

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 14 2025

RE: S.B. No. 299
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2025
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Health and Human Services, to which was referred S.B. No. 299 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO LOAN REPAYMENT FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to appropriate funds for the Healthcare Education Loan Repayment Program.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Office of the Governor, Department of Health, State Health Planning and Development Agency, Hawai'i State Center for Nursing, University of Hawai'i System, The Queen's Health Systems, Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i, Hawaii Medical Service Association, Healthcare Association of Hawaii, Hawai'i Association of Professional Nurses, Hawaii Primary Care Association, Hawaii Medical Association, Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition, Hawai'i-American Nurses Association, Hawai'i Pacific Health, Hawaii Dental Association, and five individuals.

Your Committee finds that a persistent workforce shortage in the health care industry has created difficulties for patients trying to access care, including specialized care such as behavioral health services. On September 9, 2023, the State launched the Healthcare Education Loan Repayment Program to assist qualified health care professionals with loan repayment to ensure



that they can remain in the State. As the initial appropriation supported two fiscal years of operation, renewed funding is necessary to continue this critical program. Accordingly, this measure provides the funding needed to continue to fund this transformative program to help address continuing shortages in the health care industry.

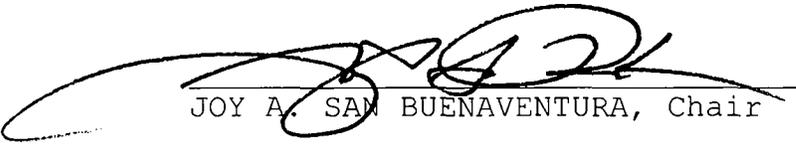
Your Committee notes that the \$30 million appropriated to the Healthcare Education Loan Repayment Program in 2023 assisted over eight hundred medical professionals to remain in the State, including three hundred primary care and behavioral health providers; ninety professionals serving in rural areas; and forty residents in training. Therefore, providing additional support for the Loan Repayment Program will help the State alleviate challenges in the health care industry that has been exacerbated by the chronic shortage of physicians statewide.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Changing the appropriation to an unspecified amount; and
- (2) Inserting an effective date of December 31, 2050, to encourage further discussion.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Health and Human Services that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 299, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 299, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.

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



JOY A. SAM BUENAVENTURA, Chair



