STAND. COM. REP. NO. 2278

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 17 2026

RE: S.B. No. 2521
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2026
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committees on Transportation and Health and Human Services, to which was referred S.B. No. 2521 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO EMERGENCY SERVICES,"

beg leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to:

(1) Exempt emergency medical services personnel from commercial drivers' license requirements; and

(2) Amend the definition of "authorized emergency vehicle" under State Traffic Code to replace ambulances with emergency medical service vehicles.

Your Committees received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Transportation; Department of Health; Department of Human Resources of the City and County of Honolulu; Honolulu Emergency Services Department; United Public Workers, AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO; and one individual.

Your Committees find that first responders obtain training on the operation of authorized emergency vehicles from federal, state, and county agencies that satisfy the requirements of a commercial driver's license. However, existing law requires many first responders to obtain a commercial drivers' license, creating an administrative barrier for first responders that prevents them



from performing vital public safety functions and hinders recruitment and retention. This measure will exempt first responders from commercial driver's licensure requirements to promote clarity, readiness, and public safety.

Your Committees note the concern raised by the Department of Health that safeguards are needed to ensure that first responders possess the necessary credentials to operate an authorized emergency vehicle. Therefore, amendments to this measure are necessary to address this concern.

Accordingly, your Committees have amended this measure by:

(1) Specifying that emergency medical services personnel who drive disaster response, recovery, and emergency vehicles shall be exempt from commercial drivers' licensure requirements;

(2) Inserting language requiring federal, state, and county firefighters, emergency medical services personnel, and law enforcement officers to maintain proof that they have successfully completed an agency approved or other state approved training on authorized emergency vehicles;

(3) Expanding the definition of "authorized emergency vehicle" to include disaster response and recovery vehicles and Department of Health vehicles;

(4) Inserting language authorizing the State, appropriate county council, or emergency management agency to designate authorized emergency vehicles; and

(5) Making nonsubstantive technical amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

As affirmed by the records of votes of the members of your Committees on Transportation and Health and Human Services that are attached to this report, your Committees are in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 2521, as amended herein, and recommend that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 2521, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Judiciary.



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

JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA, Chair

LORRAINE R. INOUYE, Chair

The Senate
Thirty-Third Legislature
State of Hawai'i

Record of Votes
Committee on Transportation
TRS

Bill / Resolution No.:*	Committee Referral:	Date:
SB 2521	TRS/HHC, JDC	02/11/26

☐ The Committee is reconsidering its previous decision on this measure.

If so, then the previous decision was to: _____

The Recommendation is:

☐ Pass, unamended 2312 ☑ Pass, with amendments 2311 ☐ Hold 2310 ☐ Recommit 2313

Members	Aye	Aye (WR)	Nay	Excused
INOUYE, Lorraine R. (C)	✓			
ELEFANTE, Brandon J.C. (VC)	✓			
KANUHA, Dru Mamo	✓			
LEE, Chris				✓
DECORTE, Samantha	✓			
TOTAL	4	Ø	Ø	1

Recommendation: ☑ Adopted ☐ Not Adopted

Chair's or Designee's Signature:

Distribution: Original — File with Committee Report; Yellow — Committee; Pink — Drafting Agency

*Only one measure per Record of Votes

Revised: 01/02/26

The Senate
Thirty-Third Legislature
State of Hawai'i

Record of Votes
Committee on Health and Human Services
HHS

Bill / Resolution No.:*	Committee Referral:	Date:
SB 2521	TRS/HHS, JDC	2/11/26

☐ The Committee is reconsidering its previous decision on this measure.

If so, then the previous decision was to: _____

The Recommendation is:

☐ Pass, unamended 2312 ☑ Pass, with amendments 2311 ☐ Hold 2310 ☐ Recommit 2313

Members	Aye	Aye (WR)	Nay	Excused
SAN BUENAVENTURA, Joy A. (C)	✓			
MCKELVEY, Angus L.K. (VC)	✓			
KANUHA, Dru Mamo	✓			
KEOHOKALOLE, Jarrett	✓			
FEVELLA, Kurt	✓			
TOTAL	5	Ø	Ø	Ø

Recommendation: ☑ Adopted ☐ Not Adopted

Chair's or Designee's Signature: _____

Distribution: Original — File with Committee Report; Yellow — Committee; Pink — Drafting Agency

*Only one measure per Record of Votes

Revised: 01/21/26