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JADE T. BUTAY
DIRECTOR

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DEPUTY DIRECTOR

JOVANIA DOMINGO DELA CRUZ
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
KA 'OIHANA PONO LIMAHANA
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IN REPLY, REFER TO:
OCS 24.1117

March 25, 2024

To: The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair,
The Honorable Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair, and
Members of the House Committee on Finance

Date: Thursday, March 28, 2024

Time: 3:30 p.m.

Place: Conference Room 308, State Capitol & Videoconference

From: Jovania Domingo dela Cruz, Executive Director
DLIR – Office of Community Services

Position: Support

Re: S.B. 2787, SD 2, HD 1 – RELATING TO IMMIGRATION

I. OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION

This bill would appropriate funds to the Office of Community Services (OCS) to provide for additional dedicated staff and additional program funds to direct OCS to establish an immigration services and access unit (hereinafter, sometimes "ISAU") within OCS.

The bill would add a section to HRS Chapter 371K, which established OCS, to describe the purpose of the unit as to "promote immigrant economic self-sufficiency, community inclusion, and integration. The immigration services and access unit shall provide statewide services, coordinate with relevant government and nonprofit agencies, and approve contracts with qualified nonprofit organizations to support integration and civic engagement. The immigration services and access unit shall also be responsible for the immigrant resource centers, administration of the refugee program, and management of other programs relating to immigrants."

The bill would appropriate sums, in amounts to be identified, for the new State fiscal year – FY 2024-2025, which starts on July 1, 2024. The funds would allow for one or more FTE staff in the ISAU plus additional funds for services to be provided by the ISAU. The bill also states that the appropriation is made in accordance with Hawaii State Constitution Art VII and HRS §§37-91 and -93 relating to appropriations that cause the general fund expenditure to be exceeded, and states that the appropriation is in the public interest and the appropriation made in this bill meets the needs addressed by the bill.

II. CURRENT LAW

The Office of Community Services (OCS) is an agency attached to the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations. OCS was created by the Legislature by Act 305, SLH 1985, codified as Chapter 371K, Hawai'i Revised Statutes.

The mission of OCS is to eliminate the causes and conditions of poverty for economically disadvantaged persons, immigrants, and refugees in the State of Hawaii, by facilitating and enhancing the development, delivery, and coordination of effective programs for these persons and communities to enable them to achieve and maintain greater economic self-sufficiency and integration into Hawaii's society.

III. COMMENTS ON THE BILL

OCS supports the intent of this bill, provided that appropriations would not replace or adversely impact priorities in the Governor's Executive Budget Request.

S.B. 2787, SD2, HD1 would reinforce the mandate that OCS already has pursuant to HRS Chapter 371K. Having a unit dedicated to coordinating and addressing the need of one of OCS's major service populations is very critical to ensuring that this population receives proper government and social services. The need for such coordinated services was highlighted during the recent Maui wildfires. Having the ISAU would help OCS fulfill one of its legislative mandates.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify.



**STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF LANGUAGE ACCESS**

1177 Alakea Street, Room B-100
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
Phone: (808) 586-8730 / Fax: (808) 586-8733
doh.ola@doh.hawaii.gov

In reply, please refer to:
File: 24-016

**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB2787 SD2 HD1
RELATING TO IMMIGRATION**

Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

Hearing Date: 3/27/2024

Room Number: Conf. Room 308 &
Videoconference

1 **Fiscal Implications:** This measure may impact the priorities identified in the Governor's
2 Executive Supplemental Budget Request.

3 **Agency's Position:** The Office of Language Access (OLA) supports this measure, provided the
4 measure's passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities in the Governor's Executive
5 Supplemental Budget Request and defers to the Office of Community Services (OCS) on
6 implementation and resource needs.

7 **Purpose and Justification:** The purpose of this measure is to establish and appropriate funds for
8 the Immigrant Services and Access Unit within the Department of Labor and Industrial
9 Relations' Office of Community Services (OCS) and to declare that the general fund expenditure
10 is exceeded.

11 Hawaii is one of the most culturally diverse states and has one of the highest proportions of non-
12 English speakers in the nation. Many of these non-English speakers are immigrants and migrants
13 with limited English proficiency (LEP). According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022
14 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates, it is estimated that 25.73%, or 351,542, of
15 Hawaii's residents aged 5 years and older speak a language other than English at home. Of these,
16 150,743, or 11.06%, indicated that they speak English "less than very well."

- 1 English proficiency, or the lack thereof, has a great impact on people's economic and social
2 activities, and health literacy and wellness. It affects their ability to successfully access
3 education, employment, and important public assistance, benefits, programs, and services.
4 Establishing an immigrant service and access unit will provide a critical link for communication
5 and make services accessible to individuals with limited English proficiency.
- 6 This measure will allow OLA to work closely with other partners to further improve language
7 access in our state government. If the measure is passed, OLA will collaborate with OCS to
8 assist immigrant and migrant individuals with limited English proficiency to the extent allowable
9 by law.
- 10 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB2787
RELATING TO IMMIGRATION**

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: March 28, 2024

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawai'i Coalition for Immigrant Rights (HCIR) is in **full support of SB2787**, which establishes within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations' Office of Community Services the Immigration Services and Access Unit.

Immigrants are significant contributors to our State's economy. With immigrants comprising eighteen percent of Hawaii's population, the State must take proactive measures to support their integration. They accounted for nearly 40 percent of agricultural workers and 33 percent of tourism, entertainment, and hospitality workers. They also constitute 68 percent of housekeeping workers, over half of all chefs and head cooks, 47 percent of all nursing assistants, and 20 percent of all physicians. Furthermore, immigrants contributed \$17.6 billion to our local economy in 2018 alone. Additionally, the same year, over \$874 million from immigrant households went to state and local taxes¹. These figures underscore the significant economic impact of immigrants on our State's prosperity.

It is clear that immigrants are vital to our communities and essential for our economy's continued growth and success. Despite their contributions, recent immigrants often face numerous obstacles, including language barriers, legal issues related to their immigration status, and challenges with acculturation and integration. Providing comprehensive services to address these needs is not only a matter of compassion but also of practicality and economic sense. To fully realize the potential of our immigrant population, we must provide them with the necessary support and resources for integration and success.

¹ *Immigrants and Migrants in Hawai'i Essential Contributors to the State's Workforce and Economy*, Partnership for a New American Economy Research Fund, research.newamericaneconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/05/NAE_Hawaii_V7_FINAL.pdf.



The proposed Immigration Services and Access Unit will play a pivotal role in addressing the diverse needs of immigrants, including English language training, legal services related to immigration status, and support for accessing government services, including assistance with naturalization. This will ensure that recent immigrants receive the support they need to thrive in our communities. Investing in immigrant integration has proven benefits for our State. Immigrants who receive support and opportunities for economic self-sufficiency contribute more effectively to our workforce and economy as mentioned in the statistics above. Additionally, it's important to note that naturalization increases the earnings of those eligible to naturalize by 8.9 percent. This increase means that the earnings of those who become citizens will be 8.9 percent higher than their earnings if they were not naturalized².

Importantly, this bill is not only about providing vital services but also about fiscal responsibility. By investing in immigrant integration, we can prevent long-term costs associated with unaddressed challenges, such as reliance on public assistance or underutilization of immigrant talent and potential. Moreover, by coordinating with existing resources and nonprofit organizations, we can maximize the impact of state funding.

We urge you to support this bill and ensure its swift passage for the well-being of Hawaii and all its residents.

Thank you for your support and consideration,
Maria Rallojaj
Policy and Communications Coordinator

² Enchautegui, María E., and Linda Giannarelli. *The Economic Impact of Naturalization on Immigrants and Cities*, Urban Institute, New York City Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, www.urban.org/sites/default/files/2015/12/18/2000549-the-economic-impact-of-naturalization-on-immigrants-and-cities.pdf.



**Testimony of The Legal Clinic in
SUPPORT of SENATE BILL 2787, HOUSE DRAFT 1,
RELATING TO IMMIGRATION
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Rep. Lisa Kitagawa, Vice-Chair
March 28, 2024 | 3:30 pm | Conference Room 308**

Chair Yamashita, Vice-Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee:

The Legal Clinic (“TLC”) submits this testimony in support of Senate Bill 2787, House Draft 1, which would establish an Immigration Services and Access Unit within the Office of Community Services of the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations. The purpose of the new unit would be “to promote immigrant economic self-sufficiency, community inclusion, and integration.”

TLC, through our legal staff of three attorneys and three paralegals, provides legal and related services to Hawai‘i’s low- and moderate-income immigrant communities. While our primary function is to provide legal services, we have seen that the needs of our growing immigrant communities extend far beyond legal needs to virtually all aspects of their lives. Further, we have seen that immigrant communities encounter added difficulties, beyond those faced by other under-served communities, in accessing available resources. Factors peculiar to the immigrant community, such as language barriers and the lack of language services, and uncertainty with governmental agencies and the “system,” exacerbate their already difficult situation.

This heightened need was made clear by two recent disasters. First, the Covid-19 pandemic hit the low-income immigrant community with particular force. They were disproportionately affected by the loss of jobs, lower rates of health care coverage, higher rates of Covid-19 infection, and less access to unemployment insurance and other public benefits; this was due, in large part, to language barriers, unfamiliarity with the system, and related factors. Second, we have seen the same disproportionate impact in the Maui wildfires and aftermath. Immigrants, many of whom worked in the hotel and service industries in the Lahaina area, not only lost their jobs, homes, and possessions, but faced added difficulties in obtaining assistance because of the lack of adequate language resources. Many also lost their documents proving their legal status in the United States, which created further difficulties. Others without legal status were understandably apprehensive about applying for needed services for fear of revealing themselves to authorities. And, when they did apply, were found to be ineligible for certain services, such as those provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

An effective state-wide agency could have helped alleviate some of this human suffering. Currently, only Hawai‘i County and Maui County have immigrant services offices, but with limited resources. Hawai‘i needs a state-wide agency to help provide and coordinate the resources – such as language services, workforce development training, legal services, and the like – to promote immigrant economic self-sufficiency, community inclusion and integration.

We strongly urge the adoption of Senate Bill 2787, House Draft 1.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Corey Park". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Corey Park
President, Board of Directors
The Legal Clinic

TESTIMONY
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
SB2787_SD2_HD1 RELATING TO IMMIGRATION
March 28, 2024, at 3:30 PM
State Capitol Conference Room 328 via Videoconference

Honorable Chair Yamashita, Vice-Chair Kitagawa, and Committee Members,

The Hawaii Federation of Republican Women stand in STRONG OPPOSITION to SB2787_SD2_HD1 for the following reasons:

Duplication of Services. The Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR), Office of Community Services (OCS) administers grants for programs that assist low-income individuals including immigrants. The OCS currently assists immigrants in these categories: citizens, conditional and permanent, non-immigrant, and undocumented. SB2787_SD2_HD1 specifically proposes to assist RECENT immigrants. How recent?

Fiscal Irresponsibility. SB2787_SD2_HD1 proposes to ADD positions for OCS. Why? Is DLIR expecting an INCREASE in the number of immigrants they would like to serve? Where is this projected increase of immigrants coming from? Every state is a border state, and we are no exception. What form of identification is being accepted? Green cards or other? Without these questions being addressed, it is irresponsible to pass this bill.

Furthermore, SB2787_SD2_HD1 declares that the appropriation exceeds the general fund expenditure ceiling for fiscal year 2024-2025. In other words, the current established budget does not meet the needs to increase staffing.

Increased Housing and Tax Burden. Hard working taxpayers already carry the burden of government employee salaries and infrastructure needs (i.e. office space, employee benefits, etc.). “We the people” want less government and more fiscal accountability. We are the second highest taxed state in the nation where the cost of living is exorbitantly high.

The new immigrants will place a burden on the current housing shortage and compete for affordable housing with Hawaii residents (U.S. citizens). The new immigrants will also place a burden on our infrastructure and resources.

I encourage you to think about the decisions that you make today that will have an impact on our future generations to come.

Please vote NO on SB2787_SD2_HD1.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jamie Detwiler, President
Hawaii Federation of Republican Women



Testimony in support of SB 2787 SD2, HD1
RELATING TO IMMIGRANT SERVICES
Submitted by Hawai`i Friends of Civil Rights,
Co-chairs: Amy Agbayani and Pat McManaman

Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Kitagawa and members:

Hawai'i Friends of Civil Rights strongly supports SB2787 sd, hd1 RELATING TO IMMIGRANT SERVICES. This bill establishes and appropriates money and positions for an Immigrant Services and Access unit within the Office of Community Services, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations.

We appreciate the legislature's approval of the Filipino Legislative Caucus priorities related to immigration services the past sessions eg. HCR 169 (2021) and SB 2457(2022). We also appreciated consideration of bills in 2023 for an OCS immigrant service unit and funding (SB 812 and HB 439)

Community leaders and the legislature acknowledge that OCS resources for immigrants were significantly reduced over the years and provided recommendation and resources for immigrants and the Office of Community Service to meet its legislative mandate relating to immigrants and refugees.

We respectfully request you support SB 2787 sd2,hd1 which is one of the Filipino Legislative Caucus priority bills. This bill will establish an Immigrant Services and Access unit within the Office of Community Services/DLIR whose purpose is to promote economic self-sufficiency,

inclusion, and community integration for immigrants in our state. Many states and cities have an administrative organization, staffing and programs like the proposed Immigrant Services and Access.

There are over 250,000 foreign born persons in the state; nearly half of all immigrants to Hawai'i are from the Philippines (46%); Japan (8%), China (8%), Korea (7%), Micronesia (5%), Vietnam (4%) and Mexico (2%). Fifty-seven percent of Hawaii's immigrants are naturalized US citizens and many have US born children. A significant number of immigrants are eligible to apply for citizenship and many limited English proficient persons are unable to access government services because they face language barriers even though they are eligible and need the service.

Economists agree that the aging population in the US is problematic as there are fewer working age people to support the economy, social security and taxes. Working age immigrants are essential in many communities, including Hawai'i. In 2021, the Filipino Legislative Caucus invited various experts to provide information and recommendations on Hawaii's immigrants to inform their legislative priority bills. Below is a summary of a report by the New American Economy in partnership with The Legal Clinic for Hawai'i immigrants. Mo Cantor, author of the report made a zoom presentation to the 2021 Filipino Legislative Caucus:

Immigrants and Migrants in Hawaii: Essential Contributors to the State's Workforce and Economy

Using data from the 5-year 2018 American Community Survey as well as qualitative policy data from the NAE Cities Index,¹ this report takes a closer look at Hawaii's foreign-born population² to explore how immigrants and refugees play an important role in the state's economy, workforce, and community.

Immigrants are vital to industries and occupations that are essential to Hawaii's economy.

Despite making up 18 percent of Hawaii's population, immigrants accounted for nearly 40 percent of agricultural workers, and 33 percent of the workers in the tourism, entertainment, and hospitality industry. Within specific industries, immigrants are playing critical roles in certain occupations, accounting for 68

percent of housekeeping workers, over half of all chefs and head cooks, 47 percent of all nursing assistants, and 20 percent of all physicians.

Immigrants make significant economic contributions to Hawaii's economy.

Alongside the \$1.55 billion that immigrants paid in federal taxes and \$874 million in state and local taxes, immigrants contributed \$780 million to Social Security and \$195 million to Medicare in 2018. After taxes, immigrants in the state had a spending power of \$5.8 billion, and contributed over \$17.5 billion to Hawaii's GDP.

Immigrants are creating jobs in Hawai'i.

In 2018, immigrants accounted for over a quarter of all entrepreneurs in the state, making them 24.4 percent more likely to be entrepreneurs than their U.S.-born counterparts.

Immigrants hail from a diverse range of countries.

While nearly half of the immigrants in Hawai'i are from the Philippines (45.8%), the rest of the top ten countries of origin for immigrants are quite varied: Japan (8.4%), China (7.8%), Korea (7.0%), Micronesia (4.6%), Vietnam (3.9%), Mexico (2.2%), Marshall Islands (2.2%), Canada (1.6%), and Hong Kong (1.5%).

More than half of the immigrants in Hawai'i are naturalized, and many immigrants are likely eligible to naturalize.

Over 56 percent of immigrants in Hawai'i are naturalized U.S. citizens, and over 40,000 immigrants are likely eligible to naturalize, which would allow them to access a greater variety of jobs that may require citizenship, and increase their likelihood of starting a business.

Immigrants are more likely than U.S.-born residents to not have health insurance.

Despite accounting for 18 percent of the population, immigrants accounted for over 31 percent of residents in Hawai'i that did not have health insurance in 2018.

Immigrants are more likely to live in multi-generational households.

In 2018, 48.1 percent of immigrant households involved 2 generations of adults—adult children living with their adult parents—or 3+ generations, compared to 37.5 percent of their U.S.-born counterparts.

In comparison with other comparable U.S. cities, Honolulu struggles to provide policies that support immigrant integration.

Looking at NAE's 2020 Cities Index, Honolulu ranked 95th out of the 100 largest U.S. cities in terms of policies and socioeconomic opportunities that support immigrant integration. Factors taken into consideration in the Cities Index include in-state tuition for undocumented residents, cooperation between local police and federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials, and statewide cooperation with sanctuary cities.

HCR 169 (2021) requested the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) to convene a working group to "improve access to government services for immigrants and increase immigrant opportunities to make civic and economic contributions to the community. This report identified barriers, contributions, and recommendations to increase resources for and increase the capacity of the Office of Community Services to meet its legislative mandate to serve immigrants and refugees. A unit within the Office of Community Service can focus on integration and economic self-sufficiency and workforce participation for immigrants.

The HCR 169 Working group noted that the array and interrelated issues facing immigrant workers and their families requires coordination and support from other state agencies and a dedicated staff and unit within OCS would improve OCS's capacity to better meet the needs of immigrants and services of other agencies.

Although the federal government is responsible for immigration matters, the reality is that the state has responsibility for enforcing regulations and providing services to persons residing in the state. States and local governments have to fill in some of the gaps in services not provided by the federal government. For example, recently our congressional delegation and the President announced the approval of a treaty and funding for the Compact of Free Association (COFA) that would make citizens from the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands and Palau eligible for various programs. It is our understanding that COFA migrants who were harmed by the Lahaina wildfires will be eligible for FEMA and state funds will not be used. OCS has a number of federal funds related to workforce development that includes immigrants and refugees. We believe there are other funds (eg. Second language funding and funding for

agricultural workers). We believe a dedicated unit within OCS to serve immigrants and refugees may be able to identify and apply for more federal funding. US Senators introduced a bill to establish an Office of New Americans to coordinate federal programs "to respond effectively to immigrant and refugee integration issues such as language learning, adult education and workforce training, health care and naturalization. And because immigration matters are primarily a federal responsibility, state and local government interested in serving their immigrant communities need more resources and grants from the federal government.

We believe an Immigrant Services and Access unit will improve OCS's capacity to serve the immigrant community who face barriers to accessing government resources and are excluded from full participation in our community. Immigrants continue to contribute to our economy and our multicultural community. We respectfully ask you to support SB 2787 sd1,hd1 for it will benefit our state and immigrant communities.

Amy Agbayani and Pat McManaman, co-chairs
Hawai'i Friends of Civil Service



House Committee on Finance

Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Support: SB 2787 SD2 HD1

Wednesday, March 28, 2024 3:30 p.m. Conference Room 308

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee,

HAPA is writing in support of SB 2787 SD2 HD1, which establishes within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations' Office of Community Services the Immigration Services and Access Unit.

With immigrants comprising eighteen percent of Hawaii's population, the state must take proactive measures to support their integration. The need for comprehensive services for immigrants is evident, considering the various issues they encounter upon arrival, ranging from language access and legal matters to acculturation challenges and employment searches. Hawaii has a significant number of new immigrants every year, as well as 18 percent of the population comprising immigrants, who have played an essential role in contributing to the state's economy, workforce, and community. The proposed Immigration Services and Access Unit will play a pivotal role in addressing the diverse needs of immigrants, including English language training, legal services related to immigration status, and support for accessing government services.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I look forward to the successful passage of SB 2787 SD2 HD1!

Thank you for your support and consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Frederick', is written in a cursive style.

Anne Frederick
Executive Director

To: House Committee on Finance
Re: **SB 2787 SD2 HD1 – Relating to Immigration**
Hawai'i State Capitol & Via Videoconference
March 28, 2024, 3:30 PM

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in **SUPPORT of SB 2787 SD2 HD1**. This bill establishes within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations' Office of Community Services the Immigration Services and Access Unit.

During the pandemic, non-profit organizations like ours worked hard to help limited English proficiency (LEP) families in Hawai'i access the pandemic relief benefits that they were qualified for. While working on this outreach, we learned that our state departments lack resources to provide meaningful language access for LEP families, and that the federal government does not provide translations of key documents¹ in many of the languages that are the most spoken by LEP families in Hawai'i² – such as Ilocano, Marshallese, Tongan and Chuukese.

Unfortunately, our state more recently learned about the lack of resources to address the language needs of Hawai'i's residents in the aftermath of the Lahaina wildfires. According to the language services coordinator for FEMA, who coordinated language access response after both the Lahaina and Paradise, California, fires, "the diverse cultures of Maui and the fact that many people did not feel comfortable dealing with government agencies, made the response in Lahaina unique."³

The unit proposed by this bill would help fill such gaps. It could offer services such as English language training, translation and interpretation, workforce development training, legal services, assistance in obtaining citizenship and naturalization, and programs to learn about and access government services. This unit would also coordinate with nonprofit organizations, other immigrant-serving state agencies, and county immigrant services offices and explore all available federal resources.

As one of the states with the highest portion of foreign-born residents,⁴ combined with the lack of resources for translations into many of the languages that are spoken most here, Hawai'i needs to devote more resources to language access than other states do.

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

Thank you,
Nicole Woo, Director of Research and Economic Policy

¹ United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/translated-applications>

² Hawai'i Data Exchange Partnership, https://hawaiiidxp.org/quick_data/datastory/el

³ <https://www.civilbeat.org/2024/03/people-who-dont-speak-english-lost-money-and-help-in-lahaina-response/>

⁴ Statista, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/312701/percentage-of-population-foreign-born-in-the-us-by-state/>



March 18, 2024

To: Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and member of the House Finance Committee

From: Victoria Francis, Deputy Director, State and Local Initiatives, American Immigration Council

Re: SB 2787 SDF2: Relating to Immigration

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and member of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Victoria Francis, and I am the Deputy Director of State and Local Initiatives at the American Immigration Council (the Council). The Council works to create a more welcoming America – one that provides a fair immigration process for New Americans and adopts policies that consider the vital contributions they make to the U.S. economy.

I am submitting this letter in strong support of SB 2787 SD2: Relating to Immigration, which would create an Immigration Services and Access Unit within the Office of Community Services in Hawai'i. Over the past several years, my organization has worked with leaders in government, business, and civil society to establish and support similar state-level offices across the country. To facilitate the social, economic, and cultural integration of immigrant and refugee communities, these offices work across state agencies and community-based organizations to ensure equitable access to services and information; engage the private sector to attract and retain international talent and secure employment; increase civic participation; and convene relevant stakeholders to best coordinate efforts.

Hawai'i has the opportunity to join a growing number of states that recognize the return on investing in New American integration and engagement. In the past three years alone, Colorado, Maryland, Oregon, and North Dakota enacted bipartisan legislation to establish such statewide offices, bringing the total number of states with these offices or senior advisor positions to 20.

These offices are focused on ensuring New Americans successfully integrate and achieve economic self-sufficiency in their local communities and workforces. For example, the Office of Global Michigan worked with their Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs to create 44 licensing guides over three years to help internationally trained professionals attain licenses for in-demand jobs, including doctors, teachers, and cosmetologists. In 2020, the New York Office of New Americans launched Immigrants Can Code, a digital literacy project to ensure that immigrants have access to digital literacy education. In Colorado, the Office of New Americans established a Virtual, Career-Aligned English as a Second Language (VCESL) program to provide career and sector-specific adult English language courses to help newcomers build the skills they need to contribute to the state's workforce.

In collaboration with World Education Services, my organization convenes these offices through the Office of New Americans State Network. Individuals appointed to conduct integration work in Hawai'i would be welcome to participate in the Network where they can learn best practices from counterparts across the country and ensure Hawai'i is well-positioned to sustain a productive and successful

Immigration Services Access Unit that helps facilitate the full integration of the state's immigrant and refugee communities to the benefit of all.

To help illustrate why this issue is important and why it makes sense to think of a state-level immigration services office as an economic integration and workforce issue, my organization conducted quantitative research using data from the 2021 American Community Survey to highlight the impact immigrants and refugees already have in Hawai'i. What we found is quite striking:¹

- **Hawai'i is home to a sizable and strong community of nearly 264,000 immigrants and refugees, making up about 18.3 percent—or nearly one in five residents—of the state's population.** This community is critical to the state's future workforce: 69.3 percent of immigrants in Hawai'i are of working age (16-64 years of age) compared to 59.6 percent of their U.S.-born counterparts.
- **Hawaii's immigrant residents paid over \$2.7 billion in taxes in 2021 — including \$1.0 billion in state and local taxes** — and held \$6.9 billion in spending power that is reinjected back into the state's economy.
- **More than half of the state's immigrant population have become naturalized citizens.** As neighbors, business owners, taxpayers, and workers, immigrants are an integral part of Hawaii's diverse and thriving communities and make extensive contributions that benefit all.
- **Immigrants comprise over one in five workers in the state's labor force.** Hawaii's immigrant residents were crucial in numerous industries and occupations, such as healthcare. In fact, immigrants made up 60.3 percent of the state's nursing assistants, 66.6 percent of maids and housekeeping cleaners, and 53.0 percent of landscaping and groundskeeping workers.

By creating an Immigration Services and Access Unit within the Office of Community Services, Hawai'i can maximize this economic impact, invest in the state's future workforce, and ensure the full integration of immigrants and refugees. I encourage you committee to support the passage of SB 2787 SD2.

Thank you for your consideration,

Victoria Francis
Deputy Director, State and Local Initiatives
American Immigration Council

¹ Available at <https://map.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/locations/hawaii/>



AMERICANS FOR DEMOCRATIC ACTION

OFFICERS	DIRECTORS	MAILING ADDRESS		
John Bickel, President	Melodie Aduja	Stephen O'Harrow	P.O. Box 23404	
Alan Burdick, Vice President	Juliet Begley	Shannon Matson	Maria Glodilet Rallojaj	Honolulu
Doug Pyle, Secretary	Stephanie Firtzpatric	Jenny Nomura	Bill South	
	Robert Kinslow			

March 27, 2024

TO: Chair Yamashita and Members of the Finance Committee

RE: [SB2787 SD2 HD1](#) Relating to Immigration

Support for Hearing: Thursday, March 28

Americans for Democratic Action is an organization founded in the 1940s by leading supporters of the New Deal and led by Patsy Mink in the 1970s. We are devoted to the promotion of progressive public policies.

We support this bill, as it would establish and appropriate money and positions for an Immigrant Services and Access unit within the Office of Community Services, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations. OCS is a state-wide agency that helps provide and coordinate the resources — such as community engagement, workforce development training, legal services, and other important services for to promote immigrant economic self-sufficiency, community inclusion and integration.

Thank you very much for your favorable consideration.

Sincerely,

John Bickel, President



HAWAII ALLIANCE OF PACIFIC ISLANDERS

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB2787
RELATING TO IMMIGRATION
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: March 28, 2024

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Crystal Kionia, and I serve as the Executive Director of the Hawaii Alliance of Pacific Islanders (HAPI). I am writing to express my strong support for SB2787, which proposes the establishment of the Immigration Services and Access Unit within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations' Office of Community Services.

Hawaii welcomes a significant number of new immigrants each year, many of whom are Pacific Islanders contributing indispensably to the state's economy and community fabric. Immigrants constitute eighteen percent of Hawaii's population, underscoring the imperative for proactive measures to facilitate their integration. The complexities immigrants face upon arrival—from language barriers to legal intricacies and acculturation hurdles to employment searches—underscore the critical need for comprehensive support services.

The proposed Immigration Services and Access Unit will play a vital role in meeting the diverse needs of immigrants. It will offer essential services such as English language training, legal assistance pertaining to immigration status, and guidance on accessing government services.

Drawing from my personal experience as a first-generation immigrant, I intimately grasp the challenges immigrant families encounter while navigating life in a new country. Like many children of immigrants, I often serve as the intermediary between my family and the broader community, assisting with interpreting during medical appointments, school meetings, and accessing essential services. These experiences highlight the urgent necessity for dedicated support systems tailored to the unique needs of immigrants and their families.

As an organization, we have witnessed how systemic barriers can detrimentally impact immigrant families, affecting their social, cultural, and emotional well-being. Thus, we urge you to pass this bill to alleviate the challenges faced by our immigrant population.

Thank you for your attention to this pressing matter. I eagerly anticipate the successful passage of SB2787, ensuring a more inclusive and supportive environment for immigrants in Hawaii.

Thank you for your support and consideration,

Crystal T Kionia
Executive Director

**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB2787
RELATING TO IMMIGRATION**

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair

Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: March 28, 2024

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of SB2787, which establishes within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations' Office of Community Services the Immigration Services and Access Unit.

As a first-generation immigrant, I intimately understand the challenges of adapting to a new country, especially when unforeseen crises arise, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

When the pandemic hit, I was working at a restaurant where many of my coworkers, predominantly immigrants who had arrived in the United States within the last five years, suddenly found themselves unemployed. Unfortunately, most were unaware of their eligibility for unemployment benefits. Recognizing this, I took it upon myself to educate them about the available resources and guide them through the application process. I assisted them with navigating the online system, understanding their claims, and provided ongoing support. This proactive intervention proved crucial in preventing financial insecurity and helping them stay afloat during uncertain times.

With immigrants comprising eighteen percent of Hawaii's population, the state must take proactive measures to support their integration. The need for comprehensive services for immigrants is evident, considering the various issues they encounter upon arrival, ranging from language access and legal matters to acculturation challenges and employment searches. Hawaii has a significant number of new immigrants every year, as well as 18 percent of the population comprising immigrants, who have played an essential role in contributing to the state's economy, workforce, and community.

This experience underscores the pressing need for a dedicated office to support immigrant services. Many immigrants, like my coworkers, lack awareness of the assistance programs and benefits accessible to them. Establishing a centralized hub where they can access accurate information and receive tailored support would be invaluable. Given our state's significant immigrant population, it is essential to cultivate a welcoming and inclusive environment that empowers immigrants and fosters their integration into their new communities.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I look forward to the successful passage of SB2787.

Thank you for your support and consideration,
Maria Rallojay

SB-2787-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2024 6:07:25 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2024 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kenny Wusstig	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is a complete and gross misuse of taxpayer dollars towards a program that benefits illegal immigrants more than naturalized citizens. How can you the public servant, care more towards those who have never worked nor obeyed or respected the laws as put forward to be a law-abiding legal citizen of this country ? Than those who are of natural born or hard-working legal immigrants striving to be American citizens ? I pled with you not to create this bloated, ineffective government program until the migration program can be properly resolved.

SB-2787-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2024 6:41:40 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2024 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deven English	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In strong opposition of this bill.

SB-2787-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2024 7:08:30 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2024 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James K. Rzonca	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill

SB-2787-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2024 7:37:17 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2024 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sharron VanDeusen	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I OPPOSE SB2787 SD2 HD1!

SB-2787-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2024 7:39:50 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2024 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bruce Javellana	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I do not support this!

SB-2787-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2024 8:26:30 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2024 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elmer Domingo	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose this bill

SB-2787-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2024 9:49:06 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2024 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cheryl Rzonca	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill. I do not want my tax dollars spent for this and encouraging illegal migration

SB-2787-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2024 11:38:41 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2024 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paula Russo	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill, because our people of Maui and Hawai'i need to be taken cared of FIRST! We have no affordable housing. We have hundreds of Lahaina families without housing. Why do we need an immigration services unit-paid for with our tax dollars- to assist immigrants when we cannot even take care of our own people??? Who are these immigrants coming here? Where will they live? Instead of thinking about yourselves and filling your pockets from our tax payer dollars that we work so hard for, think about the people that are suffering because of your selfish and greedy actions. I encourage every single politician to do the right thing for the people of Hawai'i and not build an immigration service unit in Hawai'i. Mahalo

SB-2787-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2024 12:12:06 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2024 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Timothy Ashton	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Oppose my tax dollars going to support illegal immigrants.

SB-2787-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2024 3:32:37 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2024 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Candace Vizcarra	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose having hard earned tax dollars go toward funding of an "immigration and service access unit"!

SB-2787-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2024 8:36:45 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2024 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bronson Teixeira	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose this bill, the funding would be better suited elsewhere.

SB-2787-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2024 9:42:17 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2024 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Corinne Solomon	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We have hundreds of families in Maui without housing.

We have homeless kūpuna.

Where are these immigrants coming from? Why are my tax dollars going to immigrants?

Why are immigrants moving to Hawaii when the governor has declared an affordable housing state of emergency?

Hawaii has one of the highest tax rates in the entire nation. Money doesn't grow on trees.

You're bleeding us dry already and residents are leaving Hawaii due to the cost of living.

Enough already.

Not a dime of our tax money should go to immigrants when we cannot even take care of our own.

Please shut down this bill.

SB-2787-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2024 9:42:54 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2024 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaliko Trusdell	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose HB2787

SB-2787-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2024 2:39:45 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2024 3:30:00 PM

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

Comments:

Hello

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of SB2787, which establishes within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations' Office of Community Services the Immigration Services and Access Unit.

With immigrants comprising eighteen percent of Hawaii's population, the state must take proactive measures to support their integration. The need for comprehensive services for immigrants is evident, considering the various issues they encounter upon arrival, ranging from language access and legal matters to acculturation challenges and employment searches. Hawaii has a significant number of new immigrants every year, as well as 18 percent of the population comprising immigrants, who have played an essential role in contributing to the state's economy, workforce, and community. The proposed Immigration Services and Access Unit will play a pivotal role in addressing the diverse needs of immigrants, including English language training, legal services related to immigration status, and support for accessing government services.

me ke aloha 'āina,
Nanea Lo, Mō'ili'ili, O'ahu

SB-2787-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2024 3:01:32 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2024 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dianne Deauna	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of SB2787, which establishes within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations' Office of Community Services the Immigration Services and Access Unit.

With immigrants comprising eighteen percent of Hawaii's population, the state must take proactive measures to support their integration. The need for comprehensive services for immigrants is evident, considering the various issues they encounter upon arrival, ranging from language access and legal matters to acculturation challenges and employment searches. Hawaii has a significant number of new immigrants every year, as well as 18 percent of the population comprising immigrants, who have played an essential role in contributing to the state's economy, workforce, and community. The proposed Immigration Services and Access Unit will play a pivotal role in addressing the diverse needs of immigrants, including English language training, legal services related to immigration status, and support for accessing government services.

As a Filipino immigrant, I fully support this measure that will help more of my kababayans access crucial government services.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I look forward to the successful passage of SB2787.

Thank you for your support and consideration,

Dianne Deauna

SB-2787-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2024 3:26:06 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2024 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christy MacPherson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the House Committee on Finance,

I am in strong SUPPORT of SB2787 SD2 HD1. Immigration access to our government resources is both critical and equitable.

Mahalo for your consideration.

SB-2787-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2024 4:28:56 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2024 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Manulani Garcia	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill.

SB-2787-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2024 4:49:27 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2024 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
L.C.	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill.

Referring to the sanctuary states of Massachusetts, New York & California and sanctuary cities of Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Seattle as examples where immigration and refugee services have been established suggests that you, our elected officials, are putting us on the path of becoming a sanctuary state.

WE DO NOT WANT TO BE A SANCTUARY STATE!

Here are some examples of how immigrant programs in states mentioned in this bill are NOT working. If the mainstream national and local media were not so biased, this would already be familiar to you.

New York City Will Be Destroyed by Migrant Influx—Eric Adams

Newsweek Published Sep 07, 2023 at 8:29 AM EDT Updated Sep 08, 2023 at 8:49 AM EDT

<https://www.newsweek.com/eric-adams-migrant-influx-destroy-new-york-city-1825250>

Illegal-immigrant suspects in NYPD attack may have fled to California

By Victor Morton The Washington Times Thursday, February 1, 2024

<https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2024/fab/1/illegal-immigrant-suspects-nypd-attack-mayhave-fl>

LA made \$1.3B in illegal immigrant welfare payouts in just 2 years

ByTori Richards, Published September 26, 2017 Fox News

<https://www.foxnews.com/politics/la-made-1-3b-in-illegal-immigrant-welfare-payouts-in-just-2-years.print>

Illegal Migration's Effects on Wages, Prices, and Taxes

The Gateway Pundit Feb. 9, 2024 11:00 am

<https://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2024/02/illegal-migrations-effects-wages-prices-taxes/>

San Fran (the city littered with feces and needles) approves \$20K trash cans to be placed around city

Law Enforcement Today Posted by:Gregory Hoyt Editorial, July 26, 2021

<https://www.lawenforcementtoday.com/san-fran-the-city-littered-with-feces-and-needles-approves20k-trash-cans-to-be-placed-around-city/>

“I Plead With You for Mercy” – Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker is The Latest Pro-Illegal

Immigration Democrat to Beg Greg Abbott to stop Sending Illegals – Pritzker Previously Diverted Housing Dollars From Citizens to House Illegals

The Gateway Pundit Jan. 13, 2024 6:00 pm

<https://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2024/01/i-plead-you-mercy-illinois-gov-jb-pritzker/>

Airport Travelers Shocked by Signs Allowing Illegal Migrants to Fly Without ID

By The Politics Brief. January 21, 2024

<https://thepoliticsbrief.com/airport-travelers-shocked-by-signs-allowing-illegal-migrants-to-flywithout-id/>

Nowhere in this bill does it state that services will be available ONLY to immigrants entering the USA legally. Our national borders are open and illegal migrants are allowed to fly anywhere in the USA without identification. It's only a matter of time that more illegal migrants and refugees find their way to Hawaii to take advantage of services paid for by our resident taxpayers.

As many of our local citizens are currently facing inflation induced economic hardship, State funding should be appropriated for services only benefiting our residents who are US citizens.

SB-2787-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2024 8:42:28 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2024 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rita Wong	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I OPPOSE SB2787 SD2 HD1

SB-2787-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2024 8:43:25 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2024 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Margaret Nakoa	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this. Though I whole heartedly support helping those in need. The reality is look at Seattle, San Francisco, and the other cities this bill referenced too. The illegal immigrants and homeless have taken over and Hawaii is not too far behind. Those who vote in favor, can pat themselves on the back for making this state not safe for our children in the future.

SB-2787-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2024 10:04:30 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2024 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Malia Daraban	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose SB2787 SD2 HD1 - language is too general/vague with respect to "civic involvement" non-citizen should NOT have the right to vote.

Aloha!

While I support majority of this Bill, as few of my grandparents immigrated to Hawai'i, the language pertaining to 'civic involvement' must be clarified.

This Bill references states such as California and New York with similar Bills/departments, these states have also given non-citizens the right to vote on a municipal level, that action is highly unconstitutional. The language is unclear to ensure, to avoid an unjust loophole, the language should specify as such.

Respectfully,

Malia Daraban

SB-2787-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2024 12:21:07 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2024 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lani Poepoe	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly OPPOSE SB2787. Hawaii tax dollars belong to the people of Hawaii. We are not responsible for immigration.

SB-2787-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2024 12:24:29 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2024 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
CHESTER LUM	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony opposing this bill.

SB2787 discriminates against Hawaii citizens and should be withdrawn.

Once again, thank you for allowing me to submit testimony opposing this bill.

SB-2787-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2024 12:44:02 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2024 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Richard Ruiz	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

These are the reasons SB 2787 should not be pursued any longer. It gives the non United State citizens the right to vote in municipal election under the false pretense of civil engagement

Noncitizens should have to accept the duties of citizenship before being allowed to vote. An immigrant's affirmative decision to become a citizen is a vital acceptance of duties as well as privileges.

Prohibiting noncitizens from voting is not discriminatory. Becoming a United States citizen is a process and a privilege. There are people who have choose to begin the process legally and you cannot short them by placing someone in front of them. President Obama stated in a speech on immigration. We are a nation of immigrants and a nation of laws. You can't be jumping in front of the line. When you do that you make a mockery of those who choose to become Legal citizens the legal way.

Giving away this precious right to vote would disincentivize these non citizens from going through the process of becoming citizens. Non legal people also receive 1000's of dollars of United States citizens hard earned tax money. The combination of the social welfare benefits and the right to vote in city elections diminishes the incentive to become citizens.

SB-2787-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2024 6:42:06 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2024 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessica Caiazzo	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Jessica "Priya" Caiazzo and I strongly oppose SB2787 SD HD1. This bill raises many concerns.

1. Financial Concerns: The bill appropriates money for establishing a new unit within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, potentially exceeding the general fund expenditure ceiling for fiscal year 2024-2025. This allocation of funds could strain the state's budget or prioritize spending in a way they deem inappropriate.

2. Policy Implications: there are individuals and groups that disagree with the establishment of an Immigration Services and Access Unit within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations. We have concerns about how the unit will operate, its scope of authority, or its potential impact on immigration policies in the state.

3. Timing and Priority: given the state's current challenges or pressing issues, allocating resources and creating a new unit focused on immigration services may not be the most urgent or necessary priority.

4. Process Concerns: Raise concerns about the process by which the bill was developed, debated, and passed, including potential lack of transparency, public input, or stakeholder engagement.

Please oppose this bill as we need to allocate these funds to the citizens of the United States Of America, and to residents of Hawai'i.

Mahalo,

-Jessica "Priya" Caiazzo

SB-2787-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2024 7:14:41 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2024 3:30:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the FIN Committee,

As the child of refugees and contributing citizen, I write in **STRONG SUPPORT** of SB2787 SD2 HD1, which establishes within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations' Office of Community Services the Immigration Services and Access Unit.

With immigrants comprising eighteen percent of Hawai'i's population, the state must take proactive measures to support their integration. The need for comprehensive services for immigrants is evident, considering the various issues they encounter upon arrival, ranging from language access and legal matters to acculturation challenges and employment searches. Hawai'i has a significant number of new immigrants every year, as well as 18 percent of the population comprising immigrants, who have played an essential role in contributing to the state's economy, workforce, and community. The proposed Immigration Services and Access Unit will play a pivotal role in addressing the diverse needs of immigrants, including English language training, legal services related to immigration status, and support for accessing government services.

In both my professional and personal life, I have witnessed the many needs of our immigrant communities, as well as the significant contributions they make to our local communities, both financially and culturally.

Mahalo for your thoughtful consideration of this bill.

Thaddeus Pham (he/him)

SB-2787-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2024 7:26:58 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2024 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alice Abellanida	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill.

SB-2787-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2024 8:13:02 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2024 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robin Gusich-Batara	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill, SB 2787 in all its versions.

The priority of our state should be our residents. We need to focus our efforts on homelessness, affordable housing, and our local economy. Immigration Services is not a priority.

The Department of Labor has its plate full with current responsibilities, of which they are in sore need of improvements. Their computer system is antiquated, and client services are not client friendly. It is very difficult to reach them by phone, and navigating the lpolicies and procedures are difficult. their staff is short or poorly trained. To expand their scope of responsibilities would just compound their inefficiency.

Why are we passing legislation effective 07/01/300? A great deal can change by then. Let's focus on the present challenges.

please do not pass this bill.

thank you

Robin Gusich-Batara

SB-2787-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2024 8:35:09 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2024 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
kamakani de dely	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill

SB-2787-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2024 8:35:56 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2024 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mallory De Dely	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill

SB-2787-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2024 8:36:35 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2024 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Dedely	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill

SB-2787-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2024 8:53:11 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2024 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lora Santiago	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose this Bill SB2787 SD2 HD1.

SB-2787-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2024 10:54:09 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2024 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Austin Haleyalpiy	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of SB2787, which establishes within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations' Office of Community Services the Immigration Services and Access Unit.

With immigrants comprising eighteen percent of Hawaii's population, the state must take proactive measures to support their integration. The need for comprehensive services for immigrants is evident, considering the various issues they encounter upon arrival, ranging from language access and legal matters to acculturation challenges and employment searches. Hawaii has a significant number of new immigrants every year, as well as 18 percent of the population comprising immigrants, who have played an essential role in contributing to the state's economy, workforce, and community. The proposed Immigration Services and Access Unit will play a pivotal role in addressing the diverse needs of immigrants, including English language training, legal services related to immigration status, and support for accessing government services.

This would really help eliviate a lot of the stress that community/grassroots organizations have to go through especially during emergency situations. Instances like COVID-19 and the Maui Wildfires showed the need for this legislation as these community orgs struggled to help their respecitve communities with things such as language access to resources and general need-to-know information. This is long overdue as Hawai'i has always been home to immigrants from all over. Perhaps the need was not as great before, but with technology there has to be some way for new immigrant groups to fully integrate into society here on Hawai'i so that we can all work together for the longevity and sustainability of all of us and these Hawaiian islands.

Mahalo for your support and consideration,

Austin

SB-2787-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2024 12:41:21 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2024 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Juanita Ornellas	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I express my strong opposition to Bill SB NO 2787 SD 2 HD 1. I firmly believe that our focus should be redirected towards the pressing issues faced by the people of Hawaii.

Our state funds should be allocated to create and enhance programs that address legal issues, provide employment opportunities, and support families in their day-to-day challenges. We should prioritize the education of our children and strive to make healthcare more affordable for family's native to Hawaii.

We must not overlook the families living on our beaches who are in dire need of legal services, outreach, and community education. Workforce development should be a key area of focus to increase opportunities for the people of Hawaii.

The high cost of living in Hawaii has led to a significant number of local families becoming homeless. These families require self-sufficiency programs to help them regain their footing. Many locals are being forced to relocate due to the escalating costs. It's time for our government and nonprofit agencies to concentrate their efforts on the LOCAL PEOPLE OF HAWAII.

The question arises - does our government extend more support to illegal immigrants than they do to the people of Hawaii? This is a matter that warrants serious consideration and discussion. Let's work together to make Hawaii a better place for its people

SB-2787-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2024 2:39:41 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2024 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary Healy	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I oppose this bill. I will give oral testimony via zoom.

SB-2787-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2024 2:41:24 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2024 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marlies Lee	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Oppose

SB-2787-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2024 3:41:42 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2024 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melvin Amaral	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose

SB-2787-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2024 6:03:25 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2024 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Iris Mendoza	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hearing Date: March 28, 2024

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of SB2787, which establishes within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations' Office of Community Services the Immigration Services and Access Unit.

With immigrants comprising eighteen percent of Hawaii's population, the state must take proactive measures to support their integration. The need for comprehensive services for immigrants is evident, considering the various issues they encounter upon arrival, ranging from language access and legal matters to acculturation challenges and employment searches. Hawaii has a significant number of new immigrants every year, as well as 18 percent of the population comprising immigrants, who have played an essential role in contributing to the state's economy, workforce, and community. The proposed Immigration Services and Access Unit will play a pivotal role in addressing the diverse needs of immigrants, including English language training, legal services related to immigration status, and support for accessing government services.

As a Mexican American and the daughter of immigrant parents, I have personally experienced the challenges of navigating systems that were not inclusive to us, despite being contributing members of society. The lack of resources for immigrants in Hawaii has led first-generation children, like myself, to fall behind in our academic studies during childhood as we were occupied with assisting our parents in navigating complex systems due to the lack of resources available to support immigrant families. This cycle affects all immigrants, not just Mexicans.

Looking ahead to 2024, I believe Hawaii should follow the example of other states by providing services for immigrants to break this detrimental cycle. By doing so, the children of immigrants would be able to concentrate on their education and personal growth instead of using their limited English skills to help their parents navigate intricate systems. Immigrant families, like my own, contribute thousands of dollars in taxes annually and fulfill their civic responsibilities – it is only fair that they receive the necessary resources and support

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I look forward to the successful passage of SB2787.

Thank you for your support and consideration,

Iris Mendoza

SB-2787-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2024 6:37:52 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2024 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
james wallace	Individual	Oppose	In Person

Comments:

I oppose SB2787.I no longer TRUST our government with any spending money.We are so broke I know for a fact they dont care.Establishing funds and new positions is a BIG no no.Look at the useless RAIL.Need I say more????