

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 20, 2026

RE: S.B. No. 608
S.D. 2
H.D. 1

Honorable Nadine K. Nakamura
Speaker, House of Representatives
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2026
State of Hawaii

Madame:

Your Committee on Public Safety, to which was referred S.B. No. 608, S.D. 2, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO VETERANS RIGHTS AND BENEFITS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to regulate persons receiving compensation for providing advice or assistance regarding veterans benefits, except as permitted under federal law.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Office of Veterans Services; Veteran Benefits Guide; Aloha Independent Living Hawaii; and four individuals. Your Committee received testimony in opposition to this measure from the Veterans of Foreign Wars - Department of Hawai'i; Veterans Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i; and one individual.

Your Committee finds that in recent years, a gray market has emerged in which persons or companies that are often not accredited by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) unlawfully charge high fees -- frequently a percentage of retroactive benefits -- for assisting veterans in filing initial claims with the VA. Your Committee further finds that these unregulated actors may provide inaccurate advice, inappropriately guarantee results, or use high-pressure tactics, preying on



veterans who seek to navigate the complex system of applying for veterans' benefits. This measure takes a step in the right direction to prevent this kind of predatory behavior.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Adding as an exception to the scope of the regulation proposed by this measure, a nonprofit organization exempt from taxation under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, including a center for independent living, as defined under 29 United States Code section 796a, operating within the scope of its mission to serve veterans with disabilities or other underserved populations;
- (2) Changing its effective date to July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and
- (3) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Public Safety that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 608, S.D. 2, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 608, S.D. 2, H.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Public Safety,



DELLA AU BELATTI, Chair



