be subject to the family leave law; and appropriates funds.

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's commitment to whole-person care and health equity includes addressing social determinants of health, including housing, nutrition, and economic stability. Evidence of the health and economic benefits of paid family and medical leave are well established. Workers need to be able to take time off to attend to their own health, the health of family members, and other caregiving responsibilities without losing their wages or jobs.

Paid family leave is beneficial for family health and well-being outcomes, in terms of infant and maternal health and overall financial stability, especially in low-income

families¹ For example, research shows that providing new parents with paid time off to care for their newborn or recently adopted children contributes to healthy growth and development for infants and toddlers, research shows.² Rigorous U.S. and international studies find that adequate periods of paid leave have significant, positive effects on maternal physical and mental health, an increase in breastfeeding, which has health benefits for mother and child, and a reduction in maternal stress and intimate partner violence.³

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in **support** of **SB2474**.

¹ <https://news.stanford.edu/2022/03/09/real-benefits-paid-family-leave/>

² <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hpb20190301.484936/full/>

³ <https://www.newamerica.org/better-life-lab/reports/paid-family-leave-how-much-time-enough/maternal-health-and-wellbeing/>

To: Senate Committees on Labor and Technology and on Health and Human Services
Re: **SB 2474 – Relating to Family Leave**
Hawai'i State Capitol & Via Videoconference
February 12, 2024, 3:00 PM

Dear Chairs Aquino and San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in **SUPPORT of SB 2474**. This bill requires the department of labor and industrial relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program, provides family leave insurance benefits and extends the period of family leave to 16 weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees who meet the hourly qualifications, and appropriates funds.

Paid family leave allows workers to take time off and still receive part of their income when they need to care for their own serious health needs or those of a loved one, or to bond with a new child.

The United States is the only developed country without national paid family leave.¹ The average amount of paid family leave in OECD nations is about one year. The second-worst nation after the United States (which has zero weeks of leave) is Mexico, which has 12 weeks of leave.

To fill that gap, thirteen states plus the District of Columbia have passed paid family leave laws.² California was the first state to pass paid family leave, about 20 years ago. This program is not a new idea and works in other states. Hawai'i should join them.

Paid leave helps children by helping their parents. Research has found that states with paid family leave have seen significant **health, social and economic benefits**.³ Families who have access to paid leave – especially working women – are healthier, more economically secure, more likely to stay in the workforce, and **less likely to need public benefits**.

Paid family leave is good for business. According to research that looks at how paid family leave works in other states,⁴ employees with paid family leave are more productive, which can help increase profits, and loyal, which lowers turnover costs.

A statewide paid family leave program would be financed by small payroll deductions that go into a state fund, which workers would apply to when they need leave. **Since employees would be paid from the state fund while taking leave, employers would not need to pay them while they are on leave.**

¹ <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/explainer/paid-family-leave-across-oecd-countries/>

² <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/explainer/state-paid-family-leave-laws-across-the-u-s/>

³ https://www.abetterbalance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/PFML_Health-Case_Fact-Sheet_11.30.21.pdf

⁴ https://www.abetterbalance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/PFML_Business-Case_Fact-Sheet_5.10.22.pdf

In addition, statewide **paid family leave helps even the playing field for small businesses**. Currently, most small businesses cannot afford to offer adequate paid family leave to their employees, which puts them at a disadvantage when it comes to attracting and retaining the best workers.

Enabling small businesses to provide paid family leave through a state program helps them compete for the best workers. Not surprisingly, recent surveys show that two-thirds of small business owners support paid family leave.⁵

Similarly, as Hawaii struggles to keep our working-age families from moving away, we are competing with states that have paid family leave – including the entire West Coast – for the best workers. **In 2021, 34,898 residents of Hawai'i moved to states that passed paid leave laws.**⁶ When young couples are deciding where to start a family, paid family leave may be an important deciding factor for them.

This bill would provide up to 16 weeks of the following types of leave per year:

- **Parental leave** – for parents, including fathers and adoptive and foster parents, to bond with a new child
- **Caregiving leave** – for a worker to care for a family member with a serious health condition.
- **Military leave** – to handle arrangements for military service

We respectfully request that you consider adding language from HB2757 HD1 to create a more comprehensive paid family leave program. This new language would add:

- Up to 16 weeks of **safe leave**⁷ per year to deal with domestic violence, such as seeking a restraining order or relocating to safety.
- Up to 26 weeks of **medical leave** – which is the same amount of leave that Hawaii workers currently are eligible for under Hawaii's Temporary Disability Insurance law⁸ – for a worker to recover from their own serious illness or injury. With the addition of medical leave, **employers also would no longer need to purchase and administer private Temporary Disability Insurance** for their employees (since employees' own illness or injury would be covered by the medical leave in the paid family program), saving them time, administrative burdens, and money.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide this testimony. Please pass this bill.

Thank you,

Nicole Woo
Director of Research and Economic Policy

⁵ <https://smallbusinessmajority.org/our-research/small-businesses-support-bold-investments-child-care>

⁶ <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/geographic-mobility/state-to-state-migration.html>

⁷ <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/the-state-of-paid-family-and-medical-leave-in-the-u-s-in-2023/>

⁸ https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/hrscurrent/Vol07_Ch0346-0398/HRS0392/HRS_0392-0023.htm



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The State Legislature
Senate Committee on Labor and Technology
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Monday, February 12, 2024
Conference Room 224, 3:00 p.m.

TO: The Honorable Henry Aquino, Chair
The Honorable Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
FROM: Keali'i Lopez, State Director, AARP Hawaii
RE: Strong Support for S.B. 2474 -Relating to Family Leave

Aloha Chairs Aquino and San Buenaventura, and Members of the Committees:

My name is Keali'i Lopez, and I am the State Director for AARP Hawai'i. AARP is a nonpartisan, social impact 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 strongly supports S.B. 2474 which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family leave insurance program which provides insurance benefits that will allow workers receive paid leave to care for a loved one at home.

An estimated 154,000 family caregivers in Hawai'i provide \$2.6 billion of unpaid care. These unpaid heroes manage medications, prepare meals, help with bathing, feeding & dressing, providing transportation to medical appointments, and managing financial & legal matters to care for loved ones and keep them out of costly nursing homes. Many juggle work and caregiving. Others must balance child-care, work, and adult dependent care. Many family caregivers must cut back their work hours or even leave the workforce to care for loved ones, which can create a huge loss in income on top of any existing financial challenges related to caregiving expenses. It also puts their career advancement and retirement savings at risk.

Establishing a paid family leave program in Hawaii would allow workers to take time off and still receive part of their income when they need to care for their own serious health needs or those of a loved one, or to bond with a new child. It is noted that families who have access to paid leave – especially working women – are healthier, more economically secure, more likely to stay in the workforce, and less likely to need public benefits should they be forced to quit their jobs and lose their health benefits and income. No one should have to choose between their loved ones and their paycheck. Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify in strong support **S.B. 2474**.



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Hawai'i Farm to School Hui

Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition

Hawai'i Public Health Training Hui

Healthy Eating + Active Living

Kūpuna Collective/Healthy Aging
& Community Living

Public Health Workforce

Date: February 8, 2024

To: Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Labor & Technology

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice-Chair
Members of the Senator Committee on Health & Human Services

Re: Strong Support for SB2474, Relating to Paid Family Leave

Mtg: Monday, February 12, 2024 at 3:00 PM

The Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) Coalition, convened by the Hawai'i Public Health Instituteⁱ, **strongly supports SB2474**. This bill would provide employees up to 16 weeks of paid family leave by establishing a family and medical leave insurance program within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, which would be funded through payroll contributions.

It is time for Hawai'i to pass a strong family leave insurance program. Employees need paid time off of work to care for a newborn, newly adopted or foster child, ill family member, and other unexpected health emergencies. Paid family leave guarantees that employees can cover basic living costs while also providing care to family members when they need it most. Thirteen states and Washington, DCⁱⁱ, have passed similar legislation providing partial wage replacement for family and medical leave purposes.

Paid time off for families to care for a newborn also helps to establish a foundation for breastfeeding. Infant feeding practices can significantly affect later growth and development and can protect against obesityⁱⁱⁱ. The American Academy of Pediatrics and the World Health Organization recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life and continued breastfeeding with the addition of other foods until a child is at least twelve months of age^{iv}.

“A robust body of evidence suggests that breastfeeding has multiple health benefits for infants, and that paid family leave (and other forms of maternity leave) significantly increases the length of time that mothers breastfeed. In a review and analysis of studies of breastfeeding in developed countries, the U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality found that full-term infants fed formula are at substantially greater risk

than breastfed infants for acute ear infection, eczema, gastrointestinal infection, hospitalization for lower respiratory tract diseases in the first year of life, asthma, childhood obesity, Type 2 diabetes, leukemia, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).”^v

Furthermore, when people can take time away from work to care for themselves and their families, there are many health benefits. People are able to better manage chronic conditions, it improves health for mothers and fathers; it allows families to care for their kūpuna; and it has been shown to increase health equity.

For all of these reasons, we **strongly support SB2474**, and thank this committee for considering this important policy.

Mahalo,



Peggy Mierzwa
Policy & Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Public Health Institute

ⁱ Created by the legislature in 2012, **Healthy Eating + Active Living Coalition**, formerly the Obesity Prevention Task Force is comprised of over 60 statewide organizations, and works to make recommendations to reshape Hawai'i's school, work, community, and health care environments, making healthier lifestyles obtainable for all Hawai'i residents.

ⁱⁱ <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/the-state-of-paid-family-and-medical-leave-in-the-u-s-in-2023/>

ⁱⁱⁱ S. Arenz et al., Breast-feeding and childhood obesity - a systematic review, 28(10) *International Journal of Obesity and Related Metabolic Disorders* 1247-56 (2004).

^{iv} American Academy of Pediatrics, AAP Reaffirms Breastfeeding Guidelines, <https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/pages/AAP-Reaffirms-Breastfeeding-Guidelines.aspx> (last updated February 27, 2012).

^v http://www.nccp.org/publications/pdf/text_1059.pdf



To: Senate Committees on Labor & Technology and Health & Human Services
Hearing Date/Time: Monday February 12, 2024 3:00 PM
Place: Hawaii State Capitol, Room 224
Re: Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of S.B. 2474

Dear Chair Aquino, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and the Members of Committees,

Members of AAUW of Hawai'i thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of S.B. 2474 which would require the department of labor and industrial relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program. We strongly support this measure.

The United States is the only developed country without national paid family leave. Twenty one states and the District of Columbia have passed paid family leave laws(*). The states with paid family leave have seen significant health, social and economic benefits. Paid family leave is good for business—employees become more productive and loyal when they have it.

In fact, the owners of small businesses in Hawai'i we talked to are excited to have a family leave insurance program available to them. They are already paying for temporary disability insurance (TDI) and they know the small additional payment they would need to pay to provide paid leave benefits for their employees will be worth it. It would provide time off their employees need and fund for the employers to hire temporary help. For the business owners who are already providing paid leave out of their own pocket, S.B. 2474 would provide a less expensive option.

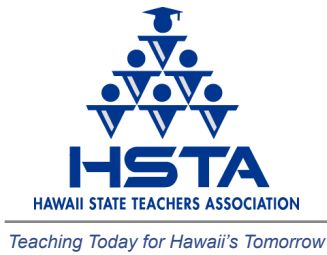
During the 2023 legislative session, the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations was concerned about what would be required to establish and implement paid family leave in terms of staffing, information technology needs, and funding. Fortunately, twelve states and the District of Columbia have experience and information technology establishing and implementing paid family and medical leave insurance program (*). We suggest DLIR considers outsourcing the establishment and implementation of this program.

Please pass this measure for our keiki, our kupuna, and our working families. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Younghee Overly
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.

(*) <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/explainer/state-paid-family-leave-laws-across-the-u-s/>



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TESTIMONY TO THE HAWAII SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY AND COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Item: **SB2474 - Relating to family leave**
Position: **Support**
Hearing: **February 12, 2024, 3:00 p.m., Conference Room 224**
Submitter: **Osa Tui, Jr. – President, Hawai'i State Teachers Association**

Chair Aquino, Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Aquino, and members of the committees,

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association **supports** SB2474 which requires the department of labor and industrial relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program which provides family leave insurance benefits and extends the period of family leave to 16 weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees who meet the hourly qualifications. It also eliminates the previous threshold of 100 employees for employers to be subject to the family leave law.

Workers who have access to family leave benefits are more likely to return to work after their leave is over. In a 10-year study of the California family leave insurance program, businesses reported that family leave had a positive or neutral effect on their business. Small businesses were less likely than large businesses to report any negative effects.

This bill is also for workers. The majority of our workforce in Hawai'i cannot afford to take unpaid leave to care for a new child or assist a family member with a serious health condition. Hawai'i law only provides a four-week extension of unpaid leave to employees of large employers with more than one hundred employees. All workers deserve access to family leave.

A public insurance model that includes all eligible workers in the state is affordable. The Institute for Women's Policy Research studied the use and cost of family leave insurance for our state and found that the annual cost to cover sixteen weeks of leave for a worker making \$48,000 would be roughly \$58 - a small price to pay for the financial security guaranteed by sixteen weeks of paid family leave.

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** this bill.

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/11/2024 10:27:57 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Golojuch Jr	Testifying for Stonewall Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Senators,

The Stonewall Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i; Hawai'i's oldest and largest policy and political LGBTQIA+ focused organization fully supports SB 2474.

We hope you all will support this important piece of legislation.

Mahalo nui loa,

Michael Golojuch, Jr. (he/him)
Chair and SCC Representative
Stonewall Caucus for the DPH



**TESTIMONY OF TINA YAMAKI, PRESIDENT
RETAIL MERCHANTS OF HAWAII
FEBRUARY 12, 2024
SB 2474 RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE.**

Good afternoon, Chair Aquino and Chair San Buenaventura and members of the Senate Committee Labor & Technology and the Senate Committee on Health & Human Services. I am Tina Yamaki, President of the Retail Merchants of Hawaii and I appreciate this opportunity to testify.

The Retail Merchants of Hawaii was founded in 1901 and is a statewide, not for profit trade organization committed to supporting the growth and development of the retail industry in Hawaii. Our membership includes small mom & pop stores, large box stores, resellers, luxury retail, department stores, shopping malls, on-line sellers, local, national, and international retailers, chains, and everyone in between.

We respectfully oppose SB 2474. This measure requires the department of labor and industrial relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program; provides family leave insurance benefits and extends the period of family leave to 16 weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees who meet the hourly qualifications; eliminates the previous threshold of 100 employees for employers to be subject to the family leave law; and appropriates funds.

It is our understanding that Family Leave is used when the Employee needs to take care of someone else who is a family member; and Sick Leave and TDI are used when the employee themselves are sick or injured.

Employers want to take care of their employees, but there has to also be a balance to what businesses can afford. Many employers already offer benefits that include significant paid time off to those employees who have earned it in addition to the mandated family leave for employees to care for their family who are ill and ensure that their jobs are secure when they return to work.

We would like to point out that TDI is calculated based on payroll and wage base. By including family leave in the TDI calculations, the employer's premium rates would significantly increase. Not to mention that the administrative process will also add an additional burden and increase the cost to the businesses. It is important to note that in addition to the "family leave" compensation the employer would have to pay to the individual taking sick leave, the employer must pay another employee "filling in" for this individual.

We want to point out that Hawaii is the only state in the entire nation that mandates medical insurance coverage for employees' healthcare. This is an added benefit to employees while being an increasing cost to employers every year with rate hikes in healthcare. For a small business, the cost for individual health insurance could be anywhere from \$900 per month or more per employee depending on the program they have.

While we understand the intent of a Family Leave Insurance Program, now is not the time to implement this program. Retailers are already operating on a very thin margin. Many are not able to afford these kinds of costly operational increases, especially with the recent raises in the minimum wage. Retailers have still not recovered. Many are still barely hanging on to keep their doors open and their employees employed. Many still carry a large debt from being shut down and the lack of customers – especially since the Japanese visitors have not returned. The rising cost for employee health care benefits, products and goods, services, and shipping continue to have a substantial effect on our operations since the pandemic ensued. Furthermore, numerous businesses are still trying to recover from the Maui Fires last year. Some of our local retailers lost multiple stores in the fires – this not only includes Maui based stores but also business from the neighboring islands who have expanded to Maui. We are also seeing streamlined and pivoted business with shortened hours of operations and freeze in employee hiring for certain positions. We continue to see local and national retailers quietly closing their doors in Hawaii. Measures like this will encourage more businesses to close their doors as they can no longer afford to operate in Hawaii and thus more of our friends, family and neighbors will be unemployed.

Retailers often are not able to absorb all the costs associated with these types of government mandates and must pass the cost on to the customer by raising prices of goods and services. This means groceries, clothing, supplies, appliances... will be even more expensive than they are now. This helps Hawaii to continue to be one of the most expensive states in the nation to live.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2474: RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE

TO: Senate Committees on Labor and Technology, and Health and Human Services,

FROM: Rob Van Tassell, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawaii

Hearing: Monday, 2/12/24; 3:00 PM; via Videoconference or Room 224

Chair Acquino, Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Acquino, and Members, Committees on Labor and Technology, and Health and Human Services:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony **in Strong Support of SB 2474**, which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family leave insurance program. I am Rob Van Tassell with Catholic Charities Hawaii. **This bill provides one step to address the great burden that Hawaii's cost of living places on our workforce.**

Catholic Charities Hawaii (CCH) is a tax exempt, non-profit agency that has been providing social services in Hawaii for over 75 years. CCH has programs serving elders, children, families, homeless and immigrants. Our mission is to provide services and advocacy to the most vulnerable of the people in Hawaii. This bill is one of our economic justice priorities.

Catholic Charities Hawaii strongly urges your support for paid family leave that will help our residents live a life of peace and dignity. This is one step to help ensure a healthier and more productive local workforce. This bill would assist our working families to meet their basic needs in times of family crises.

Middle class, ALICE, and low-income families face severe burdens when they undergo situations when they cannot work but do not have paid family leave. When members of their families suffer from serious illnesses, workers often must take time off to provide them with care. Hawaii's cost of living is so high that sudden and sometimes long-term family crises may result in great stress and even risk of homelessness. Many of the vulnerable in Hawaii are the working poor, people who work hard, but due to our high cost of living struggle to make ends meet. We serve these workers in our programs. They are often barely able to avoid homelessness, working several jobs to juggle the basic expenses of their families and unable to spend time raising their children. These workers are parents who try very hard to provide care and support to their families but have little or no reserves when a crisis strikes.

We urge your support for this bill to give hope to workers when a family crisis hits. If you have any questions, please contact our Legislative Liaison, Betty Lou Larson at (808) 527-4813.



CLARENCE T. C. CHING CAMPUS • 1822 Ke'eaumoku Street, Honolulu, HI 96822
Phone (808) 527-4813 •





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Keoni Ahlo
Lee Anderson
Noa Aoki
Javier Barberi
Tim Januszewski
Tom Jones
Felix Koeppenkastrop
Victor Lim
Keith Mallini
Don Murphy
Conan Paik-Rosa
Mike Palmer
Tyler Roukema
Michael Skededeski
Alison "Bo" Tanaka
Katy Tanaka
Tina Wang
Nicolas Ware
Anthony Wong
Nicholas Wong
Paul Yokota

Allied Members

Louis Chun
Robert Gutierrez
James Idemoto
Christopher Lee
Raymond Orozco
Bryan Pearl
Randy Sagon
David Yoshioka

Advisory Board

Jerry Agrusa
Jamie Brown
Richard Rand
John Richards
Richard Turbin

Date: February 9, 2024

To: Sen. Henry J.C. Aquino, Chair
Sen. Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Committee on Labor And Technology

Sen. Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Sen. Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair
Committee on Health and Human Services

From: Victor Lim, Legislative Lead

Subj: SB 2474 Relating to Paid Family Leave

The Hawaii Restaurant Association representing 4,000 Eating and Drinking Place locations in Hawaii stand opposed to SB 2474.

Our Industry has to be one of that was hit the hardest by the Covid Pandemic and up to today, we are still struggling to recover. We continue to be hit by very high inflation, supply chain delays, labor shortage, high medical insurance costs, and super high interest rates. Our minimum wage also just went up \$2 an hour which is one that jump the highest percentage in the country. On the aftermath of Lahaina Fire, we also anticipate a huge increase in our general and liability insurances. We continue to see business go under today and many more are struggling on very thin margins.

The one message we continue to hear from our membership is that we hope our legislators will not impose any new mandates that will increase our cost of doing business and additional administrative duties. Furthermore, this bill has no cost numbers or what the employer portion and employee portions spelled out for us to also better access.

Our restaurants are hurting and just cannot take on any additional mandates and cost increases.

Thank you giving us this opportunity to share our concerns.





African American Lawyers of
Association of Hawai'i
1188 Bishop Street, Suite 1908
Honolulu, HI 96813

February 10, 2024

To: Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & TECHNOLOGY

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

From: Elizabeth Jubin Fujiwara, African American Lawyers Association of Hawai'i ("AALA")

Re: S.B. 2474, Relating to Paid Family Leave—STRONGLY SUPPORT

Hearing: Monday, February 12, 2024, 3:00 p.m., Room 224

The African American Lawyers Association of Hawai'i ("AALA") submits testimony in strong support of S.B. 2474, which, among other things, establishes Paid Family Leave in Hawai'i that will support both our economy and family well-being. The mission of AALA is to promote the advancement of human rights and justice, and to increase the role of Black Americans in the legal community. AALA's core mission is to encourage Black lawyers in Hawai'i and to focus on the issues that affect the Black community. AALA does this work to promote the advancement of human rights and justice.

We strongly support Paid Family Leave for several reasons. Paid family leave allows workers to take time off and still receive part of their income when they need to care for their own serious health needs or those of a loved one, or to bond with a new child. This particular bill requires the department of labor and industrial relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program. It provides family leave insurance benefits and extends the period of family leave to 16 weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees who meet the hourly qualifications. It eliminates the previous threshold of 100 employees for employers to be subject to the family leave law.

Paid leave includes:

- Bonding leave – for all types of parents to bond with a new child.
- Caring leave – to care for a seriously ill family member.
- Active-duty leave – to manage arrangements for military service.
- Medical leave – to recover from one's own serious illness or injury.
- Safe leave – to deal with domestic violence.

The United States is the only developed country without national paid family leave. To fill that gap, 13 states plus DC have passed paid family leave laws.

Hawai'i should join them. Why? Only 1 in 4 private sector workers have access to paid family leave. The federal FMLA and the Hawai'i Family Leave Law provide only unpaid leave. Most workers either don't qualify for them and/or simply can't afford to take unpaid leave. As importantly only working mothers can get TDI to recover from childbirth.

Hawai'i has 154,000 unpaid caregivers, providing 144 million hours of unpaid care per year.

No one should have to choose between their loved ones and their paycheck. Paid family leave helps children by helping their parents Families with paid family leave – especially working moms – are

Healthier.

More economically secure.

More likely to stay in the workforce.

Less likely to need public benefits.



African American Lawyers of
Association of Hawai'i
1188 Bishop Street, Suite 1908
Honolulu, HI 96813

Paid family leave not only helps families but helps businesses:
Employees with paid family leave become--
More productive, which helps increase profits.
More loyal, which lowers turnover costs.

Statewide paid family leave even helps the playing field for small businesses by helping them compete for the best workers.

The administration as well as this legislature have been genuinely concerned about Hawai'i residents no longer being able to afford "Paradise". One clear solution: Paid family leave would help prevent working families from leaving Hawai'i.

Paid Family Leave works this way:

1. A state-run benefit program, like Social Security or Medicare.
2. Small payroll deductions that go into a state fund to which workers apply.
3. Employers do not need to pay workers while they are on leave and then they can hire and pay temporary workers.

The Hawai'i Family Leave Insurance Grant Analysis Report of the Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women and the Hawai'i Children's Action Network (2017) found that paid family leave in Hawai'i is:

Feasible
Not expensive
Supported by 94% of Hawai'i workers.

For all these cogent reasons, we respectfully request that the Committee pass S.B. 2474. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this measure.



UNITED PUBLIC WORKERS

AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO

THE SENATE KA 'AHA KENEKOA THE THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION OF 2024

COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY

Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

Monday, February 12, 2024, 3:00 PM
Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

Re: Testimony on SB2474 – RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE

Chairs Aquino and San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

The United Public Workers, AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO (“UPW”) is the exclusive bargaining representative for approximately 14,000 public employees, which includes blue collar, non-supervisory employees in Bargaining Unit 1 and institutional, health, and correctional employees in Bargaining Unit 10, in the State of Hawaii and various counties.

UPW **opposes** SB2474, which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program. This bill provides family leave insurance benefits and extends the period of family leave to 16 weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees who meet the hourly qualifications. Furthermore, this measure eliminates the previous threshold of 100 employees for employers to be subject to the family leave law.

We strongly believe that paid family and medical leave is a benefit that employers can and should provide to their workforce to remain in step with evolving trends in the labor market. Hawaii’s public employees are currently saddled with substantial payroll deductions for health plans offered by the Employer-Union Health Trust Fund as well as mandatory contributions to the Employees’ Retirement System. An additional, yet to be determined payroll deduction for a benefit that our members may not utilize could prove to be a significant financial burden for those who are lower income earners. As a result, what is intended to serve as an employee benefit may prove to serve as a deterrent to employment in the public sector.

HEADQUARTERS

1426 North School Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817-1914
Phone 808.847.2631

HAWAII

362 East Lanikaula Street
Hilo, Hawaii 96720-4336
Phone 808.961.3424

KAUAI

2970 Kele Street, Suite 213
Lihue, Hawaii 96766-1803
Phone 808.245.2412

MAUI

841 Kolu Street
Wailuku, Hawaii 96793-1436
Phone 808.244.0815

1.866.454.4166

Toll Free - Molokai/Lanai only

UPW appreciates that intention of this bill, but we simply cannot support legislation that would result in additional financial burden for our membership. This is a benefit that should be fully paid by the employer.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kalani Werner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

Kalani Werner
State Director

HEADQUARTERS

1426 North School Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817-1914
Phone 808.847.2631

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841 Kolu Street
Wailuku, Hawaii 96793-1436
Phone 808.244.0815

1.866.454.4166

Toll Free - *Molokai/Lanai only*

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/11/2024 10:26:06 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Pride at Work - Hawaii	Testifying for Pride at Work – Hawai‘i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senators,

Pride at Work – Hawai‘i is an official chapter of Pride At Work which is a national nonprofit organization that represents LGBTQIA+ union members and their allies. P@W-HI fully supports SB 2474.

We ask that you support this needed piece of legislation.

Mahalo,

Pride at Work – Hawai‘i



Cade Watanabe, Financial Secretary-Treasurer

Gemma G. Weinstein, President

Eric W. Gill, Senior Vice-President

February 11, 2024

Committee On Labor And Technology
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Committee On Health And Human Services
Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

Testimony in Support of SB2474

Chairs Aquino and San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committees,

UNITE HERE Local 5 represents 10,000 working people in the hotel, food service and health care industries across Hawaii.

SB2474 will give Hawaii's working families security, peace of mind and opportunity. Local families now are dealing with runaway rent, inflation and medical cost increases. The ability to take time off and not worry about lost income when illness strikes or family needs arise is critical to the pursuit of happiness in life.

Without this type of social safety net, families are disincentivized to take care of themselves or each other, all because of the implied economic threat to income or job security. This is an appalling economic threat to live under, and one that lawmakers can eradicate with this simple solution.

Enacting paid family and medical leave as public policy will improve Hawaii's quality of life forever. Other states have passed this type of policy, Hawaii should too.

We urge you to pass SB2474. Thank you for your consideration.



February 9, 2024

To: COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

RE: Strong Support of SB2474 – Relating to Paid Family Leave Bill

Hrg: Monday, February 12, 2024 at 3:00PM

The Hawai'i Public Health Association (HPHA) is a group of over 450 community members, public health professionals, and organizations statewide dedicated to improving public health. Our mission is to promote public health in Hawai'i through leadership, collaboration, education and advocacy. Additionally, HPHA aims to call attention to issues around social justice and equity in areas that extend beyond the traditional context of health (e.g., education, digital equity, cultural sensitivity), which can have profound impacts on health equity and well-being. Therefore, as stewards of public health, HPHA is also advocating for equity in all policies.

HPHA is in **STRONG SUPPORT** of Paid Family and Medical Leave that provides working 'ohana with paid time off from work to care for and bond with a new keiki or to address caregiving needs for themselves or loved ones. PFML allows people to balance work and family kuleana because workers can time off without sacrificing income.

I humbly ask for your **SUPPORT** of SB2474 for state funding.

Respectfully submitted,

Holly Kessler
Executive Director

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 5:08:04 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Doris Matsunaga	Testifying for Save Medicaid Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Save Medicaid Hawaii supports SB2474

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 5:21:36 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Doris Matsunaga	Testifying for Indivisible Hawaii Healthcare Team	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Indivisible Hawaii Healthcare Team supports SB 2474

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 1:37:11 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Golojuch	Testifying for Rainbow Family 808	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Rainbow Family 808 supports SB2474. Please pass this bill.

Mike Golojuch, Sr., Secretary/Board Member



COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

BILL SB2474
POSITION: SUPPORT

Hearing Date: February 12, 2024

Aloha Chair Aquino, Vice Chair Moriwaki
Chair Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino and Committee Members:

Aloha United Way supports SB2474, which requires the department of labor and industrial relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program. This would provide family leave insurance benefits and extend the period of family leave to 16 weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees, eliminating the previous threshold of 100 employees.

Paid family leave is imperative for working families who need to care for their 'ohana due to birth or adoption, illness, or other family disturbance. Currently, many employers offer 0 weeks of paid leave to their employees, forcing workers to make difficult decisions between retaining their employment, or caring for their loved ones and risk and falling into financial instability. In states with paid family leave, businesses report improved employee retention rates and no positive impacts on their business' performance and profitability. Measures like SB2474 would be transformative for local families, retain the workforce, and benefit the overall health and wellbeing of our community.

Aloha United Way and agencies in the ALICE initiative support this bill to create a state system on paid family leave, which will increase income and employment opportunity for ALICE families. ALICE stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed, and refers to households who are employed but whose incomes are not enough to meet their basic living costs. AUW's 2022 ALICE report found that **44% of Hawaii's households are ALICE** and showed an alarming 50% increase in ALICE households falling into poverty.

Many of Hawaii's 'ohana must work to make ends meet, are multi-generational, and care for their loved ones at home. On behalf of working mothers, caring fathers, loving daughters and sons, we respectfully ask that the legislature put working families first.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your action to support ALICE families and pass SB2474.

Sincerely,



Kayla Keehu- Alexander
Vice President, Community Impact
Aloha United Way



Suzanne Skjold
Chief Operating Officer
Aloha United Way



745 Fort St. Mall
17th Floor
Honolulu, HI 96815

808-521-9500
NFIB.com

February 9, 2024

TO: Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Labor
and Technology

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Health
and Human Services

FR: Michael Iosua, State Director
NFIB, Hawaii Chapter

RE: **OPPOSITION** TO SB 2474 – RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE
Hearing date – February 12, 2024, at 3:00 PM

Aloha Chair Aquino, Chair San Buenaventura and members of the committees,

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of NFIB's Hawaii Chapter in **OPPOSITION** to SB 2474 – RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE. NFIB is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, and member-driven organization exclusively dedicated to small and independent businesses. With members in all four counties, NFIB's Hawaii chapter advocates on issues that affect Hawaii's small and independent business owners.

Opposes to the proposed extension of the family leave period in Hawaii for an additional 12 weeks. While I understand the importance of supporting families and promoting work-life balance, I believe that such an extension would have detrimental effects on businesses and the overall economy.

Firstly, extending the family leave period may place an undue burden on small and medium-sized businesses, particularly those with limited resources. Small businesses are the backbone of our economy, providing employment opportunities and contributing significantly to local communities. Mandating an extended family leave period could lead to increased financial strain on these businesses, potentially resulting in job losses and hindered economic growth.

Moreover, the proposed extension may lead to workforce management challenges for employers. Balancing the needs of the business with an extended family leave period may require companies to hire temporary replacements or restructure their teams, causing disruptions in productivity and efficiency. This could be especially problematic for industries with tight deadlines or projects that require consistent and reliable manpower.

Additionally, the financial impact of an extended family leave period is not limited to employers. Employees themselves may face financial repercussions, as some employers may be unable to provide full compensation during extended leaves. This could result in economic hardships for families, potentially negating the intended benefits of the extended leave period.

Furthermore, the current family leave provisions already provide a reasonable balance between supporting families and ensuring the sustainability of businesses. A more measured approach, such as offering incentives for businesses to voluntarily provide extended family leave or exploring alternative solutions, such as allowing private insurers to offer paid family leave insurance, as opposed to creating a new division at DLIR, could be considered to address the needs of families without imposing undue burdens on employers.

For these reasons, I strongly urge the committee to defer this measure. Mahalo for your consideration.



Hawai'i

Committee: Labor and Technology, Health and Human Services
Hearing Date/Time: Monday, February 12, 2024 at 3:00pm
Place: Conference Room 224 & Via Videoconference
Re: ***Testimony of the ACLU of Hawai'i in SUPPORT of SB2474
Relating to Family Leave***

Dear Chairs Aquino and San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Committees:

The ACLU of Hawai'i **supports SB2474 Relating to Family Leave**, which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program that provides leave insurance benefits and extends the period of leave to 16 weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees. We are pleased to see the elimination of the 100 employee threshold to be subject to the program.

ACLU National and ACLU of Hawai'i have a longstanding commitment to redressing the adverse effects of racism and sexism and other forms of invidious discrimination. That includes decades long commitments to affirmative action in employment and paid leave reflected in our organization's policies. It includes commitments to defend essential health care coverage to address "harsh economic and social disparities that threaten our country's democratic foundation and the cohesion of our society."

In the past seven years, the State has conducted at least two comprehensive studies on the efficacy and implementation of a paid family leave program for Hawai'i. The first was **completed in 2017 by the Commission on the Status of Women (HSCSW)¹ with a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor**. The second was conducted by the **Legislative Reference Bureau² in response to ACT 109 (2018)**.

We don't need any more studies on a paid family leave program in Hawai'i.

The U.S. is the only developed country in the entire world that does not provide by law paid family leave to workers. The federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) only provides unpaid leave. And only for a little more than half of all U.S. employees.³

For workers living paycheck to paycheck, this is not an option. When a loved one is sick, their only options are to leave them unattended, or lose income and risk missing utility bill payments, not buying food, or worse, risk becoming houseless. This is unacceptable.

¹ https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/CommitteeFiles/senate/LBR/LBRfiles/DOL_Hawaii-State-Paid-Family-Leave-Analysis-Grant-Report.pdf

² https://lrb.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019_PaidFamilyLeaveProgramImpactStudy.pdf

³ https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OASP/evaluation/pdf/WHF_FMLA2018SurveyResults_Appendices_Aug2020.pdf

Providing robust family leave for every worker is a principle of equality.

Nationally, a mere 17% of workers have access to paid family leave.⁴ **That 17%, however, is nearly universally higher-paid workers who are more likely to be white.** During the COVID pandemic, those were the same workers who were able to work safely from the comfort of their own homes.

The COVID-19 pandemic showed us just how vulnerable our workers and families are to virulent disease. Not only would a public paid family leave program provide much needed assistance to Hawai'i's "essential workers" who live paycheck to paycheck and are predominantly women and people of color, it could also prove useful in protecting customers and coworkers from catching and spreading contagious illnesses.

A robust public paid family leave insurance program would provide workers up to 16 weeks of paid leave. And because a public insurance program would cover all workers in the state, it would cost just \$58 a year for each worker.⁵ **When split with the employer, that amounts to just \$0.56 a week.**

- Of note, the lack of public paid family leave insurance exacerbates sex and gender inequality:
 - A gender wage gap emerges after a child, known as the Motherhood Penalty.
 - Wage gaps mean significantly lower earning potential over the course of someone's career.

13 states and the District of Columbia have implemented paid family leave programs. It's time for Hawai'i to join them.

Sincerely,

Josh Frost

Josh Frost
Policy Assistant
ACLU of Hawai'i
jfrost@acluhawaii.org

The mission of the ACLU of Hawai'i is to protect the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the U.S. and State Constitutions. The ACLU of Hawai'i fulfills this through legislative, litigation, and public education programs statewide. The ACLU of Hawai'i is a non-partisan and private non-profit organization that provides its services at no cost to the public and does not accept government funds. The ACLU of Hawai'i has been serving Hawai'i for over 50 years.

⁴ <https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/2020/08/31/lack-paternity-leave-problem-moms-and-dads-study-finds/5662562002/>

⁵ https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/CommitteeFiles/senate/LBR/LBRfiles/DOL_Hawaii-State-Paid-Family-Leave-Analysis-Grant-Report.pdf



February 12, 2024

Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair, Chair
Senate Health and Human Services Committee
State Capitol
415 S Beretania St.
Honolulu, HI 96813

Honorable Henry Aquino, Chair
Senate Labor and Technology Committee
State Capitol
415 S Beretania St.
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: Senate Bill 2474, Relating to Family Leave - SUPPORT

Chair Buenaventura and Chair Aquino,

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS) encourages you to support Senate Bill 2474, relating to Family Leave. The bill will further protect Hawaiian workers' financial and medical well-being.

The mission of LLS is to cure leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease, and myeloma and improve the quality of life for the more than 1.3 million people in the United States living with blood cancer and their families. Paid medical leave helps blood cancer patients pursue medical treatment earlier. It helps them manage that treatment without fearing job loss or financial disaster. It enables the parents of children with cancer to focus on their child's care.

Without access to job-protected paid medical leave, cancer patients and caregivers can face crushing choices between their physical and emotional health and well-being. A 2021 American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network survey found that half of cancer patients, a third of cancer survivors, and roughly half of caregivers experienced financial hardship resulting from lack of paid leave access.ⁱ

It is estimated that more than 40% of working cancer survivors have had significant changes in employment because of their condition, including switching to part-time status or retiring early. These changes are more likely to happen to women and minority individuals.ⁱⁱ Comprehensive paid leave policies help to relieve these pressures.

LLS supports a future where every working Hawaiian can access paid leave protection when needed. We hope your committee will join us in pursuing policies that make this future a reality. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Adam C Zarrin".

Adam Zarrin
Director, State Government Affairs

ⁱ American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network. (n.d.). Paid Leave is an Important Component of Cancer Care for Working Patients, Survivors and Caregivers. *Fightcancer.Org*. Retrieved September 10, 2021,

from <https://www.fightcancer.org/sites/default/files/Paid%20Leave%20External%20Factsheet%20Final%2010-23-20.pdf>

ⁱⁱ De Moor JS, et al. Employment Outcomes Among Cancer Survivors in the United States: Implication for Cancer Care Delivery. *J Natl Cancer Inst*. Mary 2021; 113(5): 641-644. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jnci/djaa084>



Testimony to the Senate Committee on Labor and Technology
and
to the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Monday, February 12, 2024
3:00 p. m.
State Capitol Conference Room 224 and via videoconference

Re: SB 2474 Relating to Family Leave

Dear Chair Aquino, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Labor and Technology, Chair San Buenaventura, and Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services:

I am Gary Simon, a member of the board of the Hawai'i 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. I am offering testimony on behalf of the Hawai'i Family Caregiver Coalition.

The Hawaii Family Caregiver Coalition strongly supports SB 2474, which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program; provides family leave insurance benefits and extends the period of family leave to 16 weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees who meet the hourly qualifications; eliminates the previous threshold of 100 employees for employers to be subject to the family leave law; and appropriates funds.

Up to 40 percent of people in the workforce are not eligible for leave under the Family Medical Leave Act — and many cannot afford to take unpaid leave. Lack of paid family leave can lead to financial strain and negative workplace impacts for caregivers. Paid leave programs result in better health outcomes and lower overall health care system costs.

We urge you to support family leave and SB 2474, and we urge you to recommend its passage.

Mahalo for seriously considering the bill.

Very sincerely,

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

Gary Simon



Email gsimon@aarp.org

**Hawaii
Legislative
Council
Members**

Joell Edwards
Wainiha Country
Market
Hanalei

Russell Ruderman
Island Naturals
Hilo/Kona

Dr. Andrew Johnson
Niko Niko Family
Dentistry
Honolulu

Robert H. Pahia
Hawaii Taro Farm
Wailuku

Maile Meyer
Na Mea Hawaii
Honolulu

Tina Wildberger
Kihei Ice
Kihei

L. Malu Shizue Miki
Abundant Life
Natural Foods
Hilo

Kim Coco Iwamoto
Enlightened Energy
Honolulu

Chamber of
Sustainable
Commerce
P.O. Box 22394
Honolulu, HI
96823

Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Committee on Labor & Technology

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair
Committee on Health & Human Services

Monday , February 12, 2024
3:00 PM Via Videoconference

RE: **SB2474** Paid Family/Medical Leave Insurance Program - **Support**

Dear Chairs Aquino & San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Moriwaki & Members of both Committees,

The Chamber of Sustainable Commerce represents over 100 small businesses across the State that strive for a triple bottom line: people, planet and prosperity – we know Hawaii can strengthen its economy without hurting workers, consumers, communities or the environment. This is why we support SB2474.

One of our larger employers shared:

“At first I thought, ‘I care about my employees but we don't have the funds to pay 16 weeks of paid leave – my grocery store would go under and we'd all be out of a job'; then I took a closer look at SB2474 and realized the state could help me be a better and more profitable small business owner by running this insurance program just like TDI (temporary disability insurance). Under SB2474, I would be able to afford my share of the premiums to cover 16 weeks of paid leave if an employee had to care for their dying loved one! It's the humane thing to do”.

Coming out of the Covid pandemic, our economy's resiliency validated the importance of having financial safety-nets for working families. It's important to compare and contrast how our state intervenes (or chooses not to intervene) when an individual family's crisis could result in their homelessness compared to when an entire community faces homelessness because of wildfires, lava flow or global pandemic.

SB2474 would provide a needed safety net to all working families, regardless whether that family is suffering alone or with the entire state.

The Chamber of Sustainable Commerce submits A Better Balance's 2023 white paper titled “The Business Case for Paid Family and Medical Leave:” <https://www.abetterbalance.org/resources/the-business-case-for-paid-family-and-medical-leave/>



The Business Case for Paid Family and Medical Leave

Comprehensive paid family and medical leave presents a game-changing opportunity to support businesses and families. Paid family and medical leave will provide businesses with an unprecedented opportunity to recruit and retain valuable employees and increase productivity without creating significant administrative burdens.

State paid family and medical leave programs have proven to be successful for workers, businesses, and families.

- Thirteen states (RI, CA, NJ, NY, WA, MA, CT, OR, CO, MD, DE, MN, and ME) and Washington, D.C. have enacted paid family and medical leave laws,¹ which provide (or will provide) benefits to workers when they are unable to work due to a serious off-the-job illness or injury, to bond with a new child (including children newly placed for foster care or adoption) or to care for a family member with a serious health condition.
 - Ten states also provide (or will provide) paid family leave benefits to workers dealing with certain needs in connection with a family member's military deployment.
 - Six states also provide (or will provide) benefits known as "safe time," which covers certain needs arising from domestic or sexual violence.
- The state paid family and medical leave programs offer proven examples from which to build a national, paid family and medical leave program that is equitable and sustainable. They also prove that these policies can work for businesses as well as workers.
 - In a study of California businesses, the vast majority reported that the state's paid family leave program had a positive or neutral effect on their business; a vast majority also reported that the program resulted in no cost increases, with some even indicating that the program resulted in cost savings for their business by reducing benefit costs. Moreover, most businesses were able to adjust to the program easily; nearly two-thirds of businesses reported that temporarily reassigning work to other employees was their primary method for addressing the temporary absence of employees on paid family leave.²
 - In New Jersey, businesses of all sizes have easily adjusted to the state law. Most businesses reported no negative effects on business profitability and most reported that complying with the law is not difficult.³
 - In a survey of Rhode Island employers conducted a year after the state's paid family leave law went into effect, a majority of employers were strongly or somewhat in favor of the law. This was true among both large and small employers surveyed.⁴
 - In the first year after New York's paid family leave program went into effect, employers experienced a significantly easier time coordinating employee absences, especially longer absences. Additionally, after the program went into effect, the vast majority of employers were supportive of the program.⁵

Paid family and medical leave programs can help small businesses thrive.

- Providing paid leave through a government program levels the playing field for small businesses. Small businesses that cannot afford to offer the same generous leave benefits as larger companies are at a competitive disadvantage in hiring.⁶
 - The vast majority of small business owners that want paid leave want a solution involving the federal government.⁷

- Small businesses have adapted well to state paid family and medical leave programs and report positive experiences with such laws.
 - A study of California businesses found that *any* negative effects from the state’s paid family leave program were exceedingly rare, but among those few employers who did report negative effects, small businesses were *less* likely than large businesses to report any negative effects resulting from the program. Additionally, nearly all of the businesses surveyed, including very small businesses, were able to craft solutions for addressing employee absences with little difficulty—often by relying on protocols already in place for other types of absences that routinely occurred prior to the implementation of the state’s paid family leave program.⁸
 - Another study of California’s program found that small businesses saw a 14% *decrease* in their per worker labor costs when workers take paid family leave. The smallest businesses had the greatest percentage-based savings.⁹
 - In New Jersey, approximately two-thirds of small businesses reported no increase in overtime pay costs due to the state paid family leave law,¹⁰ and researchers have found that other employees do not resent absent co-workers.¹¹ This suggests that businesses were able to manage the temporary reallocation of absent employees’ workload without significant increased costs.

Paid family and medical leave programs can help businesses recruit and retain talented workers.

- Paid family and medical leave can help employers recruit talented employees and also helps employers retain employees. Human resources professionals consider family-friendly policies to be the most important factor in recruiting and retaining employees.¹² Similarly, small businesses that offer paid leave see it as necessary to recruit and retain talented employees—and those that don’t offer it report that it makes it challenging to hire.¹³
- Moreover, paid family and medical leave increases employee morale and employee loyalty. New Jersey employers have reported increased employee morale as a result of New Jersey’s paid family leave program, with one employer calling the effect “tremendous.”¹⁴
- By helping businesses retain valuable employees, paid family and medical leave can significantly cut down on turnover costs. Businesses spend, on average, around 21% of an employee’s salary to replace that employee if the employee quits.¹⁵
 - Paid family and medical leave can save employers money by enabling valuable employees to stay in their jobs instead of quitting when they have a child or a medical emergency. One study found that businesses in states with paid family leave laws were significantly less likely to experience high employee turnover compared to similar businesses without paid family leave benefits.¹⁶
 - For example, in California, 92.8% of employers reported that paid family leave had a positive or neutral effect on employee turnover,¹⁷ saving employers the costly step of replacing an existing employee.¹⁸
- This is especially crucial at a time when many businesses are desperately seeking qualified employees.
 - More than one third of unemployed adults would be more willing to return to work sooner if their employer offered paid family leave, including nearly half of unemployed caregivers.¹⁹ This suggests that continuing recruiting challenges are driven, in part, by workers’ ongoing caregiving responsibilities and their concerns

that those responsibilities may be incompatible with employment in the absence paid leave. Ensuring that workers can care for themselves and their families while working is key to robust economic recovery.

- A recent study found that workers with access to paid family and medical leave are 22% more likely than workers without such access to recommend their job to a friend.²⁰

Paid family and medical leave can increase profitability and employee productivity.

- Businesses that provide paid family leave benefits have seen marked improvements in employee productivity.
 - One study found that businesses in states with paid family leave laws significantly increased firm-wide productivity as compared to similar businesses without paid family leave benefits.²¹ And a cross-industry analysis of 41 companies found increases of more than 50% on productivity measures after the adoption of a paid leave program.²²
 - An overwhelming majority of California employers also reported positive or neutral effects on productivity (88.5%) and employee morale (98.6%).²³
- Evidence suggests that increased productivity resulting from paid family and medical leave can increase employer profitability.
 - One study found an average of 63% improvement in revenue and 54% improvement in profit after companies adopted paid leave policies.²⁴
 - An overwhelming majority (91.0%) of California employers reported that paid family leave had a positive or neutral effect on profitability/performance.²⁵
 - A recent study of California's paid leave program found that businesses with employees who used paid family leave had *higher* per worker earnings across all workers (not just the workers who took paid family leave) than did businesses where no workers took paid family leave.²⁶
- Paid leave also helps keep workers safe and healthy on the job, which increases productivity and decreases employer costs. Workers with paid leave are significantly less likely to suffer dangerous injuries on the job²⁷ or deaths on the job.²⁸
 - Paid leave allows workers to recover and return to full productivity more quickly than they would by continuing to work. When workers must return to work before a chronic condition is stabilized or before they have healed from an injury, they are more likely to relapse or re-injure themselves while working.²⁹ Fewer workplace injuries can mean healthier, happier workers and lower workers' compensation costs.
- Paid family and medical leave also can also increase a firm's value. Researchers have found that Fortune 500 companies that announced the adoption of new family-friendly policies saw same-day increases in their share prices, indicating that investors anticipate that the benefits of such a program will outweigh any costs associated with providing it.³⁰

Evidence shows that paid family and medical leave programs are not abused.

- Evidence from the states show little to no abuse of paid family and medical leave programs.
 - In a survey of California employers, the vast majority said they were not aware of *any* instances of their employees abusing the state's paid family leave program.³¹
 - In a study of New Jersey's paid family leave program, not a single employer interviewed identified even a single instance of abuse. Indeed, several Human

Resources managers interviewed expressed their views that abuse of the program was a virtual impossibility.³²

¹ A Better Balance, *Overview of Paid Family & Medical Leave Laws in the United States* (July 20, 2021), <https://www.abetterbalance.org/resources/paid-family-leave-laws-chart/>.

² EILEEN APPELBAUM & RUTH MILKMAN, LEAVES THAT PAY: EMPLOYER AND WORKER EXPERIENCE WITH PAID FAMILY LEAVE IN CALIFORNIA 7-9 (2011), <https://cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>; CENTER FOR ECONOMIC AND POLICY RESEARCH, p. 8, available at <https://cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>.

³ MIRIAM RAMIREZ, NEW JERSEY BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION, THE IMPACT OF PAID FAMILY LEAVE ON NEW JERSEY BUSINESSES (2012), <https://bloustein.rutgers.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Ramirez.pdf>.

⁴ ZACHARY CAMPBELL ET AL., THE IMPACT OF PAID LEAVE: EVIDENCE FROM TEMPORARY DISABILITY INSURANCE IN RHODE ISLAND 30 (July 2017), <https://www.mathematica-mpr.com/-/media/internet/conferences/2017/drc-annual-meeting2017/summaries/hastings.pdf?la=en>.

⁵ Ann P. Bartel et al., *The Impact of Paid Family Leave on Employers: Evidence from New York* (Nat'l Bureau of Econ. Rsch., Working Paper No. 28672, 2021), https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w28672/w28672.pdf.

⁶ Eileen Appelbaum & Ruth Milkman, *Achieving a Workable Balance*, CENTER FOR WOMEN AND WORK (2006), p. 23, available at <https://smlr.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/images/achieving%20a%20workable%20balance%202006%20Appelbaum.pdf>.

⁷ SMALL BUSINESS FOR AMERICA'S FUTURE, PAID LEAVE POLICIES ON MAIN STREET (2021), <https://www.smallbusinessforamericafuture.org/small-business-for-america-s-future-releases-paid-leave-survey-results>.

⁸ EILEEN APPELBAUM & RUTH MILKMAN, LEAVES THAT PAY: EMPLOYER AND WORKER EXPERIENCE WITH PAID FAMILY LEAVE IN CALIFORNIA 8-10 (2011), <https://cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>; CENTER FOR ECONOMIC AND POLICY RESEARCH, p. 8, available at <https://cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>.

⁹ GREER COWAN ET AL., THE CALIFORNIA EXPERIENCE: LESSONS FROM 20 YEARS OF CALIFORNIA'S PAID FAMILY LEAVE PROGRAM 13 (Sept. 2021), http://www.bayareaconomy.org/files/pdf/BACEI_PFL_Sept2021.pdf.

¹⁰ SMALL BUSINESS FOR AMERICA'S FUTURE, PAID LEAVE POLICIES ON MAIN STREET (2021), <https://www.smallbusinessforamericafuture.org/small-business-for-america-s-future-releases-paid-leave-survey-results>.

¹¹ Sharon Lerner & Eileen Appelbaum, *Business as Usual: New Jersey Employers' Experiences with Family Leave Insurance*, CTR. FOR ECON. & POL'Y RSCH. (2014), <http://www.cepr.net/documents/nj-fli-2014-06.pdf>.

¹² JOAN WILLIAMS. UNBENDING GENDER: WHY WORK AND FAMILY CONFLICT AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT (2001).

¹³ SMALL BUSINESS FOR AMERICA'S FUTURE, PAID LEAVE POLICIES ON MAIN STREET (2021), <https://www.smallbusinessforamericafuture.org/small-business-for-america-s-future-releases-paid-leave-survey-results>.

¹⁴ Sharon Lerner & Eileen Appelbaum, *Business as Usual: New Jersey Employers' Experiences with Family Leave Insurance*, CTR. FOR ECON. & POL'Y RSCH. (2014), <http://www.cepr.net/documents/nj-fli-2014-06.pdf>.

¹⁵ HEATHER BOUSHEY & SARAH JANE GLYNN, CTR. FOR AM. PROGRESS, THERE ARE SIGNIFICANT COSTS TO REPLACING EMPLOYEES (2007), <https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/CostofTurnover.pdf>.

¹⁶ Benjamin Bennett et al., *Paid Leave Pays Off: The Effects of Paid Family Leave on Firm Performance* (Nat'l Bureau of Econ. Rsch., Working Paper No. 27788, 2021), https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w27788/w27788.pdf.

¹⁷ EILEEN APPELBAUM & RUTH MILKMAN, LEAVES THAT PAY: EMPLOYER AND WORKER EXPERIENCE WITH PAID FAMILY LEAVE IN CALIFORNIA (2011), <https://cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>; CENTER FOR ECONOMIC AND POLICY RESEARCH, p. 8, available at <https://cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>.

¹⁸ Replacing an employee costs 50-75% of an hourly employee's annual pay and up to 150% of a salaried employee's annual pay. Jodie Levin-Epstein, *Getting Punched: The Job and Family Clock* (2006), CENTER FOR LAW AND SOCIAL POLICY, p. 9, available at <http://www.clasp.org/resources-and-publications/files/0303.pdf>.

¹⁹ *Morning Consult Poll: The Value of Paid Family Leave*, BIPARTISAN POL'Y CTR. (Sept. 7, 2021), <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/blog/morning-consult-poll-value-of-paid-family-leave/>.

²⁰ THEA GARON ET AL., UNPAID AND UNPROTECTED: HOW THE LACK OF PAID LEAVE FOR MEDICAL AND CAREGIVING PURPOSES IMPACTS FINANCIAL HEALTH 5 (Sept. 2021), https://fhn-finhealthnetwork-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/2021/09/PulsePaidLeave_UnpaidUnprotected.pdf.

²¹ Bennett et al., *supra* note 15.

²² PANORAMA & AM. SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS COUNCIL, THE BUSINESS IMPACTS OF PAID LEAVE (2019), https://www.asbcouncil.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/panorama_report_-_business_impacts_of_paid_leave.pdf.

²³ EILEEN APPELBAUM & RUTH MILKMAN, LEAVES THAT PAY: EMPLOYER AND WORKER EXPERIENCE WITH PAID FAMILY LEAVE IN CALIFORNIA (2011), <https://cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>; CENTER FOR ECONOMIC AND POLICY RESEARCH, p. 8, available at <https://cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>.

²⁴ PANORAMA & AM. SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS COUNCIL, THE BUSINESS IMPACTS OF PAID LEAVE (2019), https://www.asbcouncil.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/panorama_report_-_business_impacts_of_paid_leave.pdf.

²⁵ EILEEN APPELBAUM & RUTH MILKMAN, LEAVES THAT PAY: EMPLOYER AND WORKER EXPERIENCE WITH PAID FAMILY LEAVE IN CALIFORNIA 8 (2011), <https://cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>.

²⁶ GREER COWAN ET AL., THE CALIFORNIA EXPERIENCE: LESSONS FROM 20 YEARS OF CALIFORNIA'S PAID FAMILY LEAVE PROGRAM 13 (Sept. 2021), http://www.bayareaconomy.org/files/pdf/BACEI_PFL_Sept2021.pdf.

²⁷ Abay Asfaw et al., *Paid Sick Leave and Nonfatal Occupational Injuries*, 102.9 AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PUBLIC HEALTH e59-e64 (2012), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3482022/>.

²⁸ Daniel Kim, *Paid Sick Leave and Risks of All-Cause and Cause-Specific Mortality Among Adult Workers in the USA*. 14.10 INT. J. OF ENV. RESEARCH AND PUB. HEALTH 1247 (2017), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5664748/pdf/ijerph-14-01247.pdf>.

²⁹ T.G. Hollo, *Evaluating family and medical leave insurance for Washington state*, 11 Economic Opportunity Institute (May 2012), <http://www.opportunityinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/family-leave-insurance/EvaluatingFamilyandMedicalLeave-Jan13.pdf>.

³⁰ Michelle M. Arthur & Alison Cook, *Taking Stock of Work-Family Initiatives: How Announcements of "Family-Friendly" Human Resource Decisions Affect Shareholder Value*, 57 INDUSTRIAL & LAB. RELATIONS REV. 608-10 (2004).

³¹ EILEEN APPELBAUM & RUTH MILKMAN, LEAVES THAT PAY: EMPLOYER AND WORKER EXPERIENCE WITH PAID FAMILY LEAVE IN CALIFORNIA 4 (2011), <https://cepr.net/documents/publications/paid-family-leave-1-2011.pdf>.

³² Sharon Lerner & Eileen Appelbaum, *Business as Usual: New Jersey Employers' Experiences with Family Leave Insurance*, CTR. FOR ECON. & POL'Y RSCH. 24 (2014), <http://www.cepr.net/documents/nj-fl-2014-06.pdf>.





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Testimony of Bob Hood
President of the Hawaii Energy Marketers Association (HEMA)

**OPPOSITION TO SB 2474
RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE**

Senate Committee on Labor and Technology
The Honorable Henry J.C. Aquino, Chair
The Honorable Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
The Honorable Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

Monday, February 12, 2024 @ 3:00 p.m.
Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

Aloha Chairs Aquino and San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Moriwaki and
Members of the Committees:

I am Bob Hood, President of the Hawaii Energy Marketers Association (HEMA). HEMA is a nonprofit trade association comprised of members who market motor fuel products and operate convenience stores across the state.

We recognize that some employees may sometimes need to take time off for reasons outside the scope of existing employer policies and programs. However, it is important that companies already implement complex scheduling policies balancing employee and business needs, which include attractive benefits like paid leave programs to attract and retain talent.

Whether it is remote or hybrid work, retirement compensation, or vacation, they are valuable tools to attract and retain employees. The added financial burden of mandated paid family leave will cost employers and small business capital that would prolong economic recovery as businesses reel from competitive workforce, national and local inflation, and increased costs and delays associated with goods and commodities.

While we understand the intent of the measure, **Hawaii employers are already burdened with many employer obligations and further shouldering them with added costs, step up wage increases, mandates, taxes and fees will tip the scale to shutter or risk passing on the costs to customers.**

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in opposition.



TESTIMONY FROM THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAII

SENATE COMMITTEES ON LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY and HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

FEBRUARY 12, 2024

SB 2474, RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i **supports** for SB 2474, relating to family leave. In 2018, delegates to the Democratic Party of Hawai'i's State Convention adopted resolution HHS: 2018-02, which "urges the Hawai'i State Legislature to enact a paid family leave plan."

It is time to *finally* establish a paid family leave program for Hawai'i's workers that provides paid time off to address family emergencies, including care for newborn keiki and kūpuna care. Once effectuated, family leave insurance should also provide progressive wage replacement, allowing low-income workers to receive a higher percentage of their weekly wages (ideally, up to 90 percent) to make the benefit accessible to everyone.

Hawai'i's workers need this benefit. In a 2017 public poll, 62 percent of Hawai'i respondents reported that they had wanted to take leave in the past in order to care for a new child or family member. Currently, though, only one in four private sector workers has access to paid family and medical leave. Lower-income workers in Hawai'i, who are more likely to be Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, are the least likely to have paid family and medical leave, while they need that financial support the most.

The federal Family Medical Leave Act (which leaves out 40 percent of the state's workforce) provides for only *unpaid* leave with up to 12 weeks for employers with 50 or more employees. The Hawai'i Family Leave Law (HFLL) only applies to employers with 100 or more employees and only provides up to four weeks of *unpaid* leave to workers.

Hawai'i has the fastest growing aging population in the nation. Our senior (age 65+) population is expected to grow 81 percent by 2030. Our state currently has 154,000 unpaid caregivers providing care to kūpuna or seriously ill adult relatives, which can lead to financial and emotional strain. Hawai'i caregivers provide 144 million hours of unpaid care a year, worth \$2.6 billion annually. Notably, 34,898 residents of Hawai'i moved to states that passed paid leave laws in 2021, further showing our population's desire for family leave support.

This program would help Hawai'i's businesses. Family leave insurance increases worker retention and loyalty. Workers who have access to family leave benefits are more likely to return to work after their leave is over. In a 10-year study of the California family leave insurance program, businesses reported that family leave had either a positive or a neutral effect on their business. Small businesses were less likely than large businesses to report any negative effects.

Statewide paid family and medical leave also helps even the playing field for small businesses. Most small businesses cannot afford to offer adequate paid family and medical leave to their employees, which puts them at a disadvantage when it comes to attracting and retaining the best workers. Under a statewide paid family and medical leave program, however, small payroll deductions would go into a state fund, which workers would apply to when they need to take leave.

Since employees would be paid from the state fund while taking family or medical leave, employers would not need to pay them while they are on leave. Enabling small businesses to provide paid family and medical leave through a state-managed program would help them compete for workers and deliver adequate care for their employees. A survey conducted by the small business advocacy organization Small Business Majority revealed that two-thirds of small business owners support paid family and medical leave.

Providing paid time off for family caregiving strongly promotes gender equity. Women are often disproportionately impacted by the lack of paid leave, as they are the primary caregivers of infants, children, and aging parents. The lack of paid family leave exacerbates the gender wage gap for women and adversely impacts the economic stability of both male and female caregivers. Most working mothers who give birth can get partial pay through Hawai'i Temporary Disability

Insurance (TDI) to recover from childbirth, but TDI cannot be used by non-birth parents or to care for other family members.

We know this can work in Hawai'i. Top experts on family leave have studied the usage, cost, and feasibility of implementing a family leave insurance program for the islands. Multiple studies have been performed about the establishment of family leave for Hawai'i, all of which have found that paid family leave is a cost-effective way for workers to take adequate time off to care for their families without facing financial ruin or jeopardizing their careers, and that a statewide program can be implemented without significant cost to the state.

It's a stark reality when employees face the dire choice of caring for newborn or sick children, spouses, or parents, or working to sustain their family's income. We must offer a smart, affordable solution that empowers workers to care for their families, while preserving their incomes.

Mahalo nui loa,

Kris Coffield

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SENATE BILL 2474, RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE

FEBRUARY 12, 2024 · LBT/HHS HEARING

POSITION: Support.

RATIONALE: The Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus **supports** SB 2474, relating to family leave, which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program; provides family leave insurance benefits and extends the period of family leave to 16 weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees who meet the hourly qualifications; and eliminates the previous threshold of 100 employees for employers to be subject to the family leave law.

It is time to *finally* establish a paid family leave program for Hawai'i's workers that provides paid time off to address family emergencies, including care for newborn keiki and kūpuna care. Once effectuated, family leave insurance should also provide progressive wage replacement, allowing low-income workers to receive a higher percentage of their weekly wages (ideally, up to 90 percent) to make the benefit accessible to everyone.

Hawai'i's workers need this benefit. In a 2017 public poll, 62 percent of Hawai'i respondents reported that they had wanted to take leave in the past in order to care for a new child or family member. Currently, though, only one in four private sector workers has access to paid family and medical leave. Lower-income workers in Hawai'i, who are more likely to be Native Hawaiian or

Pacific Islander, are the least likely to have paid family and medical leave, while they need that financial support the most.

The federal Family Medical Leave Act (which leaves out 40 percent of the state's workforce) provides for only *unpaid* leave with up to 12 weeks for employers with 50 or more employees. The Hawai'i Family Leave Law (HFLL) only applies to employers with 100 or more employees and only provides up to four weeks of *unpaid* leave to workers.

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We know this can work in Hawai'i. Top experts on family leave have studied the usage, cost, and feasibility of implementing a family leave insurance program for the islands. Multiple studies have been performed about the establishment of family leave for Hawai'i, all of which have found that paid family leave is a cost-effective way for workers to take adequate time off to care for their families without facing financial ruin or jeopardizing their careers, and that a statewide program can be implemented without significant cost to the state.

It's a stark reality when employees face the dire choice of caring for newborn or sick children, spouses, or parents, or working to sustain their family's income. We must offer a smart, affordable solution that empowers workers to care for their families, while preserving their incomes.

Kris Coffield · Chairperson, DPH Education Caucus · (808) 679-7454 · kriscoffield@gmail.com



TESTIMONY FROM THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAI'I LABOR CAUCUS

SENATE COMMITTEES ON LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY and HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES · FEBRUARY 12, 2024

SB 2474, RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i Labor Caucus **supports** SB 2474, relating to family leave, which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program; provides family leave insurance benefits and extends the period of family leave to 16 weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees who meet the hourly qualifications; and eliminates the previous threshold of 100 employees for employers to be subject to the family leave law.

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Providing paid time off for family caregiving strongly promotes gender equity. Women are often disproportionately impacted by the lack of paid leave, as they are the primary caregivers of infants, children, and aging parents. The lack of paid family leave exacerbates the gender wage gap for women and adversely impacts the economic stability of both male and female caregivers. Most working mothers who give birth can get partial pay through Hawai'i Temporary Disability

Insurance (TDI) to recover from childbirth, but TDI cannot be used by non-birth parents or to care for other family members.

We know this can work in Hawai'i. Top experts on family leave have studied the usage, cost, and feasibility of implementing a family leave insurance program for the islands. Multiple studies have been performed about the establishment of family leave for Hawai'i, all of which have found that paid family leave is a cost-effective way for workers to take adequate time off to care for their families without facing financial ruin or jeopardizing their careers, and that a statewide program can be implemented without significant cost to the state.

It's a stark reality when employees face the dire choice of caring for newborn or sick children, spouses, or parents, or working to sustain their family's income. We must offer a smart, affordable solution that empowers workers to care for their families, while preserving their incomes.

Mahalo,

Jason Bradshaw

Chairperson, Democratic Party of Hawai'i Labor Caucus



SB 2474, RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE

FEBRUARY 12, 2024 · LBT/HHS HEARING

POSITION: Support.

RATIONALE: Imua Alliance supports SB 2474, relating to family leave, which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program; provides family leave insurance benefits and extends the period of family leave to 16 weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees who meet the hourly qualifications; and eliminates the previous threshold of 100 employees for employers to be subject to the family leave law.

It is time to *finally* establish a paid family leave program for Hawai'i's workers that provides paid time off to address family emergencies, including care for newborn keiki and kūpuna care. Once effectuated, family leave insurance should also provide progressive wage replacement, allowing low-income workers to receive a higher percentage of their weekly wages (ideally, up to 90 percent) to make the benefit accessible to everyone.

Hawai'i's workers need this benefit. In a 2017 public poll, 62 percent of Hawai'i respondents reported that they had wanted to take leave in the past in order to care for a new child or family member. Currently, though, only one in four private sector workers has access to paid family and medical leave. Lower-income workers in Hawai'i, who are more likely to be Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, are the least likely to have paid family and medical leave, while they need that financial support the most.

The federal Family Medical Leave Act (which leaves out 40 percent of the state's workforce) provides for only *unpaid* leave with up to 12 weeks for employers with 50 or more employees. The Hawai'i Family Leave Law (HFLL) only applies to employers with 100 or more employees and only provides up to four weeks of *unpaid* leave to workers.

Hawai'i has the fastest growing aging population in the nation. Our senior (age 65+) population is expected to grow 81 percent by 2030. Our state currently has 154,000 unpaid caregivers providing care to kūpuna or seriously ill adult relatives, which can lead to financial and emotional strain. Hawai'i caregivers provide 144 million hours of unpaid care a year, worth \$2.6 billion annually. Notably, 34,898 residents of Hawai'i moved to states that passed paid leave laws in 2021, further showing our population's desire for family leave support.

This program would help Hawai'i's businesses. Family leave insurance increases worker retention and loyalty. Workers who have access to family leave benefits are more likely to return to work after their leave is over. In a 10-year study of the California family leave insurance program, businesses reported that family leave had either a positive or a neutral effect on their business. Small businesses were less likely than large businesses to report any negative effects.

Statewide paid family and medical leave also helps even the playing field for small businesses. Most small businesses cannot afford to offer adequate paid family and medical leave to their employees, which puts them at a disadvantage in attracting and retaining the best workers. Under a statewide paid family and medical leave program, however, small payroll deductions would go into a state fund, which workers would apply to when they need to take leave.

Since employees would be paid from the state fund while taking family or medical leave, employers would not need to pay them while they are on leave. Enabling small businesses to provide paid family and medical leave through a state-managed program would help them compete for workers and deliver adequate care for their employees. A survey conducted by the small business advocacy organization Small Business Majority revealed that two-thirds of small business owners support paid family and medical leave.

Providing paid time off for family caregiving strongly promotes gender equity. Women are often disproportionately impacted by the lack of paid leave, as they are the primary caregivers of infants, children, and aging parents. The lack of paid family leave exacerbates the gender wage gap for women and adversely impacts the economic stability of both male and female caregivers. Most working mothers who give birth can get partial pay through Hawai'i Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) to recover from childbirth, but TDI cannot be used by non-birth parents or to care for other family members.

We know this can work in Hawai'i. Top experts on family leave have studied the usage, cost, and feasibility of implementing a family leave insurance program for the islands. Multiple studies have been performed about the establishment of family leave for Hawai'i, all of which have found that paid family leave is a cost-effective way for workers to take adequate time off to care for their families without facing financial ruin or jeopardizing their careers, and that a statewide program can be implemented without significant cost to the state.

It's a stark reality when employees face the dire choice of caring for newborn or sick children, spouses, or parents, or working to sustain their family's income. We must offer a smart, affordable solution that empowers workers to care for their families, while preserving their incomes.

Kris Coffield · Executive Director, Imua Alliance · (808) 679-7454 · kris@imuaalliance.org

Helping Hawai'i Live Well

Friday, February 12th, 2024, 3:00 p.m.

Videconference

SB2474, Relating to Family Leave

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Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members!

We write in strong support of SB2474 which would require the department of labor to establish a paid family and medical leave program in Hawai'i.

Mental Health America of Hawai'i (MHAH), an affiliate of the renowned national organization, is a highly regarded 501(c)(3) non-profit organization serving the State of Hawai'i. For nearly 80 years, MHAH has been fulfilling its mission "to promote mental health & wellness through education, advocacy, service, and access to care" through its vision of 'mental wellness for all.' We endeavor to reduce the shame and stigma of mental illness and improve the overall care, treatment, and empowerment of those with or at risk for mental health challenges across all stages of life in Hawai'i.

Considering the lingering impacts of the global pandemic, the ongoing youth mental health crisis, and the unknown long term physical and mental health impacts of the Maui fires, establishing paid family leave is a critical step towards ensuring sustainable families and improved health, economic, and social outcomes.

We strongly urge you to pass this legislation, and we are grateful for the opportunity to submit written testimony.

Respectfully,



Bryan L. Talisayan
Executive Director

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/10/2024 9:25:16 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brooke Hallett	Testifying for American Academy of Pediatrics - Hawaii Chapter	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Quino, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Committee Members,

The Hawaii Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics represents over 250 board certified pediatricians. We strongly support SB2474 relating to family leave. Paid family leave benefits children and their families and provides a big step forward in addressing health and economic disparities. Paid family leave helps support a stable family environment in which children experience less stress and have a strong foundation for positive learning, health and behavior. Having paid time away from work for caregivers to be present during major life events such as welcoming a new child, personal illness, or caring for sick family members helps support not only the health and well-being of the individual family, but also the economic well-being of families and the state.

Health

Paid family leave improves health outcomes. Children are more likely to attend well-child medical visits and receive all necessary immunizations. Breastfeeding rates and maternal mental health improve. There is a reduction in infant mortality. One study found mothers living in states with the most generous paid family leave had a 32% greater likelihood of breastfeeding at six months and 15% lower likelihood of having postpartum depression.[\[1\]](#)

Economics

Paid family leave improves the economy. This is particularly true for working mothers. They are more likely to return to the workforce, be healthier, more economically secure, and less likely to need public benefits. Mothers with paid leave are 39% less likely to receive public assistance after the birth of a child.[\[2\]](#) If women in Hawaii participated in the labor force at the same rate as women in countries with paid leave, we would have 18,000 more workers in Hawaii and over \$650 million more wages earned.[\[3\]](#) Paid leave

also helps businesses retain employees with firm specific knowledge, including the healthcare workforce. According to the Department of Labor, turnover is very costly, taking approximately 21% of the employees salary and benefits to recruit and train a replacement worker. Paid leave would also help level the playing field for small businesses including private practitioners. Small business owners cannot afford to offer adequate paid leave which puts them at a disadvantage to attracting and retaining the best workers.

Equity

Paid family leave helps address equity. Lower-income workers in Hawaii are the least likely to have paid family and medical leave. These are the families who need the most financial support. It is very expensive to raise a family in our state, and many parents have more than one job. If a woman in Hawaii takes 4 weeks of unpaid leave, on average, the household will lose \$3,700 of income. In addition, infant mortality rates are disproportionately higher in low-income populations. This includes the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander population. The rates are 9.4 infant deaths per 1,000 live births for Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders, and up to 22 for people from the Marshall Islands and Federated States of Micronesia. This is compared to the state average of 4.67 infant deaths per 1,000.^[4] Paid family leave can greatly reduce existing health and economic disparities.

The United States is the only developed country without national paid family leave. Globally, 186 countries provide paid leave. Eight states plus the District of Columbia have passed paid family leave laws. These places have seen significant health, social and economic benefits. A small payroll tax can cover the costs of this bill. SB2474 provides a very important investment in the health and economic well-being of Hawaii families and keiki. We, the pediatricians of the Hawaii AAP, want to make our support very clear. Mahalo for your consideration.

^[1] Perry, et al. *Obstetrics & Gynecology* 143(1):p14-22, January 2024.

^[2] Heather Boushey and Sarah Jane Glynn, “The Effects of Paid Family and Medical Leave on Employment Stability and Economic Security” (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2012)

^[3] U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2022). *Local Area Unemployment Statistics, Expanded State Employment Status Demographic Data (2021 Annual Averages)*. Retrieved 13 December 2022, from <https://www.bls.gov/lau/ex14tables.htm>; U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). *American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, 2021 (Table B20017)*. Retrieved 6

December 2022, from data.census.gov. For methodology, see Novello, A. (2021, July). **The Cost of Inaction: How a Lack of Family Care Policies Burdens the U.S. Economy and Families**. Retrieved 6 December 2022 from National Partnership for Women & Families website:

[4] Infant Mortality and Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders. US Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health. <https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/infant-mortality-and-native-hawaiianspacific-islanders>

Feb. 12, 2024, 3 p.m.
Hawaii State Capitol
Conference Room 224 and Videoconference

To: Senate Committee on Labor and Technology

Sen. Henry J.C. Aquino, Chair
Sen. Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice-Chair

Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

Sen. Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Sen. Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice-Chair

From: Ted Kefalas, Director of Strategic Campaigns
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

RE: COMMENTS ON SB2474 — RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE

Aloha Chairs Aquino and San Buenaventura, Vice-Chairs and Committee Members,

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii would like to offer its comments on [SB2474](#), which would establish a family leave insurance program funded by employer and employee contributions.

It also would eliminate the exemption from the family leave law for employees with fewer than 100 employees.

The idea of being able to take paid leave from work to care for a family member is certainly appealing, but decades of data demonstrate that such programs rarely live up to their promise and may even harm those they intend to help.

It is often assumed that family leave policies will be especially helpful to female workers, as women are expected to benefit more from paid leave. However, research demonstrates that family leave programs show no benefit to female workforce participation, and may even have a negative effect.

A recent study of the long-term effects of California’s Paid Family Leave Act found that it did not help narrow the pay gap, and was instead associated with reduced employment and earnings for first-time mothers.¹

A different study of maternity leave reform in the United Kingdom found that among highly educated workers, paid-leave programs tend to increase gender inequality, with fewer women holding management and promotion-track jobs, while lower-educated female workers were 10 percentage points less likely to receive a promotion than they were before the reforms were enacted.²

Nor are the benefits of paid-leave programs evenly distributed. Low-income workers are significantly less likely to take advantage of paid leave, making it little more than a government-subsidized leave program for well-paid workers.

In 2020, 18 million California workers paid into the state’s family leave program and were eligible to take advantage of its benefits. However, only 14% of workers earning less than \$20,000 took paid leave, while workers earning \$80,000 to \$99,999 had a utilization rate four times higher than the lowest earners. Those making \$100,000 or more a year utilized paid leave three times as much as low income workers.³

Family leave policies in San Francisco⁴ and New Jersey⁵ have seen similar results, with low-income families far less likely to utilize leave policies than high-income earners.

In addition to problems of efficacy, paid-leave programs also struggle with problems of cost. It is nearly impossible to properly evaluate the financial viability of the program proposed in this bill, as the contribution requirements are left to a later determination. However, there is a real risk of underestimating the full cost of the program, which could create a burden for the state budget and taxpayers.

The AEI-Brookings Working Group on Paid Family Leave analyzed the proposed federal FAMILY Act — which also relies on payroll contributions — and argued that the authors of the bill severely underestimated the costs

¹ Martha J. Bailey, Tanya S. Byker, Elena Patel, et al., [“The Long-Run Effects of California’s Paid Family Leave Act on Women’s Careers and Childbearing: New Evidence from a Regression Discontinuity Design and U.S. Tax Data.”](#) National Bureau of Economic Research, October 2019.

² Jenna Stearns, [“The Long-Run Effects of Wage Replacement and Job Protection: Evidence from Two Maternity Leave Reforms in Great Britain.”](#) SSRN, May 7, 2018.

³ Kristin Schumacher, [“Paid Family Leave Payments Don’t Add Up for California Workers.”](#) California Budget and Policy Center, February 2022.

⁴ Julia M. Goodman, William H. Dow and Holly Elser, [“Evaluating the San Francisco Paid Parental Leave Ordinance: Employer Perspectives.”](#) University of California at Berkeley, February 2019.

⁵ Amy Dunford, [“Boosting Families, Boosting the Economy: How to Improve New Jersey’s Paid Family Leave Program.”](#) New Jersey Policy Perspective, April 2017.

of the paid-leave program. Depending on take-up rates, the funding mechanism might have only covered half the program's costs.⁶

Before embarking on an ambitious paid-leave program such as the one proposed by SB2474, lawmakers should demand a strict analysis of its financial impact on the state budget and the economy as a whole to ensure that the program would not become a fiscal nightmare.

Finally, we must consider the effect that enacting this bill would have on Hawaii's business climate.

Because the proposed program is very broad, even including businesses with only a handful of employees, it would add to the cost of doing business in our state. Employers would have to compensate for the increased costs associated with the program, which could mean fewer jobs or stagnant wages.

Support for family leave probably would go down if workers knew it would equate to higher taxes or require them to forego a raise or promotion.

As attractive as the idea of paid leave might be, the negative tradeoffs that accompany family leave programs cannot be ignored.

Given the many questions raised by this bill, it seems clear that more analysis is needed of the effects and fiscal impact of paid family leave in Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our comments.

Sincerely,

Ted Kefalas
Director of Strategic Campaigns
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

⁶ ["Paid Family and Medical Leave: An Issue Whose Time Has Come,"](#) AEI-Brookings Working Group on Paid Family Leave, May 2017.

In support of SB 2474

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB 2474.

My name is Karen Ginoza, a retired teacher, and former President of the Hawaii State Teachers Association. I have a long history of being a caregiver. In my first year of teaching, my father was diagnosed with cancer, my mother fell and injured herself and my oldest sister was suffering from a mental disorder. In this chaotic time, my oldest brother became a full-time caregiver.

Currently I am a caregiver for my oldest brother who is living in a care home.

I would like to share the story of my niece who is a caregiver for her father. She has been a caregiver for her father for the past year. He was released from the hospital on February 24, 2023, and is currently receiving hospice services at home. He requires assistance with personal care, and it is necessary for her to be available whenever different workers come to her home to provide services.

She did not qualify for unpaid leave because her company did not meet the requirement of one hundred employees. So she took a leave of absence from work. Caregiving has created a financial burden on her family because of the lack of income as well as impacting her future employment. She also shared with me the mental and emotional stresses of having to care for her dad full time.

I urge you to pass SB 2474 (family leave), so my niece can receive assistance while caring for her dad. This will also help other families facing the same problems.

Thank you for your support.

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/9/2024 7:10:58 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jordan Hocker	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I **strongly support** SB2474, which would create a paid family and medical leave program in Hawai'i. Right now, we have 0 weeks of guaranteed paid leave.

Paid family leave is important to me because mothers shouldn't have to file for temporary disability insurance to be able to afford to be home after having a baby. As it stands, families have no guarantee of being able to bond after a crucial family transition and this bill would ensure that they could.

With my first child, I was too young to realize that my employer didn't care about the bonding or health of my family. Despite consistently working more hours, covering last minute shifts, helping the company transition through days of wildfires, poor weather and other emergencies as a solid and reliable employee, they offered no support financially. While they couldn't legally fire me, I was under pressure and had to return to work 10 days after having my baby. The owners of this company bought their million-dollar home in cash, but couldn't provide my family with paid time to celebrate and bond. This bill as it is written would have applied to that operation which had at most 20 employees and protected a young family trying to navigate a large life change.

The stress of finances directly contribute to the health of mother and family, increased stress being correlated with postpartum disorders, domestic violence and other family dysfunction. It's about time to pass Paid Family Leave and join the ranks of other nations and places that walk the talk when caring for families.

Mahalo,

Jordan Hocker

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/11/2024 1:22:59 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leilani Kailiawa	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha! Chair Aquino , Vice Chair Moriwaki and Committee Members,

I STRONGLY SUPPORT SB2474 relating to family leave.

It is important to me because I have a lived experience where I took care of my newborn child at Kapiolani Medical Center for Women & Children at his bedside for 7 months. It was important for me to be able to bond with him and breastfeed him, knowing that he would have developmental challenges in the future. I am from Hawai'i Island. I was away from my older two sons and husband to take care of my child. My husband took off from his independent contractor job every two weeks to fly over to Oahu so he could bond with our son and give me a break. I exhausted my TDI from my job, needed to quit, need to bood also, needed to breasfeed for his development knowing that he may have challenges in the future.

PAID leave would have helped us. Families should not have to choose between their health, their family, or their income.

Mahalo for allowing me to share my testimony.

Please strongly consider passing this bill

With gratitude,
Leilani Kailiawa

Send DataSend Data



P.O. Box 4270 Kaneohe, HI 96744
www.breastfeedinghawaii.org

TO: Senator Henry Aquino, Chair, Senator Sharon Moriwaki, Vice Chair and Members
of the Committee on Labor and Technology
Senator Joy Buenaventura, Chair, Senator Henry Aquino, Vice Chair and Members
of the Committee on Health and Human Services

FROM: Patricia Bilyk, RN, MPH, MSN, IBCLC (Retired)
Maternal Infant Clinical Nurse Specialist
Breastfeeding Hawaii Board Member

RE: SB 2474 Relating to Paid Family Leave
DATE: Monday, February 12, 2024 3pm

Good Afternoon Senators Aquino, Buenaventura , Moriwaki and Members on the Committees on Labor and Technology and Health and Human Services, I am Patricia Bilyk and I am representing Breastfeeding Hawaii . We are in SUPPORT of SB 2474 which would require the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance payment of benefits.

Breastfeeding Hawaii is a 501c3 non profit organization whose mission is to protect, promote and support breastfeeding in the State of Hawaii, by providing education and advocacy to families, businesses, professionals and other community individuals.

Each day the Breastfeeding Hawaii Board Members work with breastfeeding families who are grappling with

- 1) establishing a relationship and caring for an infant, integrating a child into the family,
- 2) establishing and maintaining a milk supply for the infant
- 3) planning to return to work 2 weeks to 3 months post delivery
- 4) the inability to take more time with their newborn because they need a paycheck and
- 5) the worry of not being able to return to the job they had prior to delivery if they need to take more time off.

We feel having paid family leave would significantly help our families with the above issues.

We further feel a Paid Family Leave Insurance Program should have the following components:

- 1) all businesses and employees covered
- 2) 16 weeks of paid leave
- 3) workers restored to the same position
- 4) progressive wage replacement



P.O. Box 4270 Kaneohe, HI 96744
www.breastfeedinghawaii.org

Some additional points I would like to make are:

- 1) 13 states and the District of Columbia, and those federal workers in our State have paid family leave laws.
- 2) Paid family leave is good for business-employees become more productive and loyal when they feel the company supports their family needs.
- 3) States with paid family leave have seen significant health, social and economic benefits.

We feel it is time and Pono-the right thing to do, to provide a Paid Family Leave Insurance Program for Hawaii's working families!

We encourage this Committee to approve this bill and pass it out of Committee. Mahalo.

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 1:12:08 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Betsy Scolnik	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

support

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 5:10:39 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Azelski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support of SB2474. Thank you.

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 1:36:48 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ka'ale'a Kyrstin Hanawahine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing to express my **strong support** for Senate Bill SB2474. As resident of Hawai'i and a firm believer in the importance of 'ohana family values and employee well-being, I believe this bill represents a crucial step forward in supporting working families across Hawai'i.

SB2474 will **provide much-needed support** to employees during times of significant life events, such as the birth of a child, caring for a sick family member, or attending to personal health needs.

The provision of family leave insurance benefits will **alleviate the financial burden** often associated with taking time off from work to address family responsibilities. This not only **promotes economic security** for employees and their families but also fosters a more inclusive and compassionate workplace culture.

Additionally, by appropriating funds for the implementation of this program, SB2474 demonstrates a commitment to **investing in the well-being of our workforce** and recognizing the importance of supporting employees in balancing their work and family obligations.

I urge you to support Senate Bill SB2474 and take a significant step towards ensuring that Hawaii's workforce is equipped with the necessary resources to thrive both personally and professionally. Thank you for your attention to this critical issue.

Sincerely,

Ka'ale'a Hanawahine

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 3:03:22 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deb Nehmad	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

PLease support this important bill

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND TECHNOLOG
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

HEARING

DATE: Friday, February 12, 2024

TIME: 3:00 PM

RE: SB 2474 RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE

Aloha Chairs Aquino and San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committees:

My name is Linda Dorset, and I am in STRONG SUPPORT of SB2474. The bill establishes a family leave insurance program that provides insurance benefits for working caregivers who need some paid time off to care for a loved one at home.

Family caregivers are the backbone of Hawaii's long term care system. They provide countless hours of care that range from bathing, preparing meals and escorting loved ones for medical visits. They lovingly perform these daily tasks so that the family member can remain in the home and age in place; but they sacrifice income, job security, and savings. Family caregivers often pay as much as \$7,200/Year out of their own pockets for needed supplies such as incontinent supplies, medications, and additional in-home assistance. It is estimated that there are 154,000 Caregivers giving 144 Million Care Hours/Year which amounts to \$2.6 Billion of Unpaid Labor/Year. Many must also balance work and caregiving or leave the workforce altogether.

Please support these unsung heroes by passing SB2474s. They deserve this help. We know eventually all of us will be there.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify!

Linda Dorset

Wailuku, Maui

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 4:34:34 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessie L Gonsalves	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support SB2474 This needs to be passed paid family leave!

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 4:59:20 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I strongly support SB2474, which would create a paid family and medical leave program in Hawai'i. Right now, we have 0 weeks of guaranteed paid leave.

Paid family leave is important to me because people get sick and need paid family leave. During these times people are living pay check to pay check. We need to support our working class people like my family, and friends!

me ke aloha 'āina,

Nanea Lo, Mō'ili'ili, O'ahu

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 5:01:57 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I **strongly support** SB2474, which would create a paid family and medical leave program in Hawai'i. Right now, we have 0 weeks of guaranteed paid leave.

Paid family leave is important to me because few *people have financial safety nets that they can draw from if they are unable to work cause they need to care for family members. The US is on the bottom of the list for this human right. Please fix it!*

Mahalo!

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 6:26:35 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John Bickel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a teacher of high school comparative government, I am amazed that we are the only major industrialized country that doesn't have this type of a program. The pther countries can attest to its importance.

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 6:31:04 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rachel Ebert	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I **strongly support** SB2474, which would create a paid family and medical leave program in Hawai'i. Right now, we have 0 weeks of guaranteed paid leave.

Fthisnis so essential to our families!

Mahalo!

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 6:50:46 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
kelly anne olayan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In Hawai'i, where many families are living paycheck to paycheck, it is critical that our state implement programs so that families are able to thrive, not just survive. Paid Family and medical time off is important & should be offered to all employees. I strongly support SB2474

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 6:56:22 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Spencer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of SB 2474 - Relating to family leave. Without FMLA, individuals must choose to work for an income or lose that income to care for a loved one (Self, Keiki, Makua, or Kupuna). Why do they have to make that choice? I encourage businesses to offer paid family leave to their employees. This offering can remove stress from having to make a choice and may positively affect family and workplace relations.

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 7:44:17 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Terri Yoshinaga	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I **strongly support** SB2474, which would create a paid family and medical leave program in Hawai'i. Right now, we have 0 weeks of guaranteed paid leave.

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 8:06:34 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Raynae Fonoimoana	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I **strongly support** SB2474, which would create a paid family and medical leave program in Hawai'i. Right now, we have 0 weeks of guaranteed paid leave.

Paid family leave is important to me because every family is impacted by an illness that requires hospitalizations, and other medical conditions that require more than 20 days of family leave.

Mahalo,

Raynae Fonoimoana

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 11:17:06 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Allison Mikuni	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I **strongly support** SB2474, which would create a paid family and medical leave program in Hawai‘i.

Right now, we have 0 weeks of guaranteed paid leave. Paid family leave is important to me because my niece will start work on February 16, 2024, for the State Department of Human Services as an eligibility worker. She is expecting her first child in June 2024, but does not have any sick leave or vacation leave. Paid family and medical leave would make it possible for her to stay home for several weeks to bond with the baby and recover from the pregnancy. There are thousands of people in this state in a wide variety of circumstances, who would be helped by having paid family and medical leave.

Thank you for considering this request.

LATE

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 9:29:31 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Thomas Jones	Testifying for Gyotaku Japanese Restaurants	Oppose	In Person

Comments:

February 11, 2024

To: Sen. Henry J.C. Aquino, Chair

Sen. Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Committee on Labor And Technology

Sen. Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair

Sen. Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

Committee on Health and Human Services

From: Thomas Jones = Gyotaku Japanese Restaurants

Subj: In Opposition to SB 2474 Relating to Paid Family Leave

While laudable in its intent, SB 2674 is more than restaurants and most businesses can handle financially. With our small margins and high number of employees, adding a paid leave benefit paid by the employer and employee via payroll tax is more than we could bear. Not to mention the impact of number of employees filing to claim this benefit. It is questionable if the payroll taxes collected would be able to meet the demand.

We are already struggling with trying to re-supply the Unemployment Insurance funds as a result of Covid and the Lahaina Fire. Businesses can only take so much in mandated fees, wages, and payroll taxes on top of keeping up in the current economy.

We hope our legislators will not impose any new mandates that will increase our cost of doing business and additional administrative duties.

Our restaurants are hurting and just cannot take on any additional mandates and cost increases.

Thank you giving us this opportunity to share our concerns.

Thomas Jones

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/9/2024 6:45:33 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Richard Collins	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure because it's important that we prioritize the health and wellness of our families. Please pass this measure.

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/9/2024 7:59:12 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Natasha Woodward	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Working families cannot afford to take time off to care for babies or their own health when needed. Please support this bill to help kids get the care they deserve without having to worry about finances.

Natasha

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/9/2024 9:13:21 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cyan Lau	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

If you asked me about this bill a year ago, I would have supported it, but not found it so overwhelmingly essential as I do now. As a new mom, I learned first hand the incredible importance of support not only for mom but for baby. It was sobering to learn that TDI only covers about half of a mother's normal pay, and only for 6 weeks. At 6 weeks many babies still need to eat every 2 hours. Daycare for a 6 week old is easily \$2000-2500 a month. One of my friends pushed through a painful pregnancy complication to work because she knew TDI wouldn't cover her bills while she took leave. She could not tend to her condition and thus, her baby, and be in healthy shape before baby was born because she knew it would be a pay cut she could not afford. This should not happen. Many of my millennial peers (including fellow native Hawaiians) are deciding to pack up and move away from Hawaii due to rising costs making it seem impossible to afford kids. A policy like this can help us stay. In a professional capacity, I work with seniors and see the financial burden that caregiving places on loved ones when seniors need support. Family caregivers often forego their own pay to take their loved ones to appointments and at the same time support their loved ones financially on top of it, which can be detrimental to the caregiver's finances and security. This also leads to burnout and worse outcomes for both caregiver and senior. Not to mention the alternative is the state ultimately paying for the seniors care if the family caregivers is no longer able to do it. A care home/nursing home is now \$6,000-12,000 a month. The state ends up paying for this care via Medicaid when family caregivers burn out. It's way past time that we pass a bill like this. Do we want healthy citizens and especially those who are most vulnerable, babies and seniors? We need to pass legislation like this. Mahalo for your consideration.

Testimony on Senate Bill No. 2473
Monday, February 12, 2024 at 9:00 am
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

Testimony on Senate Bill No. 2474
RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE
Monday, February 12, 2024 at 3:00 pm
Conference Room 224 & Videoconference
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

Aloha Chairs Aquino and San Buenaventura, and Members of the Committees:

My name is Dolores Foley, and I am former caregiver of my mother who had cancer. I am in STRONG SUPPORT of SB 2474. The bill establishes a family leave insurance program that provides insurance benefits for working caregivers who need some paid time off to care for a loved one at home.

Family caregivers are the backbone of Hawaii's long term care system. They provide countless hours of care that range from bathing, preparing meals and escorting loved ones for medical visits. They lovingly perform these daily tasks so that their family member can remain in their homes and age in place. Many caregivers have to quit or retire from their jobs prematurely to provide the needed care, often sacrificing their own source of income and financial security. Caregivers should not have to choose between their jobs and caring for their family. Please support these unsung heroes by passing S.B. 2474.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify!

Dolores Foley
Kailua Oahu
Kailua, Oahu
dolores@hawaii.edu

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/9/2024 9:26:55 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tyler	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in support of bill SB2474, which would create a paid family and medical leave program in Hawaii. Right now, we have 0 weeks of paid leave, but this program would allow working families to take time off to care for themselves and their loved ones without sacrificing pay. Paid leave is good for businesses, the economy, and most importantly, families.



HAWAII WORKERS CENTER

Defending and Respecting the workers of
Hawaii'i

LATE

(503) WORKERS ☎
(503) 967- 5377 ☎

hawaiiworkerscenter@gmail.com ✉

Mail: 2252 Puna St., Honolulu, HI 96817 ✉

hawaiiworkerscenter.org 🌐

February 11, 2024

Hawaii'i State Senate
Committee on Labor and Technology
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

**Executive Board
Committee**

Rev. Sam Domingo
Board Chair

Mary Ochs
Vice Chair

Dr. Arcelita Imasa
Secretary

John Witeck
Treasurer

Committee on Health and Human Services
Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

RE: STRONG SUPPORT for S.B. 2474 RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE

Dear Chairs Sen. Aquino and Sen. San Buenaventura, Vice-Chair Sen. Moriwaki, and Members of the Committees on Labor and Technology and Health and Human Services:

Board Members

Yoko Liriano

Nanea Lo

Innocenta
Sound-Kikku

Ray Catania

Justin Jansen

Leyton Torda

The Hawaii'i Workers Center (HWC) envisions a Hawaii'i in which all workers are empowered to exercise their right to organize for their social, economic and political well-being.

It is a resource of information, education, training and organizing for Hawaii's workers.

The HWC stands in strong support of S.B. 2474 requires the department of labor and industrial relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program.

Paid family is often a luxury that is afforded to higher paying jobs and professional industries. However, the majority of Hawaii's workforce is not afforded this luxury and cannot afford to take unpaid leave to care for a new child or assist a family member who is sick. Our current system only allows an extension of unpaid leave to employees of large employers with more than 100 employees.

Executive Director

Sergio Alcubilla III, Esq.

Allowing parents to care for newborn children or family members who are ill should not be a luxury or benefit afforded only to the few. As Hawaii's population ages and many continue to live in multigenerational homes, it is imperative that we have a system in place to support our kupuna, young families, and working class communities. This program will begin to lay the framework so that all of Hawaii's workers will not have to make the choice between caring for a loved one and bonding with their newborn or being able to pay rent the next month.

We ask that you please pass and support S.B. 2474.

Sincerely,

Sergio Alcubilla
Executive Director

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/9/2024 10:20:21 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dan Gardner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Aquino and San Buenaventura, and Members of the Committees:

My name is Dan Gardner, and my wife and I are in very **STRONG SUPPORT** of SB 2474. The bill establishes a family leave insurance program that provides insurance benefits for working caregivers who need some paid time off to care for a loved one at home. Caregivers are the backbone of Hawaii's long term care system. They provide countless hours of care to loved ones - from bathing, preparing meals and escorting them for medical visits. They lovingly perform these daily tasks so that their family member can remain in their homes and age in place. Many caregivers have to quit or retire from their jobs prematurely to provide the needed care, often sacrificing their own source of income and financial security. Caregivers should not have to choose between their jobs and caring for their family. Please support these unsung heroes by passing S.B. 2474.

Sincerely, Dan Gardner

Honolulu, HI

daniel.dano.gardner@gmail.com

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/9/2024 11:09:13 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Denise Ropa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I want this law to pass so that, when I take time to care for my aging mother, I will still be able to own my home and survive. Every bit of assistance matters.

February 12, 2024

TO: Chairs Aquino and San Buenaventura and Committee Members
FROM: Carl Takamura
RE: SB 2474

My name is Carl Takamura and my sister and I provided care for my mother, especially during the latter years of her life before she passed away at 105. I strongly support this bill that would establish a family care insurance program for working caregivers who need paid time off to care for a loved one at home.

Family caregivers are a vital and, I believe, an underappreciated component of Hawaii's long term care system. They provide countless hours of care performing daily tasks so that their loved one(s) can continue to live at home and age in place. Many caregivers struggle to provide this care, often at the sacrifice of their own families, personal health, and financial security. This bill would provide some much-needed support for these unsung heroes.

We urge you to approve this important proposal.

Mahalo,

Carl Takamura

Carl Takamura

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/9/2024 11:19:42 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lauren Usagawa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support paid family leave as a long overdue benefit for both mothers and fathers. I work for the state and because of the generous vacation and sick leave, I was able to take 3 months off using my leave. I would not have been able to take off as much time if I didn't have the paid leave to support my family. I breastfed my son and continued until he was 3 ½ years old. Pumping at work was very challenging, and I also faced harassment from my coworker for pumping at my desk. Forcing mothers to return to work and having to pump decreases the time babies are breastfed. Breastfeeding has so many more benefits and babies should be breastfed for as long as possible. Pumping at work should not be the reason mothers stop. Once children attend daycare or preschool, they are sick at least once a month, and the parents must take off to keep their children home. Having paid family leave instead of having to take leave from your own earned leave would be a benefit for all employees and keep the workforce.

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/9/2024 11:24:03 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
ANDREW ISODA	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I **strongly support** SB2474, which would create a paid family and medical leave program in Hawai'i. Right now, we have 0 weeks of guaranteed paid leave.

Mahalo!

Andrew Isoda

Lahaina, Maui

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/9/2024 11:25:50 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deb Marois	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I strongly support SB2474, which would create a paid family and medical leave program in Hawai'i. Right now, we have 0 weeks of guaranteed paid leave.

Paid family leave is important because so many families in Hawaii continue to struggle to care for loved ones who are kupuna, recovering from illness such as covid, and more. Currently, only one in four private sector workers has access to paid family and medical leave. Lower-income workers in Hawai'i – who are more likely to be Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander – are the least likely to have paid family and medical leave, while they need that financial support the most.

Research shows that paid family leave is good for workers, small business and the economy overall. Please support this measure which would allow workers to take time off and still receive part of their income when they need to care for their own serious health needs or those of a loved one, or to bond with a new child.

Mahalo,

Deb Marois, Makawao

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/9/2024 12:29:36 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ann H Paulino	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Aquino and San Buenaventura and Members of the Committee,

My name is Ann Paulino and I was a caregiver for my 90 year old dad until his passing at age 95. I am in STRONG SUPPORT of SB 2474. The bill establishes a family leave insurance program that provides insurance benefits for working caregivers who used paid time off to care for a loved one at home.

My father's care was in the hands of my older siblings who were semi-retired and were able to care for him on a 24-7 basis. Both of my brothers passed and so the kuleana was passed on to me. At the time I was working full time and supporting my college aged children, one of whom also had an infant. I was so overwhelmed and for a time my husband took care of him but there were multiple medical issues which eventually needed more attention. After an extensive search on Hawaii island we settled for a full-time caregiver. Although he had funds set aside for his care we supplemented other expenses. We consider ourselves fortunate to have the funds to help with the cost of his care.

I have family and friends who have had to make other dire choices to take care of their kupuna. Initially, most struggled to manage work, demands from their family, and care of their kupuna. As kupuna care increased and caregiving became a 24-7 job, several reduced their work hours, took early retirement or quit work. All three decisions have a direct impact on their own financial resources. Expenses are handled by liquidating kupuna assets (property and homes) so they could get some financial relief. Another strategy is to pool the family resources of all working family members to contribute to the cause. It is sad to observe this happening too frequently.

Family caregivers are the backbone of Hawaii's long term care system. Please support this bill SB2474.

Ann H Paulino

Hilo, Hawaii

healoha.722@gmail.com

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/9/2024 2:02:14 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
RoAnn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to express my strong support for SB 2474, which focuses on paid family leave. This bill is crucial for families across our state, ensuring that workers can take time off to care for themselves or their loved ones without worrying about financial difficulties. It's a fair and necessary step to support working families during important moments in their lives.

Paid family leave is essential for several reasons. Firstly, it helps families stay strong and healthy by allowing parents to bond with new babies, care for sick family members, or manage their own health needs without sacrificing their income. Secondly, it promotes fairness in the workplace by ensuring that all workers, regardless of gender, have access to the same opportunities to balance their work and family responsibilities. Lastly, it boosts productivity and loyalty in businesses by creating a supportive environment where employees feel valued and cared for.

By passing SB 2474, we show our commitment to the well-being of our community and strengthen it. This bill aligns with public opinion and addresses the needs of modern families. I urge you to support SB 2474 and help ensure that all workers have the support they need to thrive both at work and at home. Thank you for considering my testimony.

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/9/2024 2:05:40 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shelly Tokunaga May	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha kākou

I strongly support SB2474 for paid family and medical leave in Hawai‘i.

We live in a state that has a high cost of living with families barely making it to provide the basics for their children. Families need the protection and compensation during these critical times like a newborn baby or illness in the family. Life events happen to everyone. This bill enables families to stay employed and care for their family. They are then able to continue working rather than quit leaving businesses having to find and hire someone else. The long-term benefits is a win for everyone.

Mahalo for your time,

Shelly Tokunaga-May, EdD, LSW

February 12, 2024

TO: Chairs Aquino and San Buenaventura and Committee Members
FROM: Carl Takamura
RE: SB 2474

My name is Carl Takamura and my sister and I provided care for my mother, especially during the latter years of her life before she passed away at 105. I strongly support this bill that would establish a family care insurance program for working caregivers who need paid time off to care for a loved one at home.

Family caregivers are a vital and, I believe, an underappreciated component of Hawaii's long term care system. They provide countless hours of care performing daily tasks so that their loved one(s) can continue to live at home and age in place. Many caregivers struggle to provide this care, often at the sacrifice of their own families, personal health, and financial security. This bill would provide some much-needed support for these unsung heroes.

We urge you to approve this important proposal.

Mahalo,

Carl Takamura

Carl Takamura
Honolulu, Hawaii
Email: ctakamura@aol.com

Senate Committee On Labor and Technology
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Testimony on Senate Bill No. 2474
Relating to Family Leave

Aloha Chairs Aquino and San Buenaventura and Members of the Committees:

My name is Deborah M. Oyakawa, and I was a caregiver for my mother who had dementia. I am in STRONG SUPPORT of S.B 2474. The bill provides a family leave insurance program that can help working caregivers with paid time off to care for their loved ones at home.

Due to the stress of being a caregiver, my focus and energy level were taxed and I was not performing well at work. I had to reduce my hours significantly. To supplement my income, I tapped into my retirement plan and eventually drained the funds. I am now in my sixties with no retirement money to help support me.

There are many family caregivers who find themselves in similar situations. They sacrifice their own financial security to provide countless hours of care that range from bathing, preparing meals and escorting loved ones for medical visits. They lovingly perform these daily tasks so that their family member can remain in their homes and age in place. In addition, family caregivers often pay out of their own pockets for needed health care supplies and additional assistance. Like me, they have to draw down from their personal and retirement savings. They shouldn't have to choose between their own livelihood and taking care their families. Please support these unsung heroes by passing S.B 2474.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify!

Deborah M. Oyakawa
Waikoloa, HI 96738
deboyakawa@gmail.com

Date: 2/10/24

To: Hawaii State Senate Committee on Labor and Technology
Chair: Senator Henry J.C.Aquino
Vice Chair: Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki

Hawaii State Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Chair: Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura
Vice Chair: Senator Henry J.C.Aquino

From: Nancy Rustad

Hearing Date/Time/Room: Monday, February 12, 2024, 3:00 pm, Room 224 and
Videoconference

RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB2474

Dear Chairs, Vice Chairs and members of the Committee. My name is Nancy Rustad and I am in support of SB2474.

The United States is the only developed country without national paid family leave. Thirteen states and the District of Columbia have passed paid family leave laws, and the states with paid family leave have seen significant health, social and economic benefits. Paid family leave is good for both business owners and their employees.

Paid family leave allows workers to take time off and still receive part of their income when they need to care for their own serious health needs or those of a loved one, or to bond with a new child. Employees become more productive and loyal when paid family leave is available to them.

SB2474 would require the department of labor and industrial relations to establish and administer a **family leave insurance program**. The program extends family leave to 16 weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees. Mothers who gave birth would be able to take paid family leave in addition to temporary disability insurance (TDI). SB2474 would eliminate the previous threshold of 100 employees for employers to be subject to the family leave law.

Women, as primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents, are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family and medical leave. According to AARP Hawaii, there are approximately 157,000 unpaid family caregivers in the State. According to AAUW, moms working full-time, year-round are paid 74 cents for every dollar paid to dads. This is known as the motherhood penalty.

I encourage you to act on behalf of the best interests of our Hawaii businesses and workforce by supporting SB2474. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.



LATE

**Sen. Henry Aquino, Chair
Sen. Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Committee on Labor and Technology**

**Sen. Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Sen. Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair
Committee on Health and Human Services**

Thursday, February 12, 2024, at 3:00 P.M.

RE: SB 2474 Relating to Paid Family Leave

Aloha Chair Aquino, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Chair San Buenaventura and Members of the Committee:

The Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) Hawaii respectfully opposes SB2474 Relating to Paid Family Leave, which requires the department of labor and industrial relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program; Provides family leave insurance benefits and extends the period of family leave to 16 weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees who meet the hourly qualifications; and eliminates the previous threshold of 100 employees for employers to be subject to the family leave law.

SHRM Hawaii serves and represents nearly 600 members and employers' statewide and human resource management is a critical component to the success and survival of the many businesses that make up our local economy. HR professionals are responsible for evaluating and balancing the needs of both the employers and employees and caring for businesses' most valuable asset: the working people of our state.

We appreciate and understand the intent of this bill to allow for paid family leave in the workplace. However, we have serious concerns that this measure is not a reasonable, manageable or an affordable approach in addressing those needs.

First, Hawaii employers already pay Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) premiums based on payroll up to the allowable wage base. Expanding TDI benefits to now include family leave will not only increase administrative compliance, but, more importantly,

employers will likely shoulder the burden of increases in TDI premium rates to the proposed extended coverage to family leave.

It is important to note that many businesses already offer paid time off and paid leave programs as a means of attracting and retaining their workforce, especially with the employment environment not yet recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, employers are already facing increased financial burdens from high inflation rates and the recent minimum wage increase. Additionally, businesses are expecting increased insurance rates as a result of the Maui wildfires.

The proposed bill does not provide leave minimums and applies to very small employers. This unlimited leave mandate could ultimately force local businesses to shut down operations or close permanently. With the way the pandemic has affected the economy, we need policies that will provide flexibility for businesses so they can help create more jobs for our economy. We need to be encouraging businesses to adopt their own innovative paid leave programs, rather than placing yet another mandate on employers and businesses.

Furthermore, the recent Paid Family Leave Program Impact Study¹ released in November 2019, brought concerns on what exactly a possible paid family leave program in Hawaii would look like and cost. Recognizing the challenges employers face in coordinating multiple paid leave laws, the report recommended the state consider numerous issues, including the following, when deciding how to implement paid family leave in Hawaii:

- Clear regulation
- Allowing for at least two, but ideally three years, to implement the new program
- Straightforward administration
- Comprehensive education
- Permitting paid family/medical leave to run concurrently with unpaid FMLA
- Considering a simplified benefit formula
- Avoiding Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) status
- Advocating for return to work within the law, but excluding job protection (as it is accounted for elsewhere)
- Providing gender neutral covered relationships and leave lengths
- Sunsetting existing unpaid leave laws (to start fresh with any new law)

¹ Paid Family Leave Program Impact Study in Accordance with Act 109, SLH 2018

https://lrb.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019_PaidFamilyLeaveProgramImpactStudy.pdf

Given the lack of substantiated data on the adverse impact of mandatory paid family leave on Hawaii employees, SHRM Hawaii asks that the committee hold this bill and review the findings of the Paid Family Leave Program Impact Study before enacting a one-size-fits-all policy.

In closing, while we appreciate the Legislature indicating their intention to address the issue of family leave, we have concerns about the impacts this will have to small businesses that are still struggling to recover from the pandemic. We respectfully ask that you do not advance this bill. We look forward to contributing positively to the development of sound public policy and continuing to serve as a resource to the legislature on matters related to labor and employment laws.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.

Rosanne Nolan
Legislative Affairs Committee Co-Chair

Erin Kogan
Legislative Affairs Committee Co-Chair

THE THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2024

COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY

Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

AMENDED NOTICE OF HEARING

DATE: Monday, February 12, 2024, 3:00 p.m.

Aloha Chair Aquino, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Committee on Labor and Technology. Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino and Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services. My name is Carol Wakayama and I wish to submit this testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of SB 2474 (“Relating to Family Leave”).

Changes outlined in SB2474 would greatly benefit the entire community as ‘family leave’ does not only pertain to individuals caring for ‘one category of family member.’ SB2474 could provide life-improving (or saving) changes/benefits to: 1) young families with a child who needs care; 2) families providing assistance to elderly family members; and 3) any other person who needs help caring for someone precious, who may have a serious medical condition.

Placing employees into a position where they possibly feel forced to choose between their jobs or caring for a family member is unimaginable.

SB2474 might also be a ‘life saver to the community’ if another pandemic strikes. Perhaps the number of fatalities could be reduced if employees (who previously did not have any type of family leave benefits) - felt they could take ‘covered time off’ to rest and heal - without fearing that they will lose their jobs/source of income. I humbly request your support of SB2474. Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Carol Wakayama
Honolulu, Hawaii

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/10/2024 1:02:44 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Doris Segal Matsunaga	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a grandmother living on Hawai'i Island, I strongly support SB2474

Doris Segal Matsunaga

Waimea, Hawai'i

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/10/2024 10:11:07 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Pelenatita Namoa-Hanusa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I **strongly support** SB2474, which would create a paid family and medical leave program in Hawai'i. Right now, we have 0 weeks of guaranteed paid leave.

Paid family leave is important to me because *it will HELP everyone put in this position. It will make the choice of choosing between a paycheck or caring for their loved ones much easier.*

Mahalo!

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/10/2024 10:01:23 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ken Takeya	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is an important piece of legislation that will help many families that have to work to survive and take care of their loved ones. I have worked with many caregivers that have had to leave their loved ones home without anyone and unfortunately two of them had fallen and passed away by the time the caregiver came home from work, People do not realize how important this is until it happens to them and they lose a loved one.

Hearing Date: Monday, February 12, 2024, 3:00 pm, Conference Rm. 224

To: Senate Committee on Labor and Technology
Chair, Senator Henry J.C. Aquino,
Vice Chair, Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki
And
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Chair, Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura
Vice Chair, Henry J.C. Aquino

Re: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2474, RELATING TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

From: Jean Evans, (Individual)

Re: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2474, Relating to Paid Family Leave

Dear Chairs Aquino and San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of Committees,

My name is Jean Evans and **I am Strong support of Relating to Paid Family Leave**

It is shocking to know that the United States is the **ONLY** developed country in the world that does not provide paid family leave. Currently 13 states and the District of Columbia do have such laws and all reports show they help to retain talented productive employees while increasing family well-being.

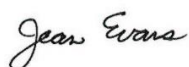
The proposed bill for family and medical leave is based on the successful insurance model which includes a large pool of companies and employees to make it affordable. The leave may be taken to care for a new child, a family member with a serious health condition, or a qualifying service member who is individual's next of kin. This leave may also be taken for self-care for victims of domestic abuse, sexual assault. In addition, an employee may take this leave if they are injured, sick or disabled and cannot perform their duties.

As well as benefiting employees and their families, paid family leave is good for businesses. Many companies are having significant difficulty recruiting employees who often initially choose to apply to a potential employer based their benefit package and, in particular, how they are seen to value and care for their staff. This benefit also has been shown to increase employee retention and loyalty.

Without paid family leave, it's been demonstrated that, workers and working families are relocating to areas that allow families to take paid time leave. This is true here in Hawaii where the cost of living is so high that workers cannot survive if they take unpaid leave or have to quit their job due to a family medical/health issue.

Please pass SB 2474 for the sake of working families in Hawaii.

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony today and I encourage you to pass this important measure.



Jean Evans

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/10/2024 9:10:04 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Kunitake	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair Sharon Moriwaki, Members of the Committee on Labor and Technology, Chair Joy San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Henry Aquino, and Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services,

My name is Caroline and I am in support of SB 2474.

I support SB 2474.

I have played an active role in providing direct care and coordinating care for my aging family members. The cost of non-medical in home care starts at about \$35 per hour. At this price point, most people cannot afford to pay for a caregiver or a registered nurse (which costs more than \$35 per hour). The reality is that we do not have enough workers to care for our aging population. Then the responsibility of caring for our elderly will fall upon family members who often are still working full time jobs.

The United States is the only developed country without national paid family leave. Thirteen states and the District of Columbia have passed paid family leave laws, and the states with paid family leave have seen significant health, social and economic benefits. Paid family leave is good for business—employees become more productive and loyal when they have it.

Paid family leave allows workers to take time off and still receive part of their income when they need to care for their own serious health needs or those of a loved one, or to bond with a new child.

SB2474 would require the department of labor and industrial relations to establish and administer a **family leave insurance program**. The program extends family leave to 16 weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees. Mothers who gave birth would be able to take paid family leave in addition to temporary disability insurance (TDI). SB2474 would eliminate the previous threshold of 100 employees for employers to be subject to the family leave law.

Women, as primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents, are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family and medical leave. According to AARP Hawaii, there are approximately 157,000 unpaid family caregivers in the State.

Please support this legislation. Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. I appreciate the opportunity to provide this testimony in support of SB 2474.

Mahalo,

Caroline Kunitake

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/9/2024 11:12:23 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
S. Sanae Tokumura	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony on Senate Bill No. 2474

RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE

Monday, February 12, 2024 at 3:00 pm

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

Aloha Chairs Aquino and San Buenaventura, and Members of the Committees:

My name is Sanae Tokumura, and for over 10 years I provided direct care for my mother at my home as her primary caregiver. Recently she has had to be placed in a nursing home with end-stage dementia, because she can no longer be safely cared for at home anymore.

I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of SB 2474. The bill establishes a family leave insurance program that provides insurance benefits for working caregivers who need some paid time off to care for a loved one at home. Because I am self-employed, I had some flexibility with my work hours. I made up lost hours by getting very little sleep at night. However, there are thousands of families who do not have the options I did. I would never have been able to care for my mother if I had to be reporting to an employer. This measure will provide relief to at-risk families who are trying hard to remain in Hawaii, resisting the urge to flee to cheaper pastures. Employers must strive to maintain Hawaii's workforce by providing benefits such as these.

During those years as a direct caregiver, I routinely hurt myself to keep my mother from being placed in a facility, and having to resort to medicaid. Bathing her, feeding her, keeping her comfortable, clean and as happy as possible was itself a backbreaking, full-time job. My husband helped with transportation whenever he could, sacrificing his working hours as well. But I had to be the one to take her to cancer treatments and all other medical/dental visits. The strain of caring for my mom continues to drive me toward a sooner retirement, but that would be by choice.

Other caregivers I know have quit or retired in order to provide essential care for their loved one. Some of them have sacrificed their financial security. Please pass S.B. 2474.

Mahalo for allowing this testimony.

Sanae Tokumura

Honolulu, Oahu

solidconcepts@hawaii.rr.com

(808) 722-0425

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/9/2024 3:46:24 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
cheryl burghardt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I SUPPORT SB 2474 which requires the department of labor and industrial relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program. Provides family leave insurance benefits and extends the period of family leave to 16 weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees who meet the hourly qualifications. Eliminates the previous threshold of 100 employees for employers to be subject to the family leave law. Appropriates funds

I think one of the positive points of this legislation is that it avoids putting undue burden on businesses, taking just a small payroll deduction that workers can tap into when they need to take leave for extended periods of time. We live in a unique place, Hawai`i and it is important that we make space and ways for people to take care of their families.

We have to start thinking through a lens of our island home and what is best for the people here.

I SUPPORT this bill.

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/10/2024 5:13:32 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara J. Service	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs San Buenaventura and Aquino and Vice Chair Moriwaki

I am a Kupuna who resides in Senate District 9 and House District 19 and I strongly support SB2474.

The United States is the only civilized country without national paid family leave. 13 states plus DC have such a law. It is good for business, it makes for happy employees, who are apt to be more productive, leading to happy employers.

Please pass SB2474.

Mahalo for allowing me to testify.

Barbara J. Service MSW,

Child Welfare Services (ret.)

Kupuna Advocate

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/10/2024 7:49:43 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rodger Hansen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha / please support this bill. A large percent of companies in Hawaii have less than 100 employees. So this bill is essential since it eliminates the previous threshold of 100 employees for employers to be subject to the family leave law.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Rodger Hansen, Hakalau HI 96710

LATE



HAWAII APPLESEED
CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Dear Chair Aquino, Chair San Buenaventura, and Members of the Committees,

I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of Hawai‘i Appleseed in **support of SB 2474**, which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family leave insurance program in Hawai‘i.

Over the last seven years, our state legislature has extensively discussed the possibility of a paid family leave policy for the state—assessing the cost, eligibility criteria, and potential economic impacts of this program. Hawai‘i already has substantial data validating the necessity for such a program, and the demand among working families continues to grow.

The absence of paid family leave in the United States highlights the urgency for comprehensive action at the state level. Existing provisions, such as the federal Family and Medical Leave Act and the Hawai‘i Family Leave Law, are inadequate, leaving a considerable portion of our workforce vulnerable.

Low-wage workers, who often require paid leave the most, face significant barriers to access. Although some companies offer this benefit, it predominantly benefits higher-income employees. Merely 6 percent of low-wage workers in the US have access to paid family leave, placing a financial strain on those who are most in need.

The consequences of this are profound, particularly in Hawai‘i, where a substantial number of children reside in households where both parents are employed. To foster the well-being of our communities and ensure the sustainability of our workforce, it is imperative for the state to establish a robust safety net for families dealing with caregiving responsibilities.

To bridge this gap, **SB 2474** proposes a family leave insurance program modeled after successful initiatives in 11 states and the District of Columbia. Experts across the political spectrum concur that a social insurance model, akin to programs like Social Security and Medicare, is highly effective in reducing costs, administrative overhead, and mitigating discrimination against workers who take leave. This kind of system keeps workers, particularly women, engaged in the workforce while reducing their reliance on public assistance.

Research indicates that job-protected paid family leave improves workforce reentry rates. In California, where a similar program has been in effect for over 15 years, mothers with access to family leave exhibited increased work hours and higher average incomes post-implementation of the law. Studies have also demonstrated the positive impact of paid leave on reducing reliance on public assistance and SNAP benefits, with recipients being significantly less inclined to depend on these services.

SB 2474 proposes offering up to 16 weeks of leave for child or dependent care, as well as medical and other caregiving purposes. This coverage ensures that workers in need of leave can avail themselves of it. Furthermore, this leave comes with partial wage replacement, which supports their health and well-being while alleviating the strain on the healthcare system and public assistance programs.

Public sentiment overwhelmingly favors the implementation of paid family leave, as evidenced by a statewide survey in Hawai'i with 94 percent of respondents in support. Nearly 60 percent of respondents expressed willingness to contribute to a monthly paid leave program, with an average comfortable contribution of just over \$41.

In conclusion, **SB 2474** represents a significant stride toward enhancing the welfare of Hawai'i's working families, affording them the time they require to adapt to significant life changes.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/10/2024 7:44:46 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elizabeth Hansen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha / please support this bill. A large percent of companies in Hawaii have less than 100 employees. So this bill is essential since it eliminates the previous threshold of 100 employees for employers to be subject to the family leave law.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Elizabeth Hansen, Hakalau HI 96710

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/10/2024 6:51:17 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ashleigh Loa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/11/2024 8:21:21 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dorothy Norris	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please consider this bill carefully. To anyone who has need of leave during a family need, this is leave is necessary. It helped me in California get through a painful operation when other leave options were not available.

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/11/2024 8:26:36 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michele Nihipali	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawai'i families need paid family leave:

- In Hawai'i, where many families are living paycheck to paycheck, it is critical that our state implement programs so that families are able to thrive, not just survive.
- Currently, only one in four private sector workers has access to paid family leave.
- Paid Family & Medical Leave has health benefits:
 - It allows people to better manage their chronic disease by creating time they can get treatment.
 - PFML improves health for both mothers and fathers.
 - When mothers can stay with their children, breastfeeding is increased, which leads to life-long health benefits for babies.
 - It allows families to provide care for their kūpuna.
 - It has been shown to increase health equity.

I've worked with co-workers who returned to work after less than 1 month after giving birth. They couldn't afford to stay home any longer. They had used up their PTO benefits. The same has been seen with caring for aging Kupuna or other Ohana. People in Hawaii cannot afford to stay away from work. They cannot afford to take FMLA because they need their full paycheck.

Thank you for your consideration,

Michele Nihipali

54-074 A Kam Hwy.

Hauula, HI 96717

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/11/2024 10:20:40 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Will Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

No one should have to sacrifice their financial well-being to care for their keiki or kupuna. The majority of Hawai'i's workforce cannot afford to take unpaid leave to care for a new child or assist a family member with a serious health condition. Hawai'i law only provides a four-week extension of unpaid leave to employees of large employers with more than one hundred employees.

In 2018, only 17 percent of workers in the United States had access to paid family leave through their employers. Women, who are often the primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents, are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family leave.

Hawai'i has one of the fastest growing populations over the age of 65 in the nation. From 2020 to 2030, the percentage of people aged 65 and over is expected to increase to 22.5 percent of the state's population. Nearly one-third of workers who do not have access to family leave will need time off to care for an ill spouse or elderly parent.

Multiple studies have shown that family leave programs can be established in a manner that is affordable for small businesses and our state. When medical emergencies arise, no one should be forced to choose between caring for their loved ones or earning a paycheck.

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/11/2024 10:32:33 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John Fitzpatrick	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Kakou,

I am in strong support of paid family leave. So many people need to take care of their new-borns, kupuna, or family members who are critically ill and need to take off work. We are the Aloha state and we should let them aloha their Ohana without going broke.

please pass paid family leave.

Aloha,

Fitz

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/11/2024 10:37:05 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nate Hix	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We all believe that people should be able to take care of their family members when it's needed. Hawai'i has a great opportunity to give its residents this ability by passing this bill and joining almost all of the other developed nations who already have paid family leave policies in place. Please pass this bill.

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/11/2024 10:38:00 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anna Mackey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

No one should have to sacrifice their financial well-being to care for their keiki or kupuna. The majority of Hawai'i's workforce cannot afford to take unpaid leave to care for a new child or assist a family member with a serious health condition. Hawai'i law only provides a four-week extension of unpaid leave to employees of large employers with more than one hundred employees.

In 2018, only 17 percent of workers in the United States had access to paid family leave through their employers. Women, who are often the primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents, are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family leave.

Hawai'i has one of the fastest growing populations over the age of 65 in the nation. From 2020 to 2030, the percentage of people aged 65 and over is expected to increase to 22.5 percent of the state's population. Nearly one-third of workers who do not have access to family leave will need time off to care for an ill spouse or elderly parent.

Multiple studies have shown that family leave programs can be established in a manner that is affordable for small businesses and our state. When medical emergencies arise, no one should be forced to choose between caring for their loved ones or earning a paycheck. No one should have to sacrifice their financial well-being to care for their keiki or kupuna. The majority of Hawai'i's workforce cannot afford to take unpaid leave to care for a new child or assist a family member with a serious health condition. Hawai'i law only provides a four-week extension of unpaid leave to employees of large employers with more than one hundred employees.

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/11/2024 12:29:37 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sarah Kern	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chairs, Vice Chairs, and Committee Members,

All parents should be able to take paid leave to care for their children. I am testifying in strong support of this bill with the hope that it will be a step in the right direction for our state.

Mahalo,

Sarah Kern

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/11/2024 12:45:13 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Diane Ware	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

No one should have to sacrifice their financial well-being to care for their keiki or kupuna. The majority of Hawai'i's workforce cannot afford to take unpaid leave to care for a new child or assist a family member with a serious health condition. Hawai'i law only provides a four-week extension of unpaid leave to employees of large employers with more than one hundred employees.

In 2018, only 17 percent of workers in the United States had access to paid family leave through their employers. Women, who are often the primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents, are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family leave.

Hawai'i has one of the fastest growing populations over the age of 65 in the nation. From 2020 to 2030, the percentage of people aged 65 and over is expected to increase to 22.5 percent of the state's population. Nearly one-third of workers who do not have access to family leave will need time off to care for an ill spouse or elderly parent.

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

My name is Diane Ware and I live in Ka'u Moku Hawai'i Island. I support SB2474 which supports working people, especially low income families.

Multiple studies have shown that family leave programs can be established in a manner that is affordable for small businesses and our state. When medical emergencies arise, no one should be forced to choose between caring for their loved ones or earning a paycheck.

Maha nui for your support,



Parents And
Children Together

BUILDING THE RELATIONSHIPS
THAT MATTER MOST

LATE

ParentsAndChildrenTogether.org

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2474 RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE

TO: Chair Aquino, Vice-Chair Moriwaki, & Members,
Senate Committee on Labor and Technology
Chair San Buenaventura, Vice-Chair Aquino, & Members,
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

FROM: Ryan Kusumoto, President & CEO

DATE: February 12, 2024 at 3:00 PM

Parents and Children Together (PACT) offers testimony in support of SB 2474 Relating to Family Leave, which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program.

The United States is the only developed country without national paid family leave. Thirteen states and the District of Columbia have passed paid family leave laws, and the states with paid family leave have seen significant health, social and economic benefits. Many of Hawaii's working families are not afforded adequate amounts of paid leave causing financial hardship and increased dependency on public assistance during times of illness or caregiving. Low-wage workers are the least likely to have access to paid leave forcing them to choose between maintaining employment or caring for their families. A family leave insurance program could enable workers to retain employment while caring for family and help businesses retain key employees and remain competitive.

Founded in 1968, PACT is a statewide community-based organization providing a wide array of innovative and educational social services to families in need. Assisting more than 15,000 people across the state annually, we help identify, address, and successfully resolve challenges through our 20 programs. Among our services are early education programs, domestic violence prevention and intervention programs, child abuse prevention and intervention programs, childhood sexual abuse supportive group services, child and adolescent behavioral health programs, sex trafficking intervention, poverty prevention and community building programs.

Paid Family Leave supports family well-being and the economy. It increases health equity among different racial and socioeconomic groups AND helps to increase worker retention and loyalty.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Please contact me at (808) 847-3285 or rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org if you have any questions.

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/11/2024 12:18:12 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shay Chan Hodges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

No one should have to sacrifice their financial well-being to care for their keiki or kupuna. The majority of Hawai'i's workforce cannot afford to take unpaid leave to care for a new child or assist a family member with a serious health condition. Hawai'i law only provides a four-week extension of unpaid leave to employees of large employers with more than one hundred employees.

In 2018, only 17 percent of workers in the United States had access to paid family leave through their employers. Women, who are often the primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents, are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family leave.

Hawai'i has one of the fastest growing populations over the age of 65 in the nation. From 2020 to 2030, the percentage of people aged 65 and over is expected to increase to 22.5 percent of the state's population. Nearly one-third of workers who do not have access to family leave will need time off to care for an ill spouse or elderly parent.

Multiple studies have shown that family leave programs can be established in a manner that is affordable for small businesses and our state. When medical emergencies arise, no one should be forced to choose between caring for their loved ones or earning a paycheck.

Shay Chan Hodges

Haiku, Maui

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/11/2024 12:51:24 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cheryl Ho	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, Chairs, Vice Chairs, and Committee Members!

I am Cheryl Ho, retired social worker, testifying based on recent experience, in strong support of SB2474.

Over the past several months, I have been assisting a friend from church, to arrange for and travel to Fresno, for a critically-needed surgery. It was expected that she would need 2 weeks for the trip, including travel, actual surgery, hospital recuperation, and travel back to Honolulu.

This friend is a single parent with shared legal custody of an 11-year old son. Grandparents in this case are either deceased, or living overseas.

The boy's mother works night shift in a care facility, and needs to sleep during the day (except on certain weekend days). Leading up to the trip, it became a huge, conflict-ridden issue of how the son would be cared for. She knew that if she had to take time off to care for her son, she would lose up to two weeks of pay.

Two (2) weeks is a long time to expect anyone to take leave without pay, to care for a child. If PAID FAMILY LEAVE is enacted, children who depend on parents for their physical, emotional, and social health will be assured of that care. Their caregiving parent will be able to take leave from work without the worry and financial stress of loss of income.

Multiple studies have shown that family leave programs can be established in a manner that is affordable for small businesses and for our state.

I strongly urge you to pass this bill, to begin the administrative processes that will bring Paid Family Leave into a reality.

Mahalo for your attention!

Cheryl Ho, Nu'uaniu

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/11/2024 11:59:18 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christy MacPherson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Aquino, Vice Chair Moriwaki and members of the Senate Committee on Labor and Technology, and Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino and members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services,

I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of SB2474. It is time that **ALL** workers, particularly low-wage workers, are provided with the same *humane* working conditions that other workers are afforded. Being able to stay home when you are sick or when your young children are sick and not lose your pay (that is unfortunately never enough to begin with) is a benefit that all employers should be providing for their employees. This also obviously reduces the spread of viruses that could have serious health impacts for co-workers.

I can't even begin to count the number of times I have seen friends and families whom I worked with having to *drag* themselves to work when they are feeling their absolute worst because they have to pay their bills. I've witnessed single, homeless parents having to call in sick in order to take care of their babies or toddlers because no one else could care for them. That meant money taken out of the paychecks they depended on in order to move out of our shelter and into housing. These are just a few examples of what our low-wage workers are going through out there.

Mahalo nui to our legislators who introduced and support this critical piece of legislation.

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/11/2024 11:51:05 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Valerie Y O Kim	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB2474

Chair Henry Aquino
Vice Chair Sharon Moriwaki

Senate Committee on Labor & Technology

Chair Joy San Buenaventura
Vice Chair Henry Aquino

Senate Committee on Health & Human Services

Monday, February 12, 2024
3:00 PM

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB2474 RELATING TO FAMILY LEAVE

Aloha Chair(s) Aquino & San Buenaventura, Vice Chair(s) Moriwaki & Aquino, Members of the Senate Committee(s) on Labor & Technology and Health & Human Services,

My name is Jun Shin. I am a service worker as well as a labor and social justice activist, testifying as an individual in **SUPPORT** of **SB2474**, Relating to Family Leave. As you may already know and as other testifiers will attest, there is no federal law guaranteeing paid family and medical leave for private sector workers. Hawai'i law provides only a four-week extension of unpaid leave to workers in workplaces with more than 100 employees.

Working people should not be asked/forced to choose between caring for a family member or taking care of themselves and getting paid. The vast majority of our people are struggling to survive in Hawai'i with our high cost of living and the general affordability crisis. It might be a bit of a cliché at this point, but a cliché is a cliché for a reason. This is especially the case for workplaces/industries with low wages and/or little to no benefits. Making sure that workers are able to at least receive a portion of their lost wages will go a long way in making sure they and their families are able to maintain a sense of stability during difficult times.

It's also a huge issue that even with unpaid leave, there is a huge chunk of workers left out. Half of our workers labor daily in small businesses¹. Small business workers should also be able to pay the bills while taking care of either themselves or their family members. A future paid family and medical leave program **MUST** include small business workers.

1

<https://advocacy.sba.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Small-Business-Economic-Profile-HI.pdf>

Please **PASS Senate Bill 2474** out of your committees. Give working people a break, literally!

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Jun Shin,

State House District 23 | State Senate District 12

Cell: 808-255-6663

Email: junshinbusiness729@gmail.com

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/11/2024 11:41:53 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cristina Bacchilega	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

When i first started as a tenure-line faculty member at UHM we had no sick leave, and of course no family leave. Fortunately that changed. But in 1988 when i gave birth to my daughter i stayed home for 2 weeks only (having arranged for substitutes in my classes) and then juggled nursing the baby and going to class and meetings for many months. All this resulted in health problems and stress for me and my family.

No one should have to sacrifice their financial well-being to care for their keiki or kupuna. The majority of Hawai'i's workforce cannot afford to take unpaid leave to care for a new child or assist a family member with a serious health condition. Hawai'i law only provides a four-week extension of unpaid leave to employees of large employers with more than one hundred employees.

Women, who are often the primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents, are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family leave. And Hawai'i has one of the fastest growing populations over the age of 65 in the nation. Nearly one-third of workers who do not have access to family leave will need time off to care for an ill spouse or elderly parent.

These are the reasons why i support SB2474 and seek your support in having it pass.
Respectfully,

Cristina Bacchilega

Professor Emerita, University of Hawai'i-Mānoa

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/11/2024 11:40:40 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anamica Bedi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chairs Senator Henry J.C. Aquino and Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki and members of the Committee. My name is - Anamica Bedi and I am in support of SB 2474

The United States is the only developed country without national paid family leave. Thirteen states and the District of Columbia have passed paid family leave laws, and the states with paid family leave have seen significant health, social and economic benefits. Paid family leave is good for business—employees become more productive and loyal when they have it.

Paid family leave allows workers to take time off and still receive part of their income when they need to care for their own serious health needs or those of a loved one, or to bond with a new child.

SB2474 would require the department of labor and industrial relations to establish and administer a family and medical leave insurance program. The program extends family leave to 12 weeks and medical leave to 26 weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees. Employees can take family leave to care for a new child, a family member with a serious health condition, to care fo a qualifying service member who is individual’s next of kin, and for victims of domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking to take self care. Employees can take medical leave when they have a serious health condition that makes the covered individual unable to perform the functions of the individual's position. The medical leave insurance program would meet Hawai‘i’s temporary disability insurance (TDI) requirement.

SB2474 would require the department of labor and industrial relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program. The program extends family leave to 16 weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees. Mothers who gave birth would be able to take paid family leave in addition to temporary disability insurance (TDI). Victims of domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking, could use the family leave insurance program to receive medical, victim, legal services they need or to relocate. Those who suffer disability resulting from accident, sickness, pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or organ donation could use the family leave insurance program to receive health care. SB2474 would eliminate the previous threshold of 100 employees for employers to be subject to the family leave law.

SB2474 would require the department of labor and industrial relations to establish and administer a family leave insurance program. The program extends family leave to 16 weeks for businesses that employ one or more employees. Mothers who gave birth would be able to take paid family leave in addition to temporary disability insurance (TDI). SB2474 would eliminate the previous threshold of 100 employees for employers to be subject to the family leave law.

Women, as primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents, are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family and medical leave. According to AARP Hawaii, there are approximately 157,000 unpaid family caregivers in the State.

According to AAUW, moms working full-time, year-round are paid 74 cents for every dollar paid to dads. This is known as the motherhood penalty.

Please support this bill.

Thank you for considering my testimony,

Anamica Bedi

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/11/2024 11:33:07 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kai Duponte	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha! I support family leave to be available for all workers. Workers should not be faced with the prospect of losing their jobs because of the need to care for children or a sick or injured family member. Hawai'i is considered "The Health State" for a reason--and valuing families is certainly an important part of being healthy. Paid family leave leads to health equity and can be affordable by sharing costs between the employer and employees. Employers will benefit from having more stability in the workforce This is a Win-Win bill for all.

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/11/2024 11:32:44 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gwen Rodrigues	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To All my law-abiding representatives:

No one should have to sacrifice their financial well-being to care for their keiki or kupuna. The majority of Hawai'i's workforce cannot afford to take unpaid leave to care for a new child or assist a family member with a serious health condition. Hawai'i law only provides a four-week extension of unpaid leave to employees of large employers with more than one hundred employees.

In 2018, only 17 percent of workers in the United States had access to paid family leave through their employers. Women, who are often the primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents, are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family leave.

Hawai'i has one of the fastest growing populations over the age of 65 in the nation. From 2020 to 2030, the percentage of people aged 65 and over is expected to increase to 22.5 percent of the state's population. Nearly one-third of workers who do not have access to family leave will need time off to care for an ill spouse or elderly parent.

Multiple studies have shown that family leave programs can be established in a manner that is affordable for small businesses and our state. When medical emergencies arise, no one should be forced to choose between caring for their loved ones or earning a paycheck.

Kindly,

Gwen Rodrigues

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/11/2024 11:15:44 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Venus Gonsalves Henriques	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

- Family leave insurance helps increase worker retention and loyalty. Workers who have access to family leave benefits are more likely to return to work after their leave is over
- A shared cost (employer/employee), state-run insurance fund, is an affordable solution that takes the burden off small businesses to provide leave and helps them compete against big corporation competitors.

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/11/2024 11:13:37 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John Witeck	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

When families are experiencing the illness or disability of a family member, or the birth and care of a child, it becomes necessary for a family member to take leave to provide essential care. If the leave is unpaid, the family is put at a huge disadvantage and can experience great hardship. It is vitally important for the Legislature to adopt this measure and provide well-warranted assistance and support for working families in these situations. Providing paid family leave is a benefit not only to families but also to the whole community. Hawaii's aloha spirit and culture mandates the passage of this bill! Mahalo!

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/11/2024 10:44:09 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Greg Crawford	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

No one should have to sacrifice their financial well-being to care for their keiki or kupuna. The majority of Hawai'i's workforce cannot afford to take unpaid leave to care for a new child or assist a family member with a serious health condition. Hawai'i law only provides a four-week extension of unpaid leave to employees of large employers with more than one hundred employees.

In 2018, only 17 percent of workers in the United States had access to paid family leave through their employers. Women, who are often the primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents, are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family leave.

Hawai'i has one of the fastest growing populations over the age of 65 in the nation. From 2020 to 2030, the percentage of people aged 65 and over is expected to increase to 22.5 percent of the state's population. Nearly one-third of workers who do not have access to family leave will need time off to care for an ill spouse or elderly parent.

Multiple studies have shown that family leave programs can be established in a manner that is affordable for small businesses and our state. When medical emergencies arise, no one should be forced to choose between caring for their loved ones or earning a paycheck.

Mahalo.

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/11/2024 10:59:31 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacqueline S. Ambrose	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

- Family leave insurance helps increase worker retention and loyalty. Workers who have access to family leave benefits are more likely to return to work after their leave is over
- A shared cost (employer/employee), state-run insurance fund, is an affordable solution that takes the burden off small businesses to provide leave and helps them compete against big corporation competitors.

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/11/2024 11:10:30 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shannon Rudolph	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONGLY SUPPORT!

Time to add some humanity back into our 'civilized state'.

Use it or lose it - or the whole system will break down.

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/11/2024 1:00:28 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Galloway	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is good for Hawaii!

To: Hawaii State Senate Committee on Health & Human Services

Hearing Date/Time: Thursday February 12, 2024, 1:02pm

Place: Hawaii State Capitol, CR 225 & Videoconference

Re: Judith Ann Armstrong supports SB2474 Relating to Family Leave

Dear Chair Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Senator Henry J. C. Aquino and members of the Committee on Health & Human Services

I, Judith Ann Armstrong, support SB2474 Relating to Family Leave.

This bill expands the population of employees who will be covered by paid family leave coverage to care for their families for whom unpaid leave is not a viable option.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of S2259.

Sincerely,

Judith Ann Armstrong

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/11/2024 2:04:55 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristy Arias	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Aquino, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and committee Members,

I STRONGLY SUPPORT SB2474 relating to family leave.

A family leave insurance program is important to me because it affects so many families. Paid family leave is great for business. Employees become more productive and loyal when they have it. States with paid have seen significant health, social and economic benefits.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Kristy arias

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/11/2024 2:28:23 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
jessica murray	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

No one should have to sacrifice their financial well-being to care for their keiki or kupuna. The majority of Hawai'i's workforce cannot afford to take unpaid leave to care for a new child or assist a family member with a serious health condition. Hawai'i law only provides a four-week extension of unpaid leave to employees of large employers with more than one hundred employees.

In 2018, only 17 percent of workers in the United States had access to paid family leave through their employers. Women, who are often the primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents, are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family leave.

Hawai'i has one of the fastest growing populations over the age of 65 in the nation. From 2020 to 2030, the percentage of people aged 65 and over is expected to increase to 22.5 percent of the state's population. Nearly one-third of workers who do not have access to family leave will need time off to care for an ill spouse or elderly parent.

Multiple studies have shown that family leave programs can be established in a manner that is affordable for small businesses and our state. When medical emergencies arise, no one should be forced to choose between caring for their loved ones or earning a paycheck.

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/11/2024 2:32:17 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Diliaur Tellei	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I urge the committee to pass this bill. People shouldn't have to be making the choice between providing care for their families and putting food on the table or making rent. I hear so many people talking about how Hawaii is not the same it used to be, and I think it's because so many people have to turn inward and keep their nose to the grindstone just to survive. If everyone is just surviving, how in the world are we supposed to build a community? Having assurance of paid family leave for the times when it's needed--which are already trying without the thought of making ends meet--would go toward building that community instead of leaving it to degrade further. Let's protect our people and our families by passing this bill. Thank you!



Chamber of Commerce HAWAII

The Voice of Business

COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY

Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

Monday, February 12, 2024, at 3:00 p.m.
Conference Room 224

RE: SB2973 Relating to Economic Development

Chairs Aquino and San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committees:

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber") **supports SB2973**, which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a three-year childcare pilot grant program to provide grants to employers to assist in offering childcare or caregiving support for their employees.

The Chamber is in discussion with the Alzheimer's Association of Hawaii, the Office of Early Learning (OEL) and the Office of Community Services (OCS) regarding this measure. **We look forward to collaborating with them to refine this bill and offer the following amendments for consideration:**

1. Sect. 1: Amend the last paragraph to read:

Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to strengthen economic development in Hawaii by establishing a childcare and caregiving pilot grant program aimed at assisting employers in offering childcare or caregiving support to their employees. Many of Hawaii residents are employed but cannot afford the basics and must choose between paying for essentials like food, rent, childcare and healthcare. According to the Aloha United Way, 2023 COVID and Financial Hardship in Hawaii Report, 41% of Hawaii's 490,101 households fell below the Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) threshold and 12 % met the poverty threshold in 2021. The pilot grant program will help to alleviate the burden on working families by enabling employers to provide necessary childcare and caregiver support, thereby enhancing workforce retention and productivity.

2. The program would require additional staff time; The Chamber supports the suggestion from OCS to allow the DLIR to collect an administrative fee (determined by DLIR and the state legislature) to administer the program.



3. Sect. 2 (b-c): The Chamber recommends that the language be amended to remove references to a nonprofit organization and provide that the DLIR may contract the administration of the pilot program to a third-party organization within the prescribed administrative rules and procurement standards as required by the department. The DLIR may determine the maximum administrative costs to be collected by the contractor.
4. Sect. 2 (h)(2):
 - a. amend to add that a “qualified employer” means a small businesses (500 employees or less)
 - b. amend to add that a “qualified employee” means an individual or household that meets the low-income and/or ALICE threshold and has a household member that requires childcare or caregiving services.
 - c. Amend to add that a “qualified childcare” and “caregiving providers” must be licensed centers in good standing with all state regulations, laws, and standards and currently operating a “day” care center for kupuna, children or persons with disabilities.
5. Sect. 3: Remove the appropriation of \$500,000 and leave the amount blank to facilitate further discussion about the amount needed for the grant program to be viable.
6. Sect. 3: Add language to provide a dollar amount cap that limits the annual assistance allowed per individual or household for caregiving or childcare services.

The Chamber works closely with DLIR in support of Hawaii’s workforce development efforts, ensuring Hawaii businesses have a skilled, local talent pipeline and provides kamaaina families with sustainable careers, providing upward mobility and personal satisfaction. In discussions with our members, increasing the availability of childcare and caregiving services for kupuna is a high priority and necessary for the viability of our workforce. The economic resiliency and financial recovery of our local business community depends upon the strength and availability of our workforce.

Limited access to childcare and kupuna care is a significant challenge faced by our local workforce and a leading contributor to Hawaii’s current workforce shortage crisis in every industry. The high cost of living, lack of affordable housing and expensive care services for loved ones make it difficult for our workforce to make ends meet in Hawaii. A grant program that could provide financial support to cover the expenses of caregiving and childcare demands could help working individuals return to the local workforce and stay in Hawaii.



Chamber *of* Commerce HAWAII

The Voice of Business

The Chamber is Hawaii's leading statewide business advocacy organization, representing about 2,000+ businesses. Approximately 80% of our members are small businesses with less than 20 employees. As the "Voice of Business" in Hawaii, the organization works on behalf of members and the entire business community to improve the state's economic climate and to foster positive action on issues of common concern.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Senate Committee On Labor and Technology
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Testimony on Senate Bill No. 2474
Relating to Family Leave

Aloha Chairs Aquino and San Buenaventura and Members of the Committees:

My name is Deborah M. Oyakawa, and I was a caregiver for my mother who had dementia. I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of S.B. 2474. The bill provides a family leave insurance program that can help working caregivers with paid time off to care for their loved ones at home.

Due to the stress of being a caregiver, my focus and energy level were taxed and I was not performing well at work. I had to reduce my hours significantly. To supplement my income, I tapped into my retirement plan and eventually drained the funds. I am now in my sixties with no retirement money to help support me.

There are many family caregivers who find themselves in similar situations. They sacrifice their own financial security to provide countless hours of care that range from bathing, preparing meals and escorting loved ones for medical visits. They lovingly perform these daily tasks so that their family member can remain in their homes and age in place. In addition, family caregivers often pay out of their own pockets for needed health care supplies and additional assistance. Like me, they have to draw down from their personal and retirement savings. They shouldn't have to choose between their own livelihood and taking care of their families. Please support these unsung heroes by passing S.B. 2474.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify!

Deborah M. Oyakawa
Waikoloa, HI 96738
deboyakawa@gmail.com

Aloha, my name is Christen Zulli and I am in support of SB 2474. Shortly after the birth of our 2nd child, I found myself with serious depression due to the natural fluctuations of postpartum hormones. The perinatal sadness and anxiety I suffered with for most of my pregnancy returned with a vengeance, along with rage, hopelessness, and memory loss. I was extremely sleep deprived and one week day morning, while nursing our newborn, I told my husband I did not think I was going to live to the end of the day because I was currently trying to figure out a way to unalive myself. His response still chills me to the bone. "I **have** to go to work" and he walk out the door and left me alone with our babies. His company only offered one week of paternity leave with an option to ask permission to use vacation days, but that was still 4 weeks shy of the estimated minimum of 6 weeks recovery time and absolutely not enough for postpartum depression support time. According to postpartum support international, 1 in 7 Mothers and 1 in 10 Dad's suffer from postpartum depression. I was not the only one in our marriage struggling. That morning when I needed my husband to stay, he was already running late for his hour and half commute to work and already paralyzed with anxiety over possibly losing his job. His workplace and small team of all men, were aware of both my physical and emotional challenges before I gave birth, and told him my "frequent" phone calls were bothering his co-workers, so he had stopped answering my phone calls and text messages during his contractual 10-hour days. With the depression as bad as it was, we had looked into our options of taking FMLA, so I could seek treatment and therapeutic services, which otherwise was not possible alone, with two babies in tow. However, FMLA does not guarantee paid leave, so there was no way we could afford the time off on top of any therapeutic services. I was 3 months postpartum struggling with suicidal ideations, when his manager asked him for his decision concerning FMLA. After hearing we could not afford it, my sleep-deprived husband's supervisor fired him from his job for not performing at 100% . We emptied our retirement to survive and incurred an enormous amount of debt. My husbands company was a subsidiary company of one of the largest aerospace company in the world and even then, we could not rely on financial support for leave or job position guarentees. For the past 4 years, our children have only seen their father 4-6 months out of the year because he was forced to return to sailing and I was forced to become a solo-parent with disabilities during the pandemic. Paid Family Leave means lowering the risk of losing a job, retirement money, sick days, or vacation days. It means employers benefit from the productive, well-rested, confident employees who feel valued and it evens the playing field for small business owners who don't have to loose or pay their valuable employees during this time because this is a state-funded program available to both full-time and part-time employees. It means spouses can secure support too and families can stay healthy and in tact. No one should ever have to choose between **loved ones** and a paycheck. Lets get SB2474 passed and join the other states who already have Paid Family Leave programs!

LATE

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/11/2024 3:44:53 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rev. Samuel L Domingo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

No one should have to sacrifice their financial well-being to care for their keiki or kupuna. The majority of Hawai'i's workforce cannot afford to take unpaid leave to care for a new child or assist a family member with a serious health condition. Hawai'i law only provides a four-week extension of unpaid leave to employees of large employers with more than one hundred employees.

In 2018, only 17 percent of workers in the United States had access to paid family leave through their employers. Women, who are often the primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents, are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family leave.

Hawai'i has one of the fastest growing populations over the age of 65 in the nation. From 2020 to 2030, the percentage of people aged 65 and over is expected to increase to 22.5 percent of the state's population. Nearly one-third of workers who do not have access to family leave will need time off to care for an ill spouse or elderly parent.

Multiple studies have shown that family leave programs can be established in a manner that is affordable for small businesses and our state. When medical emergencies arise, no one should be forced to choose between caring for their loved ones or earning a paycheck.

LATE

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/11/2024 8:35:37 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carolyn Eaton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, Chairs Aquino and Buenaventura, and Vice Chairs Moriwaki and Aquino,

My name is Carolyn Eaton and I strongly support this bill to extend paid family leave to employees in workforces smaller than 100.

Mahalo for your consideration of my support.

LATE

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/11/2024 9:05:11 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laura Ramirez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We take care of our ohana in Hawai'i. When our kūpuna or keiki get sick and need our help, we do what is right and best for them and gladly make that sacrifice of time and love. But we should not have to sacrifice our financial well-being to care for our families. The majority of Hawai'i's workforce cannot afford to take unpaid leave to care for a new child or assist a family member with a serious health condition. Hawai'i law only provides a four-week extension of unpaid leave to employees of large employers with more than one hundred employees.

COVID-19 is still having devastating effects on previously healthy people including heart attacks and strokes, not to mention the lasting effects and disability caused by Long COVID. 60% of people over the age of 60 who are infected with COVID end up with dementia. Who is going to care for all those people? Hawai'i has one of the fastest growing populations over the age of 65 in the nation. From 2020 to 2030, the percentage of people aged 65 and over is expected to increase to 22.5 percent of the state's population. Nearly one-third of workers who do not have access to family leave will need time off to care for an ill spouse or elderly parent.

Multiple studies have shown that family leave programs can be established in a manner that is affordable for small businesses and our state. When medical emergencies arise, no one should be forced to choose between caring for their loved ones or earning a paycheck.

I strongly support this bill and ask that you vote in favor of paid family leave for Hawai'i ohanas.

Mahalo,

Laura Ramirez and the multigenerational Bettencourt family at Kawaihau Road in Kapa'a, Kaua'i.

LATE

Subject: Support for SB 2474 - Paid Family Leave

Dear Senator SanBuenaventura and Senator Aquino,

I am writing to express my strong support for SB 2474, which addresses the critical need for paid family leave in our state. As it stands, only 17 percent of workers in the United States have access to paid family leave through their employers, leaving many families without essential support during times of caregiving responsibilities.

Women, who often bear the primary responsibility for caregiving within families, are disproportionately impacted by the absence of paid family leave. No individual should face the dilemma of sacrificing their financial stability to fulfill their caregiving duties, whether it's caring for a newborn child or an elderly family member.

Hawai'i's current provisions fall short in adequately supporting its workforce, with only a four-week extension of unpaid leave available to employees of larger companies. This inadequacy is particularly concerning given the state's rapidly aging population and the projected increase in demand for caregiving support in the coming years.

Research has consistently shown that implementing family leave programs is not only feasible but also beneficial for businesses and the overall economy. Furthermore, with Hawai'i's unique demographic challenges, such policies are crucial for maintaining the well-being of our communities.

SB 2474 represents a vital step towards ensuring that all workers have access to the support they need to care for their loved ones without facing financial hardship. I urge you to give this bill your full support, as it is not only a matter of economic justice but also a reflection of our values as a caring and compassionate society.

Thank you for scheduling this important measure.

Laura Acasio, District 1

LATE

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/11/2024 11:07:38 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Betsy Baker Morrigan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in favor of this family leave bill. It will create stronger, happier, more resilient children when parents are able to stay at home with their babies for the first four months. It is inhumane to have a child and then to have to dump them practically immediately in a crowded day care only a few weeks after they are born. These infants should bond and grow with their parents at home, creating strong families and individuals. I believe that this supported family leave will help alleviate a lot of the problems we have now of disturbed and mentally ill youth.

LATE

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/11/2024 11:45:24 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Calvin Lau	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I became a first time father last year. My wife and I were blessed with a very healthy boy who has continued to develop faster and healthier than our wildest dreams. We are both working professionals who were able to take time off during the first few months of his life. My wife contributes more directly to society as a social worker helping the elderly, and I contribute a bit more indirectly as a physicist working on energy research.

We support Paid Family & Medical Leave for many reasons, including the recent experience we have had in the last year. Being able to have time for our baby during those critical first few months was an important requirement for us to learn to understand his needs, and through learning how to be the best parents for him in those months, we have been able to help him grow into a healthy toddler.

Beyond just our individual family, Paid Family & Medical Leave is also a necessity for our well being as a society. How can we expect our keiki to develop into functioning adults with good moral reasoning if we cannot even insure that their parents are able to care for them when they are at their most vulnerable?

Please support PFML for the parents, for the children, and for our society as a whole.

LATE

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 4:26:29 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tony Radmilovich	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this bill as it is long overdue and will help a lot of people.

Thank you

LATE

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 10:28:41 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anne Leake	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai kakou. No one should have to sacrifice their financial well-being to care for their keiki or kupuna. The majority of Hawai'i's workforce cannot afford to take unpaid leave to care for a new child or assist a family member with a serious health condition. Hawai'i law only provides a four-week extension of unpaid leave to employees of large employers with more than one hundred employees.

In 2018, only 17 percent of workers in the United States had access to paid family leave through their employers. Women, who are often the primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents, are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family leave. Hawai'i has one of the fastest growing populations over the age of 65 in the nation. From 2020 to 2030, the percentage of people aged 65 and over is expected to increase to 22.5 percent of the state's population. Nearly one-third of workers who do not have access to family leave will need time off to care for an ill spouse or elderly parent.

Multiple studies have shown that family leave programs can be established in a manner that is affordable for small businesses and our state. When medical emergencies arise, no one should be forced to choose between caring for their loved ones or earning a paycheck. Mahalo for your consideration of this testimony.

LATE

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 10:29:51 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kealakai Hammond	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Hawaii Legislators,

I am writing to express my strong support for SB2474 which seeks to establish and administer a Family Leave Insurance Program under the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations. As a mental health professional specializing in family dynamics and caregiving, I believe that this bill is not only necessary but also critical for the well-being of individuals and families across our state/country.

The proposed expansion of the family leave period to 16 weeks, covering both the care of infants and children as well as aging or ailing adults, is a significant step forward in recognizing the diverse caregiving responsibilities faced by individuals. This extension acknowledges the complex and often demanding nature of caregiving, which encompasses not only the early stages of life but also the later stages where individuals may require extensive support due to age-related illnesses or disabilities.

Family caregivers play a pivotal role in supporting the health and stability of their loved ones, yet they often face significant challenges in balancing their caregiving duties with their professional and personal responsibilities. The lack of adequate support mechanisms, such as paid family leave, can exacerbate stress, financial strain, and mental health issues among caregivers, ultimately compromising the well-being of both caregivers and care recipients.

By providing family leave insurance benefits and eliminating the previous threshold of 100 employees for employers to be subject to the family leave law, SB2474 ensures that all workers, regardless of the size of their employer, have access to the essential support they need during times of caregiving. This not only promotes fairness and equity in the workplace but also recognizes the inherent value of caregiving and the vital role it plays in sustaining healthy families and communities.

Furthermore, investing in family leave policies has been shown to have numerous benefits, including improved employee morale, increased productivity, and reduced turnover rates. By supporting caregivers in balancing their work and caregiving responsibilities, family leave not only enhances the quality of life for individuals and families but also contributes to the overall economic and social well-being of our state/country.

In conclusion, I urge you to support SB2474 and its provisions to establish a Family Leave Insurance Program, extend the period of family leave, and eliminate the previous employee threshold. By doing so, we can ensure that all individuals have the support they need to fulfill their caregiving responsibilities without sacrificing their financial security or mental health.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of this important legislation.

Mahalo,

Kealakai Hammond, LMHC, PMH-C

LATE

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 11:42:06 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ryan Samonte	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

LATE

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 11:44:36 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Krystal Baba	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

LATE

SB-2474

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 11:53:36 AM

Testimony for LBT on 2/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Terri Calizo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.