

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
P.O. Box 3378
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

**Testimony in SUPPORT of H.B. 1563, H.D.2
RELATING TO TOBACCO PRODUCTS**

REPRESENTATIVE CHRIS TODD, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Hearing Date: March 4, 2026, 10:00 AM

Room Number: Conference Room 308
and Videoconference

1 **Fiscal Implications:** None

2 **Department Position:** The Department of Health (DOH) supports House Bill 1563, House Draft 2
3 (H.B. 1563, H.D. 2) to reestablish the legal authority of Hawaii's counties to enact policies that
4 regulate the sale of cigarettes, tobacco products, and electronic smoking devices (ESDs) that do
5 not conflict with and are more stringent than state law. H.B. 1563, H.D. 2 repeals existing law
6 that preempts all local ordinances or regulations that regulate the sale of cigarettes and
7 tobacco products including ESDs.

8 **Department Testimony:** Prior to [Act 206, HB1895 CD1, 2018 Hawaii Session Laws \(HSL\)](#) that
9 amended Section 328J-11.5, HRS, county residents and elected officials rallied to pass
10 regulations to protect the most vulnerable members of their communities from the sale and
11 promotion of tobacco products. Historically, local communities in Hawaii have been visionaries
12 in adopting strong and innovative public health and tobacco control policies that changed social
13 norms across the entire state. Smoke-free restaurants, worksites, beaches and parks, and
14 automobiles with minors inside are examples of public health protective ordinances that were
15 generated by counties. Hawaii's landmark legislation, the Tobacco 21 Law (Act 122, 2015 HSL),
16 was initially introduced and passed by the Hawaii County Council in 2014.

1 Geographic tobacco related disparities are a serious public health problem in Hawaii and
2 innovative, community-based solutions are needed. While 9% of adults in the general
3 population smoke, adults in Hawaii County have the highest prevalence of smoking at 14.5%.¹
4 Smoking rates within some communities are higher such as in Puna/Ka’u (20.7%) and
5 Lahaina/Wailuku (15.4%).² For young adults ages 18-24, Maui County had the highest current
6 ESD use at 25% compared to Hawaii County (23%), Honolulu (21%) and Kauai (16%).³ According
7 to the 2023 Hawaii Youth Risk Behavior Survey results, Hawaii and Maui County high school
8 youth reported current ESD use at 15%, compared to Kauai and Honolulu at 12%.⁴ In 2023,
9 while there was an uptick in middle school ESD use overall, Hawaii County middle schoolers still
10 had the highest prevalence for all measures including ever (22%), current (14%), frequent (5%),
11 and daily (4%) use.^{5,6,7,8} Counties and communities are concerned over the continued
12 marketing of tobacco products and want the ability to respond to pressing local needs,
13 especially in jurisdictions that bear a greater burden of tobacco use.

14 According to Julie Aoki in the Journal of Law and Medical Ethics, “From a health equity
15 standpoint, the use of local knowledge to forge community-specific solutions enables localities
16 to employ a targeted approach to combat health disparities and ensue equitable access to

¹ Hawai‘i IBIS - Query Result - Hawaii’s Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) Data - Cigarettes - current smoker. Accessed January 30, 2026. https://hhdw.org/report/query/result/brfss/SmokeCurrent/SmokeCurrentCrude11_.html

² Hawai‘i IBIS - Query Result - Hawaii’s Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) Data - Cigarettes - current smoker. Accessed January 30, 2026. https://hhdw.org/report/query/result/brfss/SmokeCurrent/SmokeCurrentCrude11_.html

³ Hawai‘i IBIS - Query Result—Hawaii’s Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) Data—Cigarettes—Current E-cig. (2022). Retrieved January 27, 2025, from https://hhdw.org/report/query/result/brfss/SmokeECigsCurr/SmokeECigsCurrCrude11_.html

⁴ Hawai‘i IBIS - Query Result—Hawai‘i Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) Data—Electronic vapor product—Current use, High Schools, County-level. (2023). Retrieved January 24, 2025, from https://hhdw.org/report/query/result/yrbs/VaporCurr/VaporCurr_HS_CNTY.html

⁵ Hawai‘i IBIS - Query Result—Hawai‘i Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) Data—Electronic vapor product—Ever use, Middle Schools, County-level. (2023). Retrieved January 27, 2025, from https://hhdw.org/report/query/result/yrbs/VaporEver/VaporEver_MS_CNTY.html

⁶ Hawai‘i IBIS - Query Result—Hawai‘i Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) Data—Electronic vapor product—Current use, Middle Schools, County-level. (2023). Retrieved January 24, 2025, from https://hhdw.org/report/query/result/yrbs/VaporCurr/VaporCurr_MS_CNTY.html

⁷ Hawai‘i IBIS - Query Result—Hawai‘i Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) Data—Electronic vapor product—Frequent use, Middle Schools, County-level. (2023). Retrieved January 27, 2025, from https://hhdw.org/report/query/result/yrbs/VaporFreq/VaporFreq_MS_CNTY.html

⁸ Hawai‘i IBIS - Query Result—Hawai‘i Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) Data—Electronic vapor product—Daily use, Middle Schools, County-level. (2023). Retrieved January 27, 2025, from https://hhdw.org/report/query/result/yrbs/VaporDaily/VaporDaily_MS_CNTY.html

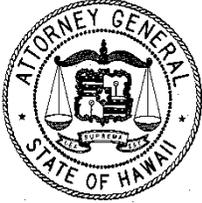
1 better public health.”⁹ Hawaii’s counties understand their youth and must be empowered to
2 respond to policy requests from communities that are most affected.

3 The DOH supports H.B. 1563, H.D. 2 as an important public health and social justice
4 measure to support community-based innovations to protect and advance the health and
5 opportunities for adults and keiki wherever they live in Hawaii.

6 **Offered Amendments:** None

7 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

⁹ Julie Ralston Aoki et al., *Maximizing Community Voices to Address Health Inequities: How the Law Hinders and Helps*, 45 J. Law Med. Ethics, 11 (2017)



**TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2026**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

H.B. NO. 1563, H.D. 2, RELATING TO TOBACCO PRODUCTS.

BEFORE THE:

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

DATE: Wednesday, March 4, 2026 **TIME:** 10:00 a.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 308

TESTIFIER(S): Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or
Chelsea N. Okamoto, Deputy Attorney General

Chair Todd and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General (Department) strongly supports this bill and offers the following comments.

This bill would repeal section 328J-11.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, which currently preempts all county ordinances regulating the sale of tobacco products. Hawaii's youth has been disproportionately affected by the nationwide vaping epidemic, and the Department supports restoring the counties' authority to adopt more stringent ordinances to regulate the sale of these harmful and addictive products that are targeted at our youth.

The Department asks that the Committee change the defective effective date to the original effective date of July 1, 2026.

We respectfully ask the Committee to pass this bill with the recommended revision. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



**STATE HEALTH PLANNING
AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH - KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO

JOSH GREEN, MD
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII

KENNETH S. FINK, MD, MGA, MPH
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH
KA LUNA HO'ŌKELE

JOHN C. (JACK) LEWIN, MD
ADMINISTRATOR

March 3, 2026

TO: HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Representative Chris Todd, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
Honorable Members

FROM: John C. (Jack) Lewin, MD, Administrator, SHPDA, and Sr. Advisor to
Governor Josh Green, MD on Healthcare Innovation

RE: HB 1563-HD2 -- RELATING TO TOBACCO PRODUCTS

HEARING: Wednesday, March 4, 2026 @ 10:00 am; Conference Room 308

POSITION: SUPPORT with COMMENTS

Testimony:

SHPDA strongly supports HB1563-HD2. We believe this bill will restore counties' authority to adopt and enforce more stringent local ordinances regulating the sale of cigarettes, tobacco products, and electronic smoking devices, rather than having to wait for state law to preempt stronger county protections.

This is a practical public health step that allows for faster, locally targeted responses to youth vaping and tobacco harms, especially in rural and neighbor island communities. Neighbor island communities know their keiki and the realities of their own retail environments, schools, and youth social patterns sometimes far better than any statewide process can capture in real time. Restoring county authority allows them to act quickly with common-sense, community-based protections, without waiting for the us at the State to move first while products, marketing, and access points move at a rapid pace.

We defer to the Hawai'i Department of Health and the counties on technical implementation details and fiscal impacts. We reiterate our support for HB1563-HD2 with an emphasis on clarity and accountability.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

■ -- Jack Lewin, MD, Administrator, SHPDA

COUNTY COUNCIL

Mel Rapozo, Chair
KipuKai Kualii, Vice Chair
Addison Bulosan
Bernard P. Carvalho, Jr.
Felicia Cowden
Fern Holland
Arryl Kaneshiro



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK

Jade K. Fountain-Tanigawa, County Clerk
Lyndon M. Yoshioka, Deputy County Clerk

Telephone: (808) 241-4188
Facsimile: (808) 241-6349
Email: cokcouncil@kauai.gov

Council Services Division
4396 Rice Street, Suite 209
Lihu'e, Kaua'i, Hawai'i 96766

March 3, 2026

TESTIMONY OF FELICIA COWDEN
COUNCILMEMBER, KAUAI COUNTY COUNCIL
ON
HB 1563, HD 2, RELATING TO TOBACCO PRODUCTS
House Committee on Finance
Wednesday, March 4, 2026
10:00 a.m.
Conference Room 308
Via Videoconference

Dear Chair Todd and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in SUPPORT of HB 1563, HD 2, Relating to Tobacco Products. My testimony is submitted in my individual capacity as a member of the Kaua'i County Council and the Public Safety & Human Services Committee Chair.

I wholeheartedly support HB 1563, HD 2, which will return the authority to regulate tobacco products to the counties. Since smoking rates vary across the counties of Hawai'i, unique, community-driven solutions are required to address tobacco-related public health concerns across the islands, rather than a uniform, statewide approach. Further, local communities throughout the State can act more nimbly, adapting and tailoring policies to changing social norms and behaviors, thereby protecting our *keiki* who are intentionally targeted by flavored vaping products marketed to youth.

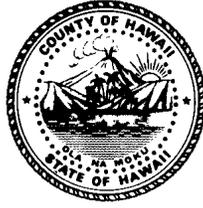
Thank you again for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 1563, HD 2. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Council Services Staff at (808) 241-4188 or via email to cokcouncil@kauai.gov.

Sincerely,

FELICIA COWDEN
Councilmember, Kaua'i County Council

RM:ss

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: March 3, 2026
TO: House Committee On Finance
FROM: Jennifer Kagiwada, Council Member
Council District 2
SUBJECT: HB 1563

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi and esteemed Committee Members,

I **strongly support HB1563**. Restoring county authority to regulate the sale of tobacco products gives counties the ability to respond quickly to public health concerns, especially as youth vaping and nicotine addiction continue to rise. Local governments are often in the best position to understand what their communities need and to act before problems worsen.

Counties in Hawai'i also have a strong history of leading successful public health policies, including Tobacco 21 and smoke -free air protections. Reducing tobacco use helps protect our residents, lowers long-term healthcare costs, and supports healthier communities across the state.

For these reason, I urge your support of HB1563.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jenn Kagiwada".

Jenn Kagiwada

**Committee
Members**

Annaleah Atkinson
808 652-7743

Regina Floyd
702 292-2372

Brian Foster
808 639-3529

Kristen Greene
808 346-0386

Doug Haigh
808 635-1120

Diana Harvey
530 635-7052

Barbara Honeycutt
541 251-1487

Dave Lister
618 237-9138

Scott McCubbins
816 781-5883

Graeme Merrin
808 651-7211

Ryan Moen
808 651-0726

Tommy Noyes
808 639-1018

Jessica Pinson
937 901-5818

Doug Shannon
909 496-1188

Valerie Woods
808 822-2420

Ron Wiley
808 245-9527

Tom Worthen
435 994-0023



March 2, 2026

House Committee on Finance

Rep. Chris Todd, Chair; Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair; Members Rep. Daisy Hartsfield, Rep. Dee Morikawa, Rep. Ikaika Hussey, Rep. Amy A. Perruso, Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy, Rep. Shirley Ann Templo, Rep. Lisa Kitagawa, Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Rep. Matthias Kusch, Rep. David Alcos III, Rep. Mike Lee, Rep. Joe Gedeon, Rep. Tyson K. Miyake, and Rep. Julie Reyes Oda

Strong Support for HB 1563, HD1 RELATING TO TOBACCO PRODUCTS.

Repeals the preemption on county ordinances that regulate the sale of cigarettes, tobacco products, and electronic smoking devices. Allows counties to adopt ordinances that regulate the sale of cigarettes, tobacco products, and electronic smoking devices that do not conflict with and are more stringent than the state law that governs smoking.

Aloha House Committee on Finance Members,

I represent the Friends of Kamalani & Lydgate Park, a community service organization that built a major playground in Lydgate Beach Park on Kaua'i in 1994. Every weekend we bring families together to work collaboratively, sustaining that facility and other attractive features of that popular regional park.

For more than a century, the tobacco industry has worked relentlessly to lure as many people as possible to its addictive products. Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death in Hawai'i, claiming more than 1,400 lives each year. Lifelong tobacco use cuts a decade off the average smoker's life. Half of smokers will die from a tobacco-related disease.

In the last twenty years, cigarette use has declined from 17% of adults to just 9%. However, that progress is being undermined by the rapid rise of e-cigarettes. This has more than doubled since 2016, from 4% of adults nearly a decade ago to 10% today.

Over 90% of adult tobacco users began smoking as children. This is why Big Tobacco targets youth with sweet, fruit-flavored products like mango and cotton candy. Enticing flavors mask the chemical harshness and health risks of nicotine, and make addiction much more likely.

The industry's aggressive tactics are unfortunately working. 4 out of 5 youth who use tobacco begin with a flavored product. Overall, 13% of Hawaii's high school students report using e-cigarettes, along with 10% of middle schoolers. These numbers are appallingly worse for our Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander youth, whose e-cigarette use rates of 17% and 27% far exceed those of other groups.

The tobacco companies are preying on our precious keiki for profit. We must stop them.

Hawai'i has a long history of leadership in fighting against Big Tobacco. We were one of the first states to pass clean air laws, protecting people from tobacco smoke exposure in public spaces like restaurants and workplaces. In 2014, Hawai'i County raised the tobacco sales age to 21. The State followed suit in 2016, becoming the first in the nation to pass this landmark legislation and set the stage for nationwide adoption in 2019.

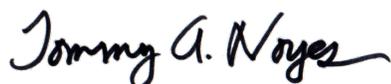
Yet, progress since then has been stymied. In the final days of the 2018 state legislative session, tobacco lobbyists convinced lawmakers to slip deceptive language into a simple kidney dialysis bill to block counties from regulating tobacco sales. Eleventh hour tactics like this are no longer legal, as they've since been ruled unconstitutional and could not pass today.

As the youth vaping epidemic continues to harm our shores, Hawaii's counties have proactively passed laws banning flavored tobacco products. Yet, because of the 2018 preemptive bill, the state blocks those county protections from taking effect.

As the Trump administration has dismantled the CDC's Office on Smoking and Health and cut funding for local cessation and prevention programs, it's more important than ever for our state to take responsibility for defending public health and strengthening tobacco regulations. The state must act now to recognize the value of home rule. Hawaii must return power to the counties and ban the sale of flavored tobacco products that target our children.

County leaders have paved the way before, driving statewide and national progress. Giving counties the freedom to protect their residents will restore Hawai'i's legacy of leadership in spearheading policy changes that prioritize the health and well-being of vulnerable communities. With 86% of our voters agreeing that counties should have the power to regulate tobacco sales, the time to restore the counties' authority is now.

Rather than allowing the tobacco industry to continue to entice our children into a lifetime of addiction, we urge you as state leaders to now do the right thing—act honorably and swiftly ban flavored tobacco products. This can save future generations from the preventable suffering that comes with tobacco use.



Tommy A. Noyes
General Coordinator
The Friends of Kamalani and Lydgate Park



March 4, 2026

Representative Chris Todd, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
Committee on Finance

**American Heart Association Testimony for HB 1563 HD2
Relating to Tobacco Products**

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, Members of the Committee:

The American Heart Association is in **strong support of HB1563 HD2**, repealing state preemption and restoring county authority to enact ordinances aimed at reducing tobacco sales in Hawai'i.

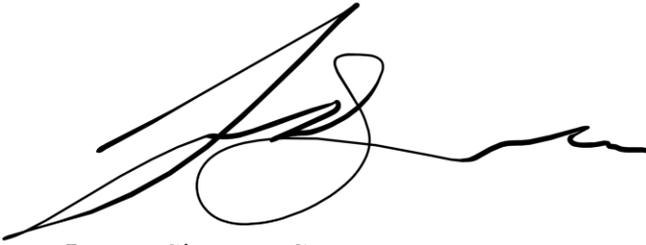
Flavored tobacco products including menthol, candy, and fruit-flavored e-cigarettes are aggressively marketed to youth and remain widely available near schools, recreation facilities, and neighborhoods. Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and Filipino communities experienced disproportionate rates of tobacco use and tobacco-related illness, due in part to targeted industry marketing, its historical inequities, and greater concentration of tobacco retailers in lower-income areas.

Hawai'i continues to face serious challenges related to tobacco use, youth vaping, and nicotine addiction. Right now, state law prevents Hawai'i counties from passing stronger tobacco control measures even when local elected officials and residents demand action. Repealing preemption would allow counties to implement strategies tailored to improve community needs without waiting for statewide legislation.

Hawai'i counties, local coalitions, and community leaders - including the Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Hawai'i, youth advocates, medical professionals, and school organizations - have repeatedly expressed support for stronger policies to reduce access to tobacco products and eliminate flavored tobacco sales. Communities elsewhere in the country with the authority to pass local restrictions on flavored tobacco, tobacco retailer density, and licensing have seen significant reductions in youth initiation and sales to minors.

Tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable death in Hawaii, posing a significant public health threat that requires both local and state policy attention. We respectfully urge the legislature to repeal state preemption and allow Hawai'i's counties to adopt strong, community-driven tobacco control policies that reduce youth access, prevent addiction, and protect the long-term health and well-being of all Hawai'i families.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lauren Simpson-Gomez', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lauren Simpson-Gomez

Hawai'i Government Relations Director



March 4, 2026

Representative Chris Todd, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
Committee on Finance

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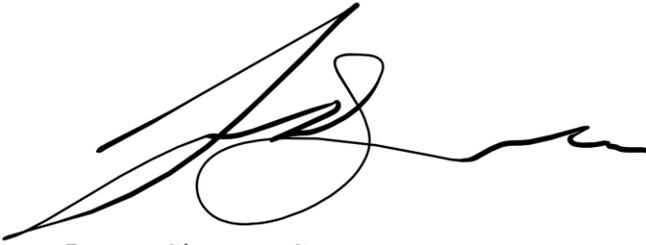
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Lauren Simpson-Gomez

Hawai'i Government Relations Director



HB1563 HD2 Allows Counties to Regulate Tobacco Regulations
COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE

Rep. Chris Todd, Chair

Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Wednesday, Mar 4, 2026: 10:00: Room 308 Videoconference

ALOHA CHAIR, VICE CHAIR, AND DISTINGUISHED COMMITTEE MEMBERS. My name is Alan Johnson. I am the ad hoc leader of the Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition (HSAC), a statewide organization for substance use disorder and co-occurring mental health disorder treatment and prevention agencies and recovery-oriented services including transitional housing.

Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition Supports HB1563 HD2.

HSAC is in full support to regulate e-cigarettes to children because of the huge impact that vaping has with children.

- Counties have demonstrated their capability to manage tobacco-related policies.
- Giving the counties the freedom to manage their own regulations at the point of sale for tobacco products helps them to better respond to their constituents.
- The counties support this measure as it was part of the Hawai'i Association of Counties legislative package.
- This measure does not affect tax.

Giving counties the ability to quickly address the unique health needs of their communities will result in better overall health.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify and are available for questions.



HB1563 HD2 Allows Counties to Regulate Tobacco Products

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Rep. Chris Todd, Chair

Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Thursday, Mar. 04, 2026: 10:00: Room 308 & Videoconference

*ALOHA CHAIR, VICE CHAIR, AND DISTINGUISHED COMMITTEE MEMBERS.
My name is Brian Baker. I am the President and CEO for Hina Mauka, a mental health and substance use disorder treatment and prevention agency for thousands of adults and adolescents on Oahu and Kauai, including recovery-oriented services and housing transitional living programs.*

Hina Mauka **supports HB1563 HD2** and provides this testimony as a major treatment and prevention provider, as well as a member of the Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition (HSAC).

We are in full support of regulating e-cigarettes to children due to the catastrophic health impacts of vaping on our children.

Given that the counties have repeatedly demonstrated their ability to manage tobacco policies, and their on-the-ground responses to their unique situations will cut the time it takes to build a response, HB1563 HD2 makes sense.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony.



TESTIMONY ON HB 1563 HD2 – IN SUPPORT RELATING TO TOBACCO PRODUCTS

TO: Chair Todd, Vice-Chair Takenouchi, & Members,
House Committee on Finance
FROM: Trisha Kajimura, PACT Vice-President of Strategy and External Affairs
DATE: March 4, 2026, 10:00 AM

Parents and Children Together (PACT) supports HB 1563 HD2, which repeals existing law that preempts local ordinances or regulations that regulate the sale of tobacco products, including electronic smoking devices. This will allow counties to adopt ordinances that regulate the sale of tobacco and vape products.

Founded by residents of Kuhio Park Terrace 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 18,000 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.

PACT's mission is to work together with Hawaii's children, individuals, and families to create safe and promising futures. Allowing the tobacco/e-cig industry to prey on youth does not empower youth to choose the futures they want for themselves. Currently, flavors in tobacco and e-cig products attract youth to try them and the nicotine in these products creates an addiction. It is estimated that the tobacco industry is spending \$22.2 million annually to market products in Hawaii. (<https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/hawaii>). Let's give our youth a better chance for freedom from predatory marketing and the opportunity to establish good health.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Please contact me at (808) 847-3285 or tkajimura@pacthawaii.org if you have any questions.



House Committee on Finance
Rep. Chris Todd, Chair
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: Wednesday, March 4, 2026

ACS CAN Comment on HB 1563 HD2: RELATING TO TOBACCO PRODUCTS.

Cynthia Au, Government Relations Director – Hawai‘i Guam
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

Thank you for the opportunity to **SUPPORT** HB 1563 HD2: RELATING TO TOBACCO PRODUCTS. The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) is the nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society. We support evidence-based policy and legislative solutions designed to eliminate cancer as a major health problem for everyone. ACS CAN supports policies that strengthen the health infrastructure in Hawaii to prevent keiki from starting to use tobacco and help adults already addicted to tobacco to quit.

Lung cancer remains the leading cause of cancer deaths in Hawai‘i and 25.3% of all cancer deaths in Hawai‘i are smoking-related.ⁱ An estimated 1,400 adults in Hawai‘i die from smoking every year.ⁱⁱ Each year in Hawai‘i, 1,800 keiki try cigarettes for the first time.ⁱⁱⁱ Tobacco use remains the leading preventable cause of death nationwide. Communities suffer when counties are unable to enact stronger tobacco control laws. Preemption is a tobacco industry tactic, enacted here in 2018. Hawai‘i has continued to see the increase of youth tobacco use including the use of electronic smoking devices and e-cigarettes.

ACS CAN supports local control as an essential component of responsive and effective public policy. Local communities are often the first to recognize emerging issues, identify unique challenges, and craft solutions that reflect the realities on the ground. Ensuring that counties retain the authority to act in the best interest of their residents allows for policies that are more adaptable, timely, and aligned with community values.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important matter. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Government Relations Director Cynthia Au at Cynthia.Au@Cancer.org or 808.460.6109.

ⁱ Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. The Toll of Tobacco in Hawaii. Updated December 15, 2025. <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/hawaii>
ⁱⁱ Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. The Toll of Tobacco in Hawaii. Updated December 15, 2025. <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/toll-us/hawaii>
ⁱⁱⁱ Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. The Toll of Tobacco in Hawaii. Updated December 15, 2025. <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/problem/tll-us/hawaii>



Date: March 2, 2026

To: Rep. Chris Todd, Chair
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Finance

From: Alexandria Felton, Advocacy Director, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids

Re: **SUPPORT for HB1563 HD2, Relating to Tobacco Products**

Hrg: March 4, 2026 at 10am

Dear Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids & the Tobacco-Free Kids Action Fund **strongly support HB1563 HD2** to end the state's prohibition on local governments in Hawai'i from enacting laws to prevent youth tobacco use. This harmful language preempting local laws has been in state statute since 2018 (HRS§ 328j-11.5), and it's long-past time to overcome the tobacco industry's opposition to its removal.

HB1563 HD2 would protect keiki from tobacco addiction, save lives and advance health equity by allowing Hawai'i communities to enact their own targeted tobacco control solutions. The City and County of Honolulu, the County of Hawai'i, and the County Maui have already taken these steps in the last 2 years – passing comprehensive legislation on behalf of their residents. Repealing preemption would allow the laws passed in these counties to go into effect and make state law the floor for tobacco control regulations, rather than retain provisions that establish state law as the ceiling.

Preemption has long been a favored tobacco industry tactic to block effective local action to reduce tobacco use, which is the No. 1 cause of preventable death in Hawai'i and the United States.

Repealing preemption would allow local communities to pass restrictions on the sale of flavored tobacco products, a favorite tobacco industry strategy not only for targeting kids, but

also Pacific Islanders, Asian Americans, Black Americans, Latinos, the LGBTQ community and other communities.

Research shows that 80% of youth who have ever used tobacco started with a flavored product, and the use of flavored e-cigarettes, in particular, has become a national crisis. In Hawai'i, 13.2% of high school students and 10.3% of middle school students use e-cigarettes, according to the 2023 Hawai'i Youth Risk Behavior Survey.

E-cigarette usage is even higher among high school students in the Hawai'i (15.4%) and Maui (15.1%) counties and among middle schoolers in Hawai'i (13.5%) and Maui (10.7%) counties, demonstrating the need for local communities to pass the tobacco-control ordinances they deem will better address their particular needs.

Nationally, communities have adopted and put into action some of the strongest, innovative, and effective tobacco control policies that have served as a catalyst for transitioning social norms about tobacco use.

We urge Hawai'i policymakers to become leaders in discouraging the state's youth from starting to use tobacco by passing HB1563 HD2.

Thank you,
Alexandria Felton, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids



**Testimony to the House Committee on Finance
Wednesday, March 4, 2026; 10:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 308
Via Videoconference**

RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 1563, HOUSE DRAFT 2, RELATING TO TOBACCO PRODUCTS.

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Primary Care Association (HPCA) is a 501(c)(3) organization established to advocate for, expand access to, and sustain high quality care through the statewide network of Community Health Centers throughout the State of Hawaii. The HPCA **SUPPORTS** House Bill No. 1563, House Draft 2, RELATING TO TOBACCO PRODUCTS.

By way of background, the HPCA represents Hawaii's Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). FQHCs provide desperately needed medical services at the frontlines to over 150,000 patients each year who live in rural and underserved communities. Long considered champions for creating a more sustainable, integrated, and wellness-oriented system of health, FQHCs provide a more efficient, more effective and more comprehensive system of healthcare.

This bill, as received by your Committee, would repeal existing law that provides that all local ordinances or regulations that regulate the sale of cigarettes, tobacco products, and electronic smoking devices are preempted and that existing local laws and regulations conflicting with the state law on smoking are null and void.

The bill would take effect on July 1, 3000.

FQHCs have long seen first-hand how tobacco has literally destroyed the lives of our patients and their families. Because of the ubiquity of cigarettes, chewing tobacco, and now electronic smoking devices, the impacts of tobacco harms our citizenry on a generational basis with people experimenting at even earlier ages. Because of this, the HPCA supports efforts that would improve enforcement of existing regulation and create disincentives for consumers to use these products.

Testimony on House Bill No. 1563, House Draft 2
Wednesday, March 4, 2026; 10:00 a.m.
Page 2

In 2018, the Hawaii State Legislature enacted Act 206 to establish the State policy that the sale of cigarettes, tobacco products, and electronic smoking devices is a matter of statewide concern, thus nullifying any local ordinances or policies that restricted the sale of these products that were in effect at that time. Since Act 206 was enacted, youth consumption of tobacco products has increased resulting in the American Lung Association giving the State of Hawaii an "F" for failing to prevent access to flavored tobacco products like menthol cigarettes and fruity-flavored electronic smoking products.

Because of this, the HPCA agrees with the Hawaii State Association of Counties and urges the State to allow the counties to enact more restrictions over the sale of tobacco products, including electronic smoking devices, in order to protect public health, safety, and welfare.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Public Affairs and Policy Director Erik K. Abe at 536-8442, or eabe@hawaiiipca.net.



HIPHI Board

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Coalition for a
Tobacco-Free Hawai'i

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Working Group

Hawai'i Drug & Alcohol-Free Coalitions

Hawai'i Immunization Coalition

Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition

Hawai'i Public Health Training Hui

Healthy Eating + Active Living

Kūpuna Collective/Healthy Aging &
Community Living

Public Health Workforce Development

Date: March 3, 2026

To: Representative Chris Todd, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Finance

RE: Strong Support for HB 1563 HD2, Relating to Tobacco Products

Hrg: Wednesday, March 4, 2026, at 10:00 AM, Room 308

The Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Hawai'i, a program of Hawai'i Public Health Institute¹ is in **Strong Support of HB 1563 HD2**, which would restore the counties' ability to regulate the sale of cigarettes, tobacco products, and electronic smoking devices. If this ability is restored, the counties would be able to enact ordinances that are more stringent than state law.

Counties want to act.

Since 2017, youth use of electronic smoking devices has soared, with flavors being a major driver. The problem is statewide, but over the years has been felt more acutely in our counties with prevalence rates well above the state average. Because of these alarming numbers, three out of four counties have now passed ordinances to end the sale of all flavored tobacco products within their counties. The councils and mayors worked with youth to pass these policies, though they are unable to go into effect without state legislation. By passing HB 1563 HD2, the counties will be able to enact these important policies.

Restoring the county's authority will protect local residents and address disparities.

Counties have a long history of being proactive in adopting innovative tobacco control policies based on community concerns and needs. All counties passed the clean indoor air law (smoke-free workplaces) before the state passed legislation, and Hawai'i Island raised the age to 21 to purchase tobacco products first; in fact, they were the fourth jurisdiction in the nation to do so. Currently, state law curtails the counties' power to enact policies relating to the sale of tobacco and electronic smoking devices. This inability to act is of particular concern, as both high school and middle school students continue to utilize e-cigarettes, a product that has grown exponentially in innovation, product sales, nicotine content and youth appeal. Meanwhile, the tobacco industry continues to develop, market, and promote new flavored products like nicotine pouches that are growing in popularity among youth. According to an independent poll conducted by Ward Research in the Fall of 2025 on behalf of the Coalition, 82% of registered Hawai'i voters believe counties should have the ability to regulate tobacco products at the point of sale.²



States should provide a foundation to build on—basic protections and best practices to reduce the burden of tobacco in the state. However, local governments should have the ability to strengthen those protections based on the needs of their communities.

Currently counties are unable:

- To take legislative and regulatory action through retail and sales strategy to protect their children, youth, and adults.
- To enact public health, evidence-based strategies by restricting local policies and regulations on pricing and access, which are proven to reduce tobacco consumption and initiation, which could include the sale of tobacco in pharmacies and creating flavor restrictions.

Preemption benefits the tobacco industry.

Restricting local control is a known tobacco industry strategy. The tobacco industry works to “preempt” local governments from passing tobacco prevention and control policies. This action creates a more favorable situation for tobacco companies because it is easier to focus efforts on statewide policies versus county or city-level policies..

We applaud the Legislature for helping to strengthen our county's authority on tobacco sales by considering this measure, and thank this committee for your consideration of HB 1563 HD2.

We respectfully ask you to pass this measure.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin Ramirez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Kevin Ramirez
Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Hawai'i Program Manager
Hawai'i Public Health Institute

1 The Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Hawai'i (Coalition) is a program of the Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI) that is dedicated to reducing tobacco use through education, policy, and advocacy. With more than two decades of history in Hawai'i, the Coalition has led several campaigns on enacting smoke-free environments, including being the first state in the nation to prohibit the sale of tobacco and electronic smoking devices to purchasers under 21 years of age.

2 This study by Ward Research, Inc. summarizes findings from a telephone/online survey among n=741 Hawai'i registered voters (maximum sampling error +/- 3.7%), conducted between October 3 to November 1, 2025.

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1563 HD2

TO: Chair Todd, Vice-Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members

FROM: Michael Paul, Certified Tobacco Treatment Specialist

DATE: March 4, 2026 (10:00 AM)

Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHRC) **strongly supports** HB 1563 HD2, which re-establishes county control over the sale of tobacco and nicotine products.

Prior to 2018, counties had the ability to regulate the sale of tobacco products in their communities. Counties in our state have been more responsive in quickly addressing the health and well-being of the people in their communities on this point. Our state's smoke-free air laws and the tobacco 21 law are examples of successful county level ordinances that were subsequently adopted statewide. Reauthorizing the counties to regulate the sale of tobacco products opens the possibilities for innovative policies at the local level, freeing the counties to find new and effective ways to address the public health challenges posed by tobacco use.

HHRC's mission is to reduce harm, promote health, create wellness, and fight stigma in Hawai'i and the Pacific. We work with many individuals impacted by poverty, housing instability, and other social determinants of health. Many have behavioral health problems, including those related to substance use and mental health conditions.

With the ongoing support of the Hawai'i Community Foundation, HHRC continues to offer smoking cessation services that are tailored to meet the needs of our state's LGBTQ+ people, and other priority populations through its [Hawai'i's Last Drag](#) (HLD) program. We work with individuals in ways that are most appropriate for their current needs, with trainings conducted in person or via phone, text, or videoconferencing. We provide smoking cessation products to assist them with quitting the consumption of smoked tobacco and other nicotine products.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 4:00:12 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shani Carvalho	Hamakua-Kohala Health	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha nui kākou,

My name Shani Kai Carvalho of Paauilo, Hāmākua.

I serve my community as a certified Tobacco Treatment Specialist at Hamakua-Kohala Health Hawaii Island and am a mother of four ages 8-18, and I strongly support HB 1563 HD2.

Over the years Hawaii Island has led the way in passing laws at the county level such as raising the age from 18 to 21, smoke and vape free environments including smoke free cars with keiki.

At the present time while we holomua, move forward to protect our Keiki against big tobacco and vaping companies we kindly ask your continued support and passing of HB 1563 HD2 to restore local control back to the counties to regulate tobacco sales.

As a health educator on the harmful effects of electronic smoking devices, the youngest student I worked with to get her quit, was 11 years old, she started vaping regularly at 8 years old. This is one of many stories we see daily in both our public and private schools.

Please choose our Keiki. Let us protect them at the county level as we have historically done so with success. Bills in Honolulu county, Hawaii and Maui county to end the sale of flavored tobacco has already been signed by our mayors, we are makaukau, we are ready. Please choose our Keiki.

Mahalo piha kakou



Chair - Representative Chris Todd
Vice Chair - Jenna Takenouchi
Members of the Committee on Finance

On behalf of the Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Hawai'i's (CTFH) Youth Council, thank you for allowing us to submit testimony **in strong support of HB1563.**

The CTFH Youth Council is a nationally recognized group of youth leaders fighting to envision and create a Hawai'i centered on uplifting community public health beyond the reaches of Big Tobacco. Our council comprises middle school, high school, and college students, with representation from across Hawai'i's counties.

We have worked hard over the years, and the City and County of Honolulu, the County of Hawai'i, and the County of Maui have passed bills to end flavored tobacco sales in their communities. This sends a clear message to the State to protect our keiki and restore their authority to regulate tobacco sales. These county councils stood by the youth and community advocates in passing these bills, and we ask that you do the same by passing HB1563.

With turbulence at the federal level, it's important to have as many tools available to fight against Big Tobacco. Allowing counties to respond enables quicker action against emerging threats, fill gaps left by federal rollbacks, and prevent harm before it becomes widespread. The Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Hawai'i Youth Council urges the Committee to pass HB1563 to restore county authority to regulate tobacco sales.

Mahalo,
Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Hawai'i Youth Council

PARTIAL LIST OF SUPPORTERS

HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS

- 'Ohana Health Plan
- Adventist Health - Castle
- Aloha Care
- AMA/HMA Student Chapter at JABSOM
- American Academy of Pediatrics - Hawaii Chapter
- American Heart Association
- American Lung Association
- Bay Clinic Inc.
- Blue Zones Project
- Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids
- Coalition for a Drug-Free Hawaii

- Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Hawai'i (Hawai'i Public Health Institute)
- Hamakua Kohala Health Centers
- Hawaii – American Nurses Association (Hawaii-ANA)
- Hawaii COPD Coalition
- Hawaii Dental Hygienists' Association
- Hawaii Health and Harm Reduction Center
- Hawai'i Nurses' Association
- OPEIU Local 50
- Hawaii Public Health Association
- Hui No Ke Ola Pono
- Hui Ola Pono (UH Public Health Student Organization)
- Kaho'omiki; Hawaii Council of Physical Activity and Nutrition
- Kauai Rural Health Association
- Keiki Injury Prevention Coalition
- Na Lei Wili Area Health Education Center, Inc.
- The Queen's Health Systems
- Tobacco Prevention Project, Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy
- University of Hawaii Student Health Advisory Council
- US COPD Coalition
- Waimānalo Health Center

HEALTH & COMMUNITY LEADERS

- Kathryn Akioka, RRT / TTS
- Joy Barua
- Forrest Batz, PharmD
- Frank Baum, MD
- Deborah Bond-Upson
- Dale Carstensen
- Valerie Chang Dyson
- Chee Danelle Cheng
- Bridgitte Daniel
- May Rose Dela Cruz, Dr. PH
- Andrew Fox, MD
- Shani Gacayan
- Donita Garcia
- Asaka Herman

- Pedro Haro, MPH
- Cyd Hoffeld
- Colleen Inouye, MD
- Lila Johnson
- Leilani Kailiawa
- Lehua Kaulukukui
- Ken Kozuma
- Mark Levin
- Loren Lindborg
- Katherine May, PsychD
- Bryan Mih, MD
- Kristin Mills
- Shelly Ogata
- Gregg Pacilio, PT
- Matthew Prellberg
- Jordan Ragasa
- Nathalie Razo
- Keenan Reader
- Crystal Robello
- Kimberly Golis-Robello
- Mary Santa Maria
- Anne Takata, DC
- Patty Kahanamoku-Teruya
- Chien-Wen Tseng, MD
- John A. Hau'oli Tomoso
- Jennifer Valera
- Cecilia Villafuerte
- Linda Weiner, MD
- Andre Weston, MDiv
- Matthew Wong

YOUTH & COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

- After-School All-Stars Hawaii
- American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO)
- Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs
- Bad Boys Football Club
- Big Island Interscholastic Federation (BIIF)
- Hale 'Ōpio Kaua'i Inc.
- Hawaii Children's Action Network
- Hawaii Interscholastic Athletic Directors Association
- Hawaii State Commission on Fatherhood

- Hawaii State Teachers Association (HSTA)
- Hawaii State Youth Commission
- Hawai'i Youth Climate Coalition
- Hawaii Youth Services Network
- Honolulu Youth Commission
- Kanu o ka 'Āina Learning Ohana (KALO)
- Kauai Path Inc.
- LearningBond
- Pacific American Foundation
- Parents for Public Schools of Hawai'i
- Partners in Development Foundation
- Residential Youth Services & Empowerment (RYSE)
- The Friends of Kamalani and Lydgate Park
- Waipahu Intermediate Youth For Safety

BUSINESSES

- Country Courier, LLC
- Hana Lima Physical Therapy
- Home Remedies Interior Design
- JCS Enterprises Inc.
- Pediatric Therapies Hawaii

O'AHU NEIGHBORHOOD BOARDS

- Kuliouou-Kalani Iki (02)
- Kaimuki (04)
- Diamond Head (05)
- Palolo (06)
- McCully-Moiliili (08)
- Makiki-Tantalua (10)
- Ala Moana/Kakaako (11)
- Nuuanu/Punchbowl (12)
- Downtown-Chinatown (13)
- Liliha/Puunui/Alewa (14)
- Aliamanu-Salt Lake (18)
- Aiea (20)
- Pearl City (21)
- Waipahu (22)
- Ewa (23)
- Mililani-Waipio (25)
- North Shore (27)
- Koolauloa (28)

- Kahaluu (29)
- Kaneohe (30)
- Kailua (31)
- Waimanalo (32)
- Mililani Mauka-Launani Valley (35)
- Nanakuli-Mailii (36)

SCHOOLS

- Damien Memorial School
- Hawaii Association of Independent Schools (HAIS)
- Hawaii Council of Private Schools (HCPS)
- Holy Family Catholic Academy
- Island Pacific Academy
- Maryknoll School
- Maui Preparatory Academy
- Mid-Pacific Institute
- Roots School
- St. Andrew's Schools
- Saint Louis School



Hawaii COPD Coalition

P O Box 240053

Honolulu, HI 96824

hicopd@gmail.com

(808)699-9839

February 9, 2026

RE: **Please hear and Pass HB1563, HD2 Relating to Tobacco Products**

Dear Chair Chris Todd, Vice Chair Jenna Takenouchi and members of the House Finance Committee:

This measure is extremely critical to the health of the children of our state and our entire state as well. **Please hear AND pass HB1563, HD2** which would restore local authority to regulate the sale of tobacco products to the counties, who were effectively controlling the issues arising in their communities. The Big Island, Kauai and Honolulu County have measures in their counties ready to be enacted as soon as this bill is effective!

I am Executive Director of the Hawaii COPD Coalition and serve over 45,000 Hawaii adults diagnosed with COPD in Hawaii (with an estimated equal number still undiagnosed). Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease or COPD is an umbrella of diseases which include emphysema, chronic bronchitis and chronic asthma. Since 2007, I have worked in Hawaii, nationally and internationally with countless people who have had their lungs and lives horribly affected by tobacco and nicotine. Many of these people have become disabled and unable to perform jobs and hobbies they enjoyed, spending a lot more time and resources with healthcare providers and requiring support from society than they or any of us would like.

- Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable deaths.
- 1,400 people die in Hawai'i each year from tobacco use, cutting a decade off the average smoker's life.
- Half of smokers die from tobacco-related disease.
- In Hawai'i more than 13% of high schoolers and 10% of middle schoolers reported using e-cigarettes in 2023.
- 82% of registered Hawai'i voters support restoring county authority.

Please help protect the lungs and lives of our people from flavored and mislabeled nicotine products. We urge you to **please HEAR and vote in favor of HB1563, HD2 pass it out of committee so our counties can control the tobacco issues that are creating havoc in their communities.** The Hawaii COPD Coalition thanks you very much for your careful consideration of this most important and timely bill.

Very truly yours,

Valerie Chang

Valerie Chang

Executive Director

To: House Committee on Finance
Re: **HB1563 HD2 – Relating to Tobacco Products**
Hawai'i State Capitol & Via Videoconference
March 4, 2026, 10:00 AM

Dear Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in **SUPPORT of HB1563 HD2**. This bill repeals the preemption on county ordinances that regulate the sale of cigarettes, tobacco products, and electronic smoking devices.

Hawai'i has some of the highest youth e-cigarette use rates in the nation, with more than 1 in 4 (29%) of high school and 1 in 6 (17%) of middle school students having tried e-cigarettes.¹ Flavored products play a major role in attracting young users, and Hawai'i was recently given a grade of "F" in the ending of the sale of all flavored tobacco products by the American Lung Association.²

Hawai'i's counties have long been national leaders in tobacco regulation, pioneering policies such as raising the tobacco sales age to 21 and banning smoking in parks and beaches. In 2018, state law stripped counties of their authority to regulate tobacco sales, limiting their ability to respond to local public health needs.³

This has been especially harmful as flavored nicotine products continue to hook our keiki. Restoring county authority would allow local governments to implement effective, innovative policies—such as ending the sale of flavored tobacco—to better protect our children and youth and reduce smoking-related harm in their communities.

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

Thank you,

Nicole Woo
Director of Research and Economic Policy

¹ <https://hhdw.org/report/query/selection/yrbs/YRBSSelection.html>

² <https://www.lung.org/media/press-releases/fy26-sotc-hawaii>

³ https://health.hawaii.gov/news/newsroom/department-of-health-extends-stronger-together-campaign-exposing-tobacco-industry-targeted-marketing-to-hawaiis-youth/#_ftn2



March 2, 2026

To: COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Rep. Chris Todd, Chair
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Re: SUPPORT of HB 1563 HD2 RELATING TO REGULATING THE SALE OF
TOBACCO PRODUCTS

Hrg: March 4th at 10:00AM

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.

The Hawaii Public Health Association supports HB1563 and its goal to allow counties the ability to regulate the sale of tobacco products and address tobacco use in their community

Hawai'i counties have been national leaders in tobacco regulation and it's time to end the 2018 state law that blocks them from acting. Flavored tobacco products attract teens and children. 90% of current middle and high school students that use e-cigarettes are using flavored e-cigarettes. Please pass this bill to allow laws ending the sale of flavored tobacco products to take effect in Honolulu, Hawai'i, and Maui County.

The Hawaii Public Health Association urges you to support HB1563. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important public health issue.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Holly Kessler' in a cursive script.

Holly Kessler
Executive Director



Hawaii Medical Association

1360 South Beretania Street, Suite 200 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96814
Phone: 808.536.7702 • Fax: 808.528.2376 • hawaiimedicalassociation.org

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Representative Chris Todd, Chair

Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Date: March 4, 2026

From: Hawaii Medical Association (HMA)

Elizabeth Ann Ignacio MD - Chair, HMA Public Policy Committee

Christina Marzo MD and Robert Carlisle MD, Vice Chairs, HMA Public Policy Committee

RE HB 1563 HD2 RELATING TO TOBACCO PRODUCTS. Keiki Caucus; Cigarettes, Tobacco Products, and Electronic Smoking Devices; Sale; Regulation; County Authority

Position: **Support**

This measure would repeal the preemption on county ordinances that regulate the sale of cigarettes, tobacco products, and electronic smoking devices. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD2)

Youth vaping in Hawaii remains a significant public health challenge, with both local and national data demonstrating high rates of nicotine use among adolescents and persistence of the habit into young adulthood. In Hawaii, vaping has become widespread among students. According to *Understanding Youth Vaping in Hawaii*, 46% of high school students who vape are regularly vaping every day, indicating a high level of nicotine dependence among youth users.

Teen vaping exposes adolescents to nicotine addiction, harms brain development (affecting attention, learning, and mood), and increases the risk of respiratory symptoms and later use of combustible tobacco and other substances.

Hawaii physicians continue to see the harmful effects of nicotine addiction beginning in adolescence, and local flexibility is essential to address youth vaping trends that vary by community. HMA supports this measure that empowers counties to adopt more stringent regulations on the sale of cigarettes, tobacco products, and electronic smoking devices to better protect public health. Strengthening these protections today helps safeguard the long-term health of our keiki and future generations.

Thank you for allowing the Hawaii Medical Association to submit testimony in support of this measure.

2026 Hawaii Medical Association Public Policy Coordination Team

Elizabeth A Ignacio, MD, Chair • Robert Carlisle, MD, Vice Chair • Christina Marzo, MD, Vice Chair
Linda Rosehill, JD, Government Relations • Marc Alexander, Executive Director

2026 Hawaii Medical Association Officers

Nadine Tenn-Salle, MD, President • Jerald Garcia, MD, President Elect • Elizabeth Ann Ignacio, MD, • Immediate Past President
Laeton Pang, MD, Treasurer • Thomas Kosasa, MD, Secretary • Marc Alexander, Executive Director

REFERENCES AND QUICK LINKS

DeGracia, Daniel. "Understanding Youth Vaping in Hawaii ." *LivingHealthy.Hawaii.gov*, 9 Dec. 2025, livinghealthy.hawaii.gov/tobacco-free/vaping/.

Erythropel HC, Jabba SV, Silinski P, et al. Variability in Constituents of E-Cigarette Products Containing Nicotine Analogues. *JAMA*. 2024;332(9):753–755. doi:10.1001/jama.2024.12408

Whitacre TR, Crippen A, Monthrope M, et al. Tobacco product flavour policies in the USA *Tobacco Control* 2025;34:688-693.

Pattani, Aneri. "Many Young Adults Who Began Vaping as Teens Can't Shake the Habit." *KFF Health News*, 12 June 2024, www.kffhealthnews.org/news/article/many-young-adults-who-began-vaping-as-teens-cant-shake-the-habit/

2024 Hawaii Medical Association Officers

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2024 Hawaii Medical Association Public Policy Coordination Team

Beth England, MD, Chair
Linda Rosehill, JD, Government Relations • Marc Alexander, Executive Director



Testimony of the Hawai'i State Association of Counties

H.B. No. 1563 HD2 - Support

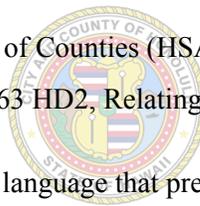
Relating to Tobacco Products

Committee on Finance

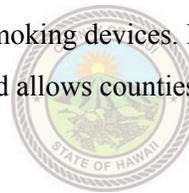
Wednesday, March 4, 2026, 10 a.m.



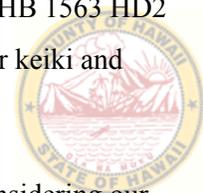
The Hawai'i State Association of Counties (HSAC) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **strong support** of HB 1563 HD2, Relating to Tobacco Products.



This measure repeals statutory language that preempts counties from adopting ordinances to regulate the sale of cigarettes, tobacco products, and electronic smoking devices. Restoring local authority in this area is critical to addressing the youth vaping epidemic and allows counties to implement tailored policies that meet the unique needs of their communities.



The statistics are clear: tobacco use, particularly among youth, remains an alarming public health concern. As local governments, counties are uniquely positioned to respond swiftly and effectively to public health challenges in ways that reflect the values and priorities of their residents. HB 1563 HD2 empowers counties to take meaningful action to protect the health and well-being of our keiki and communities.



We urge the committee to advance this important legislation. Thank you for considering our testimony, and we stand ready to assist in your efforts to support public health.

Nahelani Parsons, Executive Director

Hawai'i State Association of Counties



1411 K Street N.W.
Suite 900
Washington, D.C. 20005
202-525-5717

Free Markets. Real Solutions.
www.rstreet.org

Testimony from:

Steven Greenhut, Western Region Director, R Street Institute

In OPPOSITION to House Bill 1563, "Relating to Tobacco Products"

March 4, 2026

House Committee on Finance

Chairman Todd and members of the committee,

My name is Steven Greenhut and I am the Western Region Director at the R Street Institute, a nonprofit, nonpartisan public policy research organization that promotes limited, effective government. R Street works on a variety of policy areas, including tobacco harm reduction. I am writing to oppose House Bill 1563, which would repeal an existing law that forbids counties from adopting tobacco-related ordinances that conflict with state law. It also clarifies that localities can pass laws that are more stringent than state regulations regarding cigarettes, tobacco products and electronic cigarettes.

This bill's passage would effectively put into law already-passed local measures that ban flavored tobacco, thereby limiting smokers' ability to purchase electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) and other reduced-risk alternatives to combustible cigarettes, such as flavored pouches made from pharmaceutical grade nicotine. We are concerned that this law would therefore have a negative effect on public health in Hawai'i by restricting access to lower-risk products while still allowing the sale of the highest-risk ones, namely combustible cigarettes.

As the bill language explains, the county of Hawai'i, the city and county of Honolulu and the county of Maui have introduced legislation that would ban the sale of flavored tobacco products to all residents as part of their effort to restrict the underage use of such products.¹ Those measures, which are more stringent than state law, cannot go into effect until the state repeals a 2018 law that pre-empts local tobacco ordinances. Most vaping and lower-risk smokeless tobacco products include flavors. If HB 1563 goes into effect, then more than 95 percent of Hawai'i's residents would live under the ban. State law already forbids direct-to-consumer sales of most nicotine products.

This is counterproductive and at odds with the principles of harm reduction, which encourages policy makers to ensure that people who engage in risky behaviors have access to options that help them mitigate the harm.² Tobacco products exist on a continuum of risk, with combustible cigarettes providing the highest risk because of the thousands of dangerous chemicals found in tobacco smoke.

By contrast, Great Britain's main public-health agency, Public Health England, finds that vaping is only 5 percent as risky as smoking.³ The U.S. Food and Drug Administration also views vaping as a lower-risk alternative.⁴ By limiting the availability of vaping, policy makers encourage people with nicotine addictions to switch to the most dangerous products. A variety of studies following bans, including in San Francisco, point to a resulting surge in cigarette smoking. The city's "ban on flavored tobacco product sales was associated with higher odds of self-reported recent smoking among minor high school students relative to trends in other school districts," according to a study in JAMA Pediatrics.⁵

We certainly share the bill author's concerns about underage vaping. R Street was one of the first national think tanks to support raising the purchase age of all tobacco products to 21. However, it already is illegal for teens to buy electronic cigarettes. And research shows that flavors are not the main reason that young people experiment with vaping.⁶ The best policy is to strongly enforce existing law to keep tobacco products out of the hands of minors, while still allowing adult smokers the option to choose lower-risk products that can save their lives.⁷

Research also confirms that the availability of non-tobacco flavors entices more smokers to make the switch. One study found that 91 percent of smokers who had entirely quit smoking combustible cigarettes cited the availability of non-tobacco flavors as a "very important" part of their decision because it helped them disassociate the pleasurable effects of smoking with tobacco flavor.⁸ R Street therefore opposes HB 1563, which we believe would eliminate one key component of an effective harm-reduction strategy.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best regards,

Steven Greenhut
Western Region Director
R Street Institute
(909) 260-9836
sgreenhut@rstreet.org

¹ Ben Angarone, "Honolulu Mayor Signs Bill to Ban Flavored Tobacco," Honolulu Civil Beat, Oct. 20, 2023, <https://www.civilbeat.org/beat/honolulu-mayor-signs-bill-to-ban-flavored-tobacco/>

² Principles of Harm Reduction, National Harm Reduction Coalition, Accessed March 2, 2026, <https://harmreduction.org/about-us/principles-of-harm-reduction/>.

³ National Health Service, "Using e-cigarettes to stop smoking," Department of Health and Social Care, March 29, 2019. <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/using-e-cigarettes-to-stop-smoking>.

⁴ U.S. Food and Drug Administration, "FDA announces comprehensive regulatory plan to shift trajectory of tobacco-related disease, death," Department of Health and Human Services, July 27, 2017. <https://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm568923.htm>.

⁵ Abigail S. Friedman, "A Difference-in-Differences Analysis of Youth Smoking and a Ban on Sales of Flavored Tobacco Products in San Francisco, California," *JAMA Pediatrics* 175:8 (May 24, 2021), pp. 863-865. https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/2780248?guestAccessKey=227700a4-e3cb-4ccf-8ad5-ae5133e0009c&utm_source=silverchair&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=article_alert-jamapediatrics&utm_content=olf&utm_term=052421.

⁶ Christopher Russell et al., "Changing patterns of first e-cigarette flavor used and current flavors used by 20,836 adult frequent e-cigarette users in the USA," *Harm Reduction Journal* 15:33 (June 28, 2018). <https://harmreductionjournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12954-018-0238-6#Abs1>.

⁷ Chelsea Boyd, "Pragmatic tobacco policy can decrease youth use without affecting adult smokers," *R Street Responds*, July 7, 2020, <https://www.rstreet.org/commentary/pragmatic-tobacco-policy-can-decrease-youth-use-without-affecting-adult-smokers/>

⁸ Konstantinos E. Farsalinos et al., "Impact of Flavour Variability on Electronic Cigarette Use Experience: An Internet Survey," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 10:12 (Dec. 17, 2013), pp. 7272-7282. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3881166>.

Wednesday, March 4, 2026; 10:00a.m.
Conference Room 308 & Video Conference

House Committee on Finance

To: Representative Chris Todd, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

From: Michael Robinson
Vice President, Government Relations & Community Affairs

**Re: HB 1563, HD2 – Testimony In Support
Relating to Tobacco Products**

My name is Michael Robinson, and I am the Vice President of Government Relations & Community Affairs at Hawai'i Pacific Health. Hawai'i Pacific Health is a not-for-profit health care system comprised of its four medical centers – Kapi'olani, Pali Momi, Straub and Wilcox and over 70 locations statewide with a mission of creating a healthier Hawai'i.

I am writing in SUPPORT of HB 1563, HD2 which repeals existing law that preempts local ordinances or regulations that regulate the sale of cigarettes, tobacco products, and electronic smoking devices and voids any existing local laws and regulations conflicting with the state law governing smoking. The measure further allows counties to adopt ordinances that regulate the sale of cigarettes, tobacco products, and electronic smoking devices that do not conflict with and are more stringent than the state law that governs smoking.

Tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable disease and death in the United States and in Hawai'i. Tobacco use is a serious public health problem in terms of the human suffering and loss of life it causes, as well as the financial burden it imposes on society and our healthcare system. In Hawaii, approximately \$611 million is spent annually on healthcare costs directly attributed to smoking. Smoking-related illnesses result in an estimated \$1.1 billion in lost productivity each year. E-cigarette use or vaping among youth and young adults has become a national public health concern. E-cigarettes are now the most popularly used tobacco product among youth and young adults, surpassing cigarettes. While smoking rates in Hawaii have decreased through the years, electronic smoking device (ESD) use has rapidly increased.

The counties have demonstrated that they are uniquely positioned to quickly address the health needs of their communities and have been utilizing that ability to great success. Historically, Hawaii has passed forward-thinking legislation to address the high usage of

tobacco products. These policies were first adopted at the county level to quickly address the counties' need to protect their communities from the relentless promotional targeting by tobacco companies. The county of Hawaii, City and County of Honolulu, and county of Maui, have introduced local legislation to prohibit the sale of flavored tobacco products to deal with the unique susceptibility of youths to the marketing of such products. This prohibition is not in conflict with and is more stringent than the restrictions of chapter 328J, Hawaii Revised Statutes. However, this legislation cannot be enacted until existing state law preempting county ordinances on the sale of tobacco products is repealed. HB 1563 would eliminate the preemption of local ordinances that regulate the sale of cigarettes, tobacco products and electronic smoking devices, thus enabling the counties to more effectively tackle the health and social problems related to smoking and ESD use.

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

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 8:38:41 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gina Malani	Keaau Shell	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Honorable Members,

I am submitting this testimony on behalf of our small, locally owned convenience store Keaau Shell on Hawaii Island in opposition to HB1563. Operating a neighborhood store in Hawai'i is not easy. Every aspect of doing business here — from shipping goods across the ocean, to electricity, to wages that reflect our high cost of living — is significantly more expensive than on the mainland. We already follow strict state laws and invest time and money into understanding compliance requirements. Creating an additional regulatory layer would make it even more difficult for small retailers to navigate the rules and continue operating without disruption.

This measure would also place heavier enforcement expectations on businesses that are already doing their best to comply in a complicated regulatory environment. Retailers must stay current on changing statutes, tax structures, product approvals, and licensing obligations. When requirements expand or overlap between state and county jurisdictions, it increases confusion and the likelihood of unintended violations. In Hawai'i's tight-margin market, even small compliance issues can carry outsized financial consequences. For local stores, that can mean cutting back on hours, delaying investments, or absorbing costs we simply cannot afford.

Equally concerning is the instability that could result if counties begin adopting different standards for products that are presently authorized at the state level. A patchwork of rules across islands makes business planning extremely difficult. We rely on consistency to manage purchasing decisions, vendor relationships, and employee scheduling. Ongoing regulatory uncertainty in an already high-cost state threatens the sustainability of small retailers and the jobs we provide to local families. For these reasons, we respectfully ask the Committee to oppose HB1563 and consider the practical impact on Hawai'i's small business community.

Gina Malani

Keaau Shell



Hearing on 3-4-26

Testimony in Strong Opposition to House Bill 1563

Dear Chair Todd and House Finance Committee Members,

The Hawaii Smokers Alliance STRONGLY OPPOSES HB 1563) relating to the ridiculous idea that State law is subordinate to County Ordinances.

House Bill 1563 is strongly opposed for the following reasons:

1. Existing and future bans and taxes by counties won't fit the state's needs and promises.
-Per Section 245-3(a)(12), the following groups/funds are dependent on tobacco taxes:
 - Hawaii Cancer Research Center
 - Trauma System Special Fund
 - Community Health Centers special fund
 - Emergency Medical Services special fund
2. Counties passing additional regulations put in question the tax revenue that these health organizations depend on at the state level. This includes the banning of product lines which can no longer be taxed causing additional revenue shortfalls. Additionally, the Counties operate year-round. This would require a special legislative session to try to fix the problems caused by the counties during most of the year.
3. The State House promised businesses and constituents just a few years ago that State Control would be maintained. People and business are counting on that promise being upheld.

Respectfully request that this deeply troubling bill not leave the FIN committee. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Michael Zehner, Co-chair of the Hawaii Smokers Alliance.

808-952-0275. Hawaiiismokersalliance.net

March 3, 2026

TO: Chris Todd, Chair
Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Finance

FROM: Cigar Association of America, Inc.
(William Goo)

RE: **HB 1563, HD2** - Relating to Tobacco Products
Hearing Date: March 4, 2026
Time: 10:00 am

The Cigar Association of America, Inc. (CAA) **opposes HB 1563, HD2** which would enable the counties to supersede the State's regulatory authority over tobacco products.

CAA is the leading national trade organization representing the interests of manufacturers, importers, distributors, and major suppliers in the cigar and pipe tobacco industry. It is a key stakeholder in this discussion, as the proposed change has the potential to significantly impact its members and their ability to conduct business in Hawaii.

Statewide regulation ensures that prevention measures are clear, achievable and well implemented. These programs are designed and funded by the State, not the counties. The State law preemption model has been successful in seeing tobacco use in Hawaii reach the lowest level in decades and trends indicate continued decline¹. Establishing a change whereby counties would regulate the use of tobacco products will do little to change public health metrics. History has shown that where states have allowed this, consumers look at other alternatives including illicit markets.

If the counties are allowed to supersede State regulation, local businesses will lose the additional fuel and sundry purchases consumers make along with their tobacco purchases. Fragmented regulation also discourages businesses from broader investment in the State thereby limiting economic growth and jobs. Without regulatory control, the State will have little certainty over its future revenue projections. This would jeopardize management of the Cancer Research Fund, Trauma System Fund and more.

Statewide regulation ensures that compliance standards are uniform and fair across the State. When regulation is fragmented, it burdens law enforcement resources and inevitably forces more encounters in the community. Confusion between State and local law should not be the source of conflict between law enforcement and business owners.

¹Based on data from the CDC's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) and the Hawaii Health Data Warehouse, the adult smoking rate has dropped from approximately 17.4% in 2004 to 8.1% in 2024.

Nor should the State enable a county to issue greater restrictions that push vulnerable communities into illicit markets which are unregulated and untaxed.

CAA strongly opposes HB 1563, HD2 because it will destabilize the current regulatory model, complicate compliance, burden enforcement agencies and hurt local economies – setting the stage for future program deficits. Statewide preemption supports public health goals, facilitates compliance and balances the holistic needs of the State. Hawaii cannot afford to abrogate its responsibilities in this area.

Thank you for considering this testimony.

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 9:55:47 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
The Easley Corp	The Easley Corp	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

My name is Nicky Kolo, and I am submitting this testimony in opposition to HB1563 on behalf of our locally owned, three-store chain serving the Kona community. As small business owners operating in an already high-cost market, we are deeply concerned about the added financial and operational burden this bill would create. Enforcement of existing regulations is already complex and costly. Adding another layer of oversight and compliance requirements will only increase expenses for retailers like us, who are doing our best to follow the law while keeping our doors open in one of the most expensive states in the country to do business.

The retail community is already navigating a complicated patchwork of state laws, rules, and agency guidance. Each new mandate requires additional training, system updates, signage changes, and time spent ensuring we understand what is required. For small, locally owned businesses without dedicated compliance staff, this becomes overwhelming and costly. Instead of focusing on serving our customers and supporting our employees, we are forced to redirect limited resources toward deciphering and implementing new regulations.

Most importantly, measures like HB1563 create uncertainty about the future, especially if county-level regulations begin to impact products that are currently authorized for sale at the state level. That uncertainty makes it difficult to plan inventory, staffing, and long-term investments. Our three stores employ local residents who rely on steady hours and consistent income. Additional regulatory pressure and the risk of losing legally authorized products threaten our ability to maintain those jobs. We respectfully ask that you consider the real impact on small Kona businesses and vote no on HB1563.

Nicky Kolo

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 10:06:01 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chong Sullivan	KAGRO	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

My written testimony will be read

Date: March 3, 2026

To: Chair Representative Chris Todd
Vice Chair Representative Jenna Takenouchi
And members of Committee on Finance

From: Members of the University of Hawaii Student Health Advisory Council

Re: Support for HB 1563 HD1, Relating to the Electronic Smoking Devices

Hearing: Wednesday, March 4 at 10:00 AM

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in SUPPORT of HB 1563. Hawai'i counties have been national leaders in tobacco regulation and it's time to end the 2018 state law that blocks them from acting.

The UH Student Health Advisory Council has played a pivotal role in the development and implementation of health policies and tobacco education on the UH System campuses. We remain deeply committed to the mission of reducing the use of all tobacco products, including flavored electronic smoking devices, among adolescents and young adults.

Electronic cigarettes are now the most commonly used form of tobacco among young people in the United States, flavored tobacco products attract teens and children, with 90% of current middle and high school students using flavored e-cigarettes. Ending the sale of flavored tobacco products will reduce the appeal of these products and protect our young people from a lifetime of addiction.

Please pass this bill to allow laws ending the sale of flavored tobacco products to take effect in Honolulu, Hawai'i, and Maui County. The Student Health Advisory Council urges you to support this measure which will protect the health of our people, environment, and the future of Hawai'i. We recognize your committees' commitment to well-being and ask you to help create a safer Hawai'i for all.

Mahalo,

Student Health Advisory Council

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 2:23:15 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Juan He	Non Stop Convenience	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Juan He, and I am writing in strong opposition to HB1563 on behalf of our small family-managed convenience store. For the past six years, our family has worked hard every day to keep our doors open and serve our local community. Like many small businesses in Hawai'i, we are not a big corporation—we are simply a family trying to make an honest living and provide for our families. Every decision that impacts our store directly affects our ability to continue operating in an already expensive and challenging business environment.

HB1563 would create additional challenges that could reduce future sales that our business depends on to survive. Those sales are what allow us to pay our bills, keep our store open, and continue serving the community that has supported us over the years. Running a small business in Hawai'i is already difficult with rising costs, and bills like this add more uncertainty to whether family-run stores like ours can continue operating long term. We are not asking for special treatment—we are simply asking for the ability to continue running our small business and supporting our families.

Our store has proudly served our neighborhood for six years, and we take responsible retailing very seriously. We follow the rules, check IDs, and do our part to operate responsibly in our community. Family businesses like ours care deeply about the neighborhoods we serve because we are part of them. I respectfully ask that you please consider the impact this bill will have on small local businesses and vote NO on HB1563.

Mahalo for the opportunity to share my testimony.

Juan He



ABC Stores
766 Pohukaina Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813-5391
www.abcstores.com

Telephone: (808) 591-2550
Fax: (808) 591-2039
E-mail: mail@abcstores.com

March 3, 2026

To:
Chris Todd, Chair
Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HB1563 HD2

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and committee members,
My name is John Mark Mageo, and I submit this testimony on behalf of ABC Stores in
opposition to HB1563 HD2.

ABC Stores supports clear, consistent, and enforceable statewide laws that ensure a level playing field for all retailers. Repealing state preemption would allow counties to adopt differing tobacco regulations, creating a patchwork of confusing local laws across the islands. This lack of uniformity increases compliance challenges, raises costs for businesses operating in multiple counties, and undermines fairness and effective enforcement.

HB1563 HD2 also places significant public revenue at risk. Repeal of preemption could jeopardize an estimated \$61.5 million annually, including approximately \$34.9 million in Honolulu, \$13.3 million in Hawaii County, \$8.6 million in Maui, and \$4.7 million in Kauai. Overall, nearly 99% of the State's tobacco excise and sales tax revenue from flavored products would be at risk.

These funds support critical public priorities, including cancer research, cessation and prevention programs, healthcare services, and essential infrastructure. At a time of competing fiscal demands, risking this level of recurring revenue is concerning.

For these reasons, ABC Stores respectfully urges the Committee to oppose HB1563 HD2 and maintain state preemption to ensure consistency, fairness, and fiscal stability. We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

John Mark D. Mageo
Employee Relations and Government Affairs Manager
ABC Stores

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 11:27:46 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ra Long	R&K Liquor	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Ra Long, and I am a local convenience store owner here on Oahu. My family and I work in the store every day, and this small business is how we provide for our family and serve our community. We know our customers by name, we extend aloha, and we try our best to operate responsibly and follow the law. I respectfully stand in opposition to HB1563. While I understand the intent behind increased oversight, enforcement is already a major challenge. Adding more costly enforcement requirements and another layer of regulation makes it even harder for small, locally owned stores like mine to continue operating.

The retail community is already navigating complicated state rules, tax requirements, and compliance standards. Adding another regulatory layer—especially one that could open the door to county-level regulations—creates confusion and uncertainty for small business owners. We do not have teams of attorneys or compliance specialists. We are doing our best to understand and follow state law as it stands. This bill would increase operational costs, create more red tape, and make it more difficult to stay compliant in an already expensive business environment.

Most importantly, HB1563 would impact future sales that support my ability to maintain my small business and continue providing goods and services to the community. If counties begin restricting products that are currently authorized under state law, it will directly affect the revenue we rely on to cover rent, utilities, and rising supply costs. Small stores like mine are simply trying to make a living for our families while serving our neighborhoods. In today’s economy, that is becoming harder and harder to do. I respectfully urge you to consider the real impact on local businesses and vote no on HB1563.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Ra Long

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 11:21:14 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sein McKissen	Waialae Mini Mart	Oppose	In Person

Comments:

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sein McKissen, and I am submitting this testimony in strong opposition to HB1563 on behalf of our local convenience store, which is owned and managed by myself and my mom. Our store is not part of a large corporation — it is a true family business. We open early, close late, and work side by side every day to keep our doors open and serve our community. Like many small retailers in Hawai‘i, we are already operating in one of the most expensive markets in the country. The cost of rent, utilities, insurance, freight, and payroll continues to rise, and adding another layer of regulation through HB1563 would only make it more difficult for small businesses like ours to survive.

This bill would create additional enforcement requirements and compliance burdens that are costly and confusing for small retailers to navigate. We already work hard to follow all state regulations and ensure we are selling only authorized products. Adding further restrictions or creating uncertainty around future county-level regulation would directly impact our ability to plan inventory and sustain consistent sales. For small, family-run stores like ours, tobacco and other regulated products represent a significant portion of revenue that helps cover basic operating expenses. If these sales are reduced or restricted further, it will not hurt large corporations the same way — it will hurt local, mom-and-pop stores who rely on every dollar to stay afloat.

HB1563 threatens future sales that support our ability to maintain our small business and continue serving our community. We are not asking for special treatment — we are simply asking for the ability to operate under clear, consistent rules without additional costly layers that make doing business even harder. Small businesses across Hawai‘i are already just trying to make a living for our families in an increasingly challenging economic environment. Please consider the real impact this bill will have on local families like ours and vote no on HB1563.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sein McKissen

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 6:17:18 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leo Liu	Campbell Stop & Shop	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

My name is Leo Lou, and I am the owner of Campbell stop & shop here in Hawai‘i. I am writing in strong opposition to HB1563, which proposes to ban the sale of menthol tobacco products.

As a locally owned small business, I take my legal and ethical responsibilities very seriously—especially when it comes to age-restricted products. My employees and I strictly enforce age verification requirements. We check every customer’s ID for tobacco purchases, regardless of how old they appear. We use electronic ID scanners and have a zero-tolerance policy for underage sales. Compliance is not optional in my store; it is part of our daily operating culture. Protecting youth access is something we actively support and uphold.

However, HB1563 would significantly harm my business without addressing the real issue of youth access. Menthol products represent a substantial portion of my tobacco sales. If this bill becomes law, I would lose a major segment of my revenue almost overnight. For small retailers like myself—who are already operating on tight margins due to inflation, high shipping costs, and the cost of doing business in Hawai‘i—this loss could mean cutting employee hours, reducing staff, or potentially closing our doors.

In addition to harming legitimate businesses that follow the law, a menthol ban risks driving customers to the illicit market or to online and out-of-state sellers, where age verification is far less controlled. That outcome would undermine responsible retailers while doing little to curb overall demand.

Rather than imposing a blanket prohibition that punishes compliant small businesses, I respectfully urge lawmakers to focus on stronger enforcement of existing age restrictions and penalties for bad actors who sell to minors. Retailers like me are partners in compliance—not the problem.

HB1563 threatens local jobs, small businesses, and tax revenue, while shifting sales away from regulated environments. I respectfully ask you to consider the unintended economic consequences this bill would have on small, community-based retailers like myself.

For these reasons, I strongly urge you to vote NO on HB1563.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,
Leo Liu

Campbell Stop & Shop

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Rep. Chris Todd, Chair

Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Wednesday, March 4, 2026

10:00 AM – Room 308

Testimony In Support of House Bill 1563 HD2 Relating to Tobacco Products

The American Lung Association is the leading organization working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease, through research, education, and advocacy. The work of the American Lung Association in Hawai'i and across the nation is focused on four strategic imperatives: to defeat lung cancer; to improve the air we breathe; to reduce the burden of lung disease on individuals and their families; and to eliminate tobacco use and tobacco-related diseases.

The American Lung Association calls on Hawai'i officials to support House Bill 1563 HD2 which repeals existing law that preempted local ordinances or regulations that regulate the sale of cigarettes, tobacco products, and electronic smoking devices and nullified and voided any conflicting local laws and regulations.

The need for Hawai'i to protect youth from tobacco is more urgent than ever, with youth e-cigarette use reaching epidemic levels. According to the Centers for Disease Control, in 2019, the last year that CDC was able to collect data in comparable ways as previous years and (2021 was affected by school shutdowns and school-from-home protocol due to COVID-19), the nearly every 1 in 3 high schoolers in Hawai'i vape regularly. This is an over 70% increase in youth vaping rates since 2017. Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders have even higher vaping rates than the youth state average.¹

Preemption is a legal concept where a higher level of government restricts or even eliminates the authority of a lower level of government to regulate an issue. Federal laws can preempt state and local laws, and state laws can preempt local laws. As a practice, preemption can slow or stop community solutions addressing a wide range of health and social issues including tobacco, food, alcohol, and climate change.²

Enacting policies at the local level is one of the best ways to make progress in tobacco control. In fact, many tobacco control policies that have succeeded in Hawai'i have in fact been passed and tested at the local level, including smoke-free workplaces, smoke-free restaurants, restricting sales of tobacco to those 21 and over. We need to enact laws that are proven to reduce tobacco use.

By blocking the power of local elected officials to protect youth and failing to take any meaningful action at the state level, we risk another generation addicted to deadly tobacco products. Preventing local control over the sale and marketing of tobacco products has been a favorite tactic of the tobacco industry to stop the passage of effective policies to reduce tobacco use and save lives.

Hawai'i is a full diversity, where the needs of different counties vary widely. Because of this, we must give local governments the ability to develop the best laws to protect their citizens. The American Lung Association

¹ American Lung Association. *State of Tobacco Control – Hawai'i*. 2025

² Pertschuk, M, Pomeranz, JL, Aoki, JR, Larkin, MA, Paloma, M. Assessing the Impact of Federal and State Preemption in Public Health: A Framework for Decision Makers. *J Public Health Management Practice*. 2012

believes that local governments should be allowed to respond to public health issues, like the youth e-cigarette epidemic, in ways that work for their communities.

The American Lung Association in Hawai'i urges legislators to continue to support and advocate for policies to protect youth from tobacco use by allowing local governments to create solutions that work for them. We urge for your support of House Bill 1563 HD2.

Pedro Haro
Executive Director
American Lung Association in Hawai'i
pedro.haro@lung.org

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 8:42:43 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Travis Yoshinaga	Marukin Market	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members,

My name is Travis Yoshinaga and I am the owner of Marukin Market. My wife and I have been running our small convenience store for over ten years. It is a family business and we are the ones working in the store every day. We work long hours just trying to keep the doors open and serve our community. HB1563 worries us because it would add more rules and enforcement costs. Small stores like ours already have a hard time understanding all the state regulations, and this bill would add another layer that makes it even harder for us to operate.

At Marukin Market, my wife and I take responsibility very seriously. We check IDs and follow the law every day. Over the years we have passed all of our undercover inspections, and we are proud of that record. We are not a big company with lawyers or extra help to keep up with every new rule. It is just my wife and I working hard and doing our best to follow the laws and run our store the right way.

We are also worried this bill will create more black market sales. If legal stores cannot sell products that adults want to buy, people may start buying from illegal sellers instead. That means the state loses tax money and there is less control over what is being sold. Please think about small family businesses like ours that are just trying to survive in Hawaii and vote no on HB1563.

Mahalo for the opportunity to share our testimony.

Travis Yoshinaga

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 8:55:33 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cassidy Reeves	Aloha Discount Liquor	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Chair Todd and members of the committee,

My name is **Cassidy**. I work at a small neighborhood store here in Maui. My work family and I depend on this store for our livelihood and the store is an important part of our community.

I am here today to ask you **toplease oppose House Bill 1563**.

The people who shop at our store are regular people— seniors, working class adults, and neighbors who count their money carefully. They come to us because the store is close, prices are fair, and they feel comfortable here.

HB 1563 creates different tobacco rules in different counties and will remove legal tobacco options for adults from our store. With the prohibition of these legal products, unintended consequences will result in a significant loss in revenue for the State of Hawaii. Mind you we operate in the most responsible manner only by selling legal products to adults 21+ plus. Again, the state would be losing revenues at a faster rate than expected which contradicts their recent efforts of the recent imposed cigarette tax. While I do understand why there is motivation to further reduce consumption of cigarettes, studies show minimal impact occurs and more illicit activity occurs as consumers hunt for their preferred products. Illicit markets do not pay tax. They don't care who they are selling to, or the community they impact, furthering risk for underage use. Our nation has record low underage use now, because retail is the most responsible place for adults to purchase products.

For workers and small stores, this is very confusing. When each county has its own rules, it is hard to understand what is allowed and what is not. We want to follow the law, but changing rules from place to place makes it harder and costs more. **One clear statewide rule is easier for everyone to follow.**

This bill also puts our jobs at risk. Stores are already dealing with higher costs, more shoplifting, and less profit. We recently were impacted by a significant tobacco tax putting more pressure and targeting the most price-sensitive consumers, many of whom are already struggling with the high cost of living.

If sales go down, stores may cut hours, let workers go, or shut down completely.
That hurts employees like me, our families and our community.

Please do not make it harder for small stores and their workers to survive.

I respectfully ask you to **oppose House Bill 1563**.

Thank you for listening.

Testimony in Opposition to HB 1563 HD2 Relating to Tobacco Products

Committee on Finance
Hawai'i House of Representatives
Thirty-Third Legislature, Regular Session of 2026

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jodi Rementer, and I respectfully submit testimony **in opposition to HB 1563 HD2**, which would repeal the state preemption on county ordinances regulating the sale of cigarettes, tobacco products, and electronic smoking devices.

This measure would create significant unintended consequences for Hawai'i residents, retailers, and regulators by replacing a clear statewide regulatory framework with multiple county-level systems.

First, repealing preemption would allow **each county to impose its own restrictions or bans**, meaning the rights of adults could vary depending on where they live. Products that remain legal under state and federal law could be prohibited locally, effectively allowing county governments to remove access to lawful products for residents within their jurisdiction. This creates unequal treatment for Hawai'i residents based solely on county boundaries.

Second, this bill would create **misalignment with federal regulation**. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) already regulates and authorizes specific tobacco and nicotine products for sale in the United States. Retailers currently operate within this federal regulatory framework. Allowing counties to prohibit products that the FDA has authorized would create conflicting regulatory standards that are difficult for both businesses and regulators to navigate.

Third, the measure would make compliance significantly more difficult for Hawai'i retailers. The retail community is responsible for following and enforcing regulations, including licensing requirements and other regulatory obligations. Many businesses operate across multiple islands. If each county establishes different rules, retailers would be forced to manage multiple regulatory systems, increasing the risk of accidental violations and imposing additional administrative burdens—particularly on small local businesses.

Fourth, fragmented regulations often lead to **emerging illicit markets**. When legal products are banned locally but remain legal elsewhere, unregulated sales channels can develop. These markets lack oversight, undermine consumer protections, and shift sales away from licensed retailers who are committed to complying with the law.

Hawai'i currently benefits from a **consistent statewide framework** that provides clarity for residents, regulators, and businesses. Replacing that system with a patchwork of county regulations would create confusion, misalignment with federal standards, and unnecessary burdens on the retail community while potentially encouraging illicit activity.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to **defer HB 1563 HD2** and maintain a clear and consistent statewide regulatory framework.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

Jodi Rementer
TransPac Group
Honolulu, Hawai'i
On behalf of Hawai'i wholesalers and retail partners

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/4/2026 10:56:04 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ken Yonemitsu	Ala Wai Service	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Ken Yonemitsu, and I am the owner of Ala Wai Service, a locally owned convenience store and gas station. I respectfully submit this testimony in opposition to HB1563. Independent gas stations and small convenience stores are becoming fewer and farther between in Hawaii because of the many challenges that come with operating a small business in such a costly market. We already work hard to comply with existing state laws and regulations, and adding another layer of state enforcement would increase costs and make it even more difficult for small retailers like me to keep up with complicated and changing rules.

Another concern is that policies like this can unintentionally push customers toward the black market instead of licensed local retailers. In efforts to be more responsible I have installed age verification scanners for checking ID's.

When legal products become harder for responsible stores to sell, customers will look for other ways to purchase them. This hurts small local businesses that follow the law and also results in lost tax revenue for the State of Hawaii.

Lastly, I believe Hawaii should align with the federal framework already established by the FDA. The FDA goes through a rigorous scientific process before authorizing products for sale. If a product has already been authorized at the federal level, retailers should be able to sell those products without additional county regulations that create confusion and inconsistency across the state. For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to oppose HB1563. Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony.

Ken Yonemitsu

Ala Wai Service

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 10:20:55 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Valerie Smalley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Vice Chair,

I am writing in strong support of HB1563 HD2:

- Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable deaths.
- 1,400 people die in Hawai‘i each year from tobacco use, cutting a decade off the average smoker’s life.
- Half of smokers die from tobacco-related disease.
- In Hawai‘i more than 13% of high schoolers and 10% of middle schoolers reported using e-cigarettes in 2023.
- 82% of registered Hawai‘i voters support restoring county authority.

Thank you Valerie Smalley

Judith F. Clark
48-218 Kamehameha Highway
808-499-9966
Judithforceclark@gmail.com
Kaneohe, Hawaii 96744

March 2, 2026

To: Representative Chris Todd, Chair
And members of the Committee of Consumer Protection and Commerce

Testimony in Support of HB 1563 HD 2 Relating to Tobacco Products

As a community advocate and the former Executive Director of Hawaii Youth Services Network, I strongly support HB 1563 HD 2, which gives counties additional authority to regulate tobacco products.

Hawaii has a high rate of youth vaping and manufacturers target youth in their marketing efforts. Allowing counties to implement bans on the sale of flavored tobacco products will reduce youth tobacco usage and prevent the serious health problems that result from tobacco use.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Judith F. Clark, MPH

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 6:37:23 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please pass this important piece of legislation for the health and wellness of our keiki and community. Mahalo

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 8:09:26 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brian Char	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of our locally owned convenience store, I respectfully submit testimony in opposition to HB1563. As a small business serving our community, we already operate within a highly regulated environment and work diligently to comply with all existing state requirements. The addition of further regulatory layers and enforcement mandates would create significant operational challenges. Retailers like us must interpret and implement complex rules related to licensing, taxation, product authorization, and age verification. Adding another layer of regulation—particularly if it differs from current state standards—creates confusion, increases compliance risk, and diverts time and resources away from serving customers and maintaining lawful operations.

HB1563 would also lead to costly increases in enforcement expectations at a time when enforcement is already a challenge. Small retailers do not have in-house legal teams or compliance departments. We rely on clear, consistent statewide standards to ensure we are following the law. When regulations become fragmented or expand in scope without sufficient guidance and education, it increases the likelihood of unintentional violations and places undue financial strain on locally owned businesses. Compliance costs—whether through additional training, administrative processes, or potential penalties—directly impact our ability to reinvest in our business and our community.

Finally, the future impact of potential county-level regulation on products that are currently authorized under state law creates uncertainty that hinders long-term planning. Our store depends on predictable policies to manage inventory, contracts, and staffing. If authorized products become subject to shifting local regulations, it jeopardizes revenue stability and, ultimately, our ability to maintain local employees. We employ members of this community who rely on steady work and consistent hours. Policies that create regulatory patchwork and uncertainty place those jobs at risk. For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to defer or reject HB1563.

Brian Char

Luke Itomura

March 3, 2026

House Committee on Finance

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB1563

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair
Takenouchi, and Members of the
Committee on Finance,



**Photo of Collected Vapes from Schools Across
Hawaii**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **strong support of HB1563**. I am Luke Itomura, and I am a high school student. I am testifying to express my strong support for HB1563. Today, I stand alongside numerous Hawaii youth united against the alarming youth-flavored vaping epidemic that threatens our health and future. We collectively believe that passing this legislation is an essential step in protecting the health and future of the youth.

At just 13 years old, I was offered a flavored vape by another youth for the first time. This youth smoker used many tactics to peer pressure me into trying it. Their main tactic was telling me it was a delicious Hawaiian Sun flavor; a local favorite. At that moment, I realized how easy it is to fall for the appeal of flavored vapes. My friends in the sixth grade had also mentioned that they were offered flavored vapes. For people as young as twelve, flavors like watermelon or Jolly Rancher are an enticing death trap. What starts as innocent curiosity can turn into a lifelong addiction filled with lung cancer, strokes, heart disease, and countless other diseases. There is no other product on the market that kills up to 50% of its users who don't quit ([WHO](#)).

Advocates have worked to pass bills that end the sale of flavored tobacco in the City and County of Honolulu, the County of Hawai'i, and the County of Maui. The counties have given the state a clear message to protect our keiki and restore their authority to regulate tobacco sales by passing HB1563. Past precedent proves that **bills that end the sale of flavored tobacco are effective**. A study published in JAMA Network evaluating statewide restrictions on flavored e-cigarette sales in the US from 2014 to 2020 found that statewide restrictions were associated with reductions of 25.01% to 31.26% in total e-cigarette unit sales compared to states without restrictions ([Ali et al. 2022](#)). Thus, it is clear that similar results will yield from the passage of HB1563, protecting our innocent keiki from Big Tobacco

Many opposers bring up the argument that Hawaii would lose tax revenue by banning flavored tobacco products. However, the full picture must be taken into account. The reality is

that while the state would likely see a reduction of tax revenue in the short term, **long-term cost savings would be substantial**. A report by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids ([CTFK](#)) found the following:

Annual healthcare costs in Hawaii directly caused by smoking	\$611 million
Medicaid costs caused by smoking in Hawaii	\$152.3 million
Residents' state & federal tax burden from smoking-caused government expenditures	\$955 per household
Smoking-caused productivity losses in Hawaii (from smoking-caused premature death and illness that prevent people from working)	\$1.1 billion

By passing HB1563, Hawaii can reduce these costs, thereby saving more in the long run. A study by Stanford University shows that Hawaii can expect these savings: it found that prohibiting flavored tobacco leads to savings in healthcare expenses and increased labor productivity ([Proctor 2013](#)). **84% of Hawaii registered voters support ending the sale of flavored tobacco products**, justifying that this is a highly wanted policy ([Ward Research](#)).

Flavored tobacco has no place in the hands of the youth. Passing HB1563 is the first step in securing a tobacco-free future.

Thank you for your time.

Mahalo,

Luke Itomura

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 8:59:39 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anthony Orozco	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The purpose of this bill is to **let the tail wag the dog**. Is that really what the Legislature wants, where the City and County is more powerful than the State? I think this bill is a really bad idea.

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 9:01:50 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jon Fia	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill. Tobacco sales should be enforced with one unified state rule or guidelines. Allowing counties to enforce creates many problems for the retailers. For the consumers, it creates confusion and also could create a black market just between the counties. In the end, the only one who gets hurt is the retailer who is trying to make a living.

Another question I have, is whether the individual counties even has the manpower to enforce a different set of rules? Hawaii is famous for making new rules/laws with no real enforcement around it. Dont make a rule that isnt really going to be enforced.

Thanks for your time and hearing my concerns.

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 9:47:32 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristin Mills	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

As a resident and taxpayer in Pukalani Hawaii, as well as a parent, health educator and epidemiologist, I am in strong support of HB1563 HD2.

We need to repeal tobacco preemption and restore county authority to regulate tobacco products. When laws are preempted, they have no force or effect. In the case of tobacco control, local (or county-level) control is very important. Because of the importance of local control, the tobacco industry and its allies have historically used, and continue to use, preemptive strategies to prevent smoke-free laws, youth access, retailer licensing restrictions, advertising and promotion regulations, and similar policies.

When a state has preemption, it takes away the “local voice” and invalidate many local tobacco control policies that represent years of effort. Moreover, once enacted, preemptive laws are traditionally difficult to repeal, and can affect the legal and advocacy landscape for years. When comparing states with and without preemption, research has shown that preemption has resulted in health and social norm disparities.

In terms of tax dollars coming into the state from tobacco sales, (1) other states that have strong tobacco laws, including flavor bans, show that people still spend the same amount of money in their state, just on other products, and (2) when considering the potential of lost funds from tobacco, Hawaii also needs to look at the true costs of healthcare and lost income due to illnesses related to using tobacco. While this last paragraph is not directly related to reversing preemption, it’s important as our efforts have been denied in the past because of statewide concerns over lost income if control is given back to the counties.

Our local voice has been preempted for too long. We have a serious tobacco and vaping epidemic occurring, especially with our youth. And each county has spoken... we want our control back. I am just one voice of many Hawaii voters who want our local voice back.

Please represent what the people of Hawaii want and support HB1563 HD2 so we can get back our local voice regarding tobacco control. It is the right thing to do!

Sincerely,

Kristin Mills

Taxpayer, parent, epidemiologist, and health educator

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 9:54:04 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Allan Lee	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I'll be reading my testimony via zoom

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 10:27:26 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emma Waters	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Writing in strong support of this very important bill to restore county authority to regulate harmful products. Vaping and tobacco use in general are big problems here on the Big Island and we need the authority to regulate this damaging industry to protect our keiki. Mahalo.

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 10:29:05 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jake J. Watkins	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Maintaining State Control allows a level playing field for small businesses.

HB 1563

I am writing as a retired neighbor island pediatrician in strong support of HB 1563 to reverse preemption of County powers to regulate health issues locally. Since 2018, when the State Legislature voted for this usurpation of County regulation of the sale of tobacco products, the Legislature, at the urging of the tobacco lobby, has found itself unable to enact a tobacco flavor ban . Flavor bans have been proven to greatly reduce electronic tobacco use in children in other states that have been less reluctant to protect their children. Already Hawaii has one of the highest rates of vaping in the country, - 13% of high school and 10% of middle school students report e-cigarette use - and the neighbor islands are suffering even more. Our schools are staggering under the burden of electronic tobacco devices. And yet, our counties are prohibited from enacting any tobacco control measures whatsoever. Previously this was not the case, and Kauai had great success in decreasing cigarette use among both teens and adults.

Please give our counties back the ability to address our local tobacco issues and protect our citizens, especially children, from the ravages of tobacco use. 82% of registered Hawaii voters support restoring county authority to regulate tobacco.

Linda Weiner, MD
Kauai

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 11:17:32 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jay Ihara	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Jay Ihara, and I strongly support HB1563 HD2. Hawai'i County, Maui County, and Honolulu City and County have passed bills that prohibit the sale of flavored tobacco products. In Hawai'i, over 13% of high school students and 10% of middle school students reported using e-cigarettes in 2023. Furthermore, schools have reported that elementary students as young as third grade are using e-cigarettes. By restoring the counties' authority to regulate the sale of flavored tobacco products, we can make it more difficult for youth to access e-cigarettes. An overwhelming 82% of registered Hawai'i voters support restoring this authority. Thank you for your time and consideration.

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 11:23:04 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Donita Garcia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

- Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable deaths.
- 1,400 people die in Hawai‘i each year from tobacco use, cutting a decade off the average smoker’s life.
- Half of smokers die from tobacco-related disease.
- In Hawai‘i more than 13% of high schoolers and 10% of middle schoolers reported using e-cigarettes in 2023.
- 82% of registered Hawai‘i voters support restoring county authority.

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 11:41:55 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Scott Stensrud	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for hearing HB1563 HD2.

I strongly support HB1563 HD2 which would restore the counties authority to regulate tobacco products. Youth from across the state have worked with 3 counties to pass laws more restrictive than the state to help protect their communities and 82% of registered Hawai'i voters support restoring county authority.

Please pass HB1563 HD2 to restore county level authority over tobacco sales and allow communities to do what is needed to protect their keki.

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 12:04:54 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sabrina Spencer	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill will cause hardships for business that depend on the State keeping the law equal and stable. The legislature promised us that the State would control tobacco legislation and we depend on the State keeping that promise.

Thank You - Stay Maui Strong

Aloha Chair and Members of the House Finance Committee,

My name is Malia Lehua Ball. I am a resident of Wai‘anae on the west side of O‘ahu and a nationally Certified Tobacco Treatment Specialist with over 10 years of experience helping individuals overcome nicotine addiction. I submit this testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of HB1563 HD2.

Tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable death in Hawai‘i. Approximately 1,400 people in our state die each year from tobacco-related disease, and half of long-term smokers will die from a tobacco-related illness. These are not just statistics. These are our family members, our patients, and our neighbors.

In 2023, more than 13 percent of Hawai‘i high school students and 10 percent of middle school students reported using e-cigarettes. As someone who works directly with individuals struggling with nicotine addiction, I can tell you that today’s products are highly addictive and intentionally designed to appeal to youth.

I live in Wai‘anae and I am deeply concerned about the rapid expansion of vape shops in our community. A new vape shop is opening on Farrington Highway at a busy intersection near my home. The same company recently opened another store in Nānākuli and already operates another location less than a mile away from this new site near Farrington Highway. Our communities on the west side are already disproportionately impacted by health disparities. The saturation of tobacco and vape retailers in our neighborhoods only worsens those inequities.

I see youth vaping regularly. I work with adults who started vaping as teens and are now severely addicted. I am tired of watching our young people become lifelong customers of an industry that profits from addiction.

Local counties must have the authority to regulate the density and placement of these retailers to protect our keiki and our communities.

Restoring county authority is not about prohibition. It is about local control, health equity, and protecting future generations. Polling shows that 82 percent of registered Hawai‘i voters support restoring county authority.

Please stand with our communities, restore county authority, and vote YES on HB1563 HD2. Our keiki deserve better.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Malia Lehua Ball
Wai‘anae Resident
Certified Tobacco Treatment Specialist

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 1:02:37 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

I Strongly Oppose HB1563

The State is best able to fairly review these types of bills and has the experience to make decisions better.

Sincerely,

Brian Santiago

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 1:07:50 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
lynne matusow	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please accept this as testimony in support of HB1563. We must allow the counties to establish regulations that meet their needs regarding the regulation of tobacco products. Some of them want rules that are more stringent than those of the state, and it should be up to each county to set higher standards for the benefit of their residents.

lynne matusow

March 4, 2026

Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of HB 1563, HD2 “Relating to Tobacco Products”

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi and members of the House Committee on Finance,

I am writing in strong support of HI 1563, HD2 which would amend a law passed during the waning days of the 2018 State Legislative Session through House Bill 1895, which underwent last minute changes and did not receive a public hearing or allow public comment, and amended an otherwise well-meaning and worthy bill to fund needed kidney dialysis centers in the state with a provision that harms public health and helps the tobacco industry. This last minute-added provision blocked (preempts) county governments in Hawaii from passing their own ordinances to reduce tobacco use, including measures addressing the sale of candy-flavored tobacco products and menthol cigarettes that attract kids.

Most of Hawaii’s most effective tobacco-related laws that have contributed to reductions in youth and adult smoking rates began as ordinances passed by Hawaii’s counties. Some of those ordinances, aimed at addressing local public health threats, proved their effectiveness at the county level for years before being replicated by state/and or federal laws.

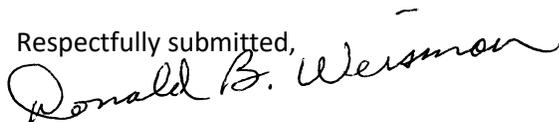
The tobacco industry for years, on the other hand, attempted to advance state legislation that would preempt local government’s home rule on tobacco issues. In fact, former Governor John Waihee vetoed such a bill after it passed through the legislative process citing the need for county governments to be able to address important health issues that affect their communities. Tobacco, which remains the leading preventable cause of death in Hawaii, and which costs the state and its taxpayers over a half-billion dollars annually in healthcare costs, certainly qualifies as a public health threat deserving of both local and state policy attention.

Local governments should be able to determine their own needs for tobacco policies, and the state legislature should support those efforts by establishing a floor, not a ceiling, on what local governments can do to address those needs. Some 1,400 Hawaii residents die each year from tobacco use, and 21,000 kids alive today in Hawaii will die prematurely from tobacco use if nothing is done to reduce it.

HB 1563, HD2 would correct the last minute provision (which today would be deemed illegal if attempted following a state Supreme Court judgement declaring such legislative maneuvers unconstitutional) added to legislation in 2018 which provided the tobacco industry its long sought goal to funnel important, progressive tobacco-control policies only through the state legislative level. There it can focus its resources to defeat those measures, and away from the counties where the industry struggles to compete with community grassroots support for those issues.

I urge your strong support of HB 1563, HD2 and ask that you return county home rule on this most vital public health issue back to local communities.

Respectfully submitted,



Don Weisman
Kailua, HI

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 1:45:23 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Ball	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Todd and Vice-Chair Takenouchi,

I am writing to voice my full support for HB1563, which is one necessary step to protect Hawaii's keiki from the public health plague of electronic smoking devices. As a teacher of teenagers, I have heard too many stories of parents' distress at the explicit marketing tactics used by tobacco companies to hook kids on these devices. Prohibiting these devices will ensure they stay out of the reach of many kids while simultaneously protecting our waste disposal infrastructure. The counties have spoken on this issue in brave defiance of national lobbying efforts to keep our kids addicted, and I urge the Committee to advance this necessary bill.

With aloha,

Dave Ball

Waiialae-Kahala

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 1:55:08 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Katie Folio	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the House Committee on Finance,

My name is Katie Folio, a mother and resident of Kula, Maui, and I submit testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of this measure to restore county authority to regulate the sale of tobacco products.

Preemption in tobacco control has long been recognized as a strategy used by the tobacco industry to block local public health protections. Historically, county-level policies have led the way on smoke-free laws, youth access restrictions, and other measures that were later adopted statewide. Local innovation has been a driving force behind Hawai‘i’s reductions in smoking, improved health outcomes, and decreased healthcare costs.

All four counties have already passed flavored tobacco restrictions that are unable to take effect due to state preemption. These laws reflect the will of local communities and were developed in response to rising youth vaping and nicotine addiction. Restoring county authority would not mandate any specific policy at the state level; it would simply allow counties to respond to the needs of their own communities.

Youth use of electronic smoking devices and high-nicotine products has increased dramatically in recent years. Flavored products play a central role in youth initiation. Without the ability to regulate the retail sale of these products locally, counties are prevented from implementing evidence-based strategies designed to reduce youth addiction and its long-term health consequences.

As a former teenage smoker, I know firsthand how critical strong public health protections are. The tobacco control measures enacted in the 1990s, such as clean indoor air laws, tax increases, and flavor restrictions, created the environment that enabled me to quit. Those policies saved lives and reduced long-term healthcare costs across our state. We should not tie the hands of counties seeking to continue that progress.

From a fiscal perspective, preventing nicotine addiction and tobacco-related disease reduces long-term public expenditures in Medicaid and other publicly funded health programs. Restoring local authority supports prevention, which is far less costly than treatment.

I respectfully urge you to pass this measure and restore counties' ability to protect the health of their communities, particularly our keiki.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Katie Folio
Mother and Resident
Kula, Maui, Hawai'i

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 2:08:14 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melissa Magonigle	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in **strong support of HB 1563 HD2**, which restores county authority to regulate the sale of tobacco products and allows local laws restricting flavored tobacco products to take effect.

Hawai‘i’s counties have long been national leaders in protecting public health. The 2018 state preemption law removed local authority to respond to urgent health threats in their own communities. Today, Honolulu, Hawai‘i, and Maui Counties have already passed laws to end the sale of flavored tobacco products — policies that cannot move forward unless this Legislature restores county authority. Passing HB 1563 HD2 will allow communities to implement the protections they have already chosen through their local democratic processes.

Flavored tobacco products are specifically designed to attract youth. Candy, fruit, and mint flavors mask the harshness of tobacco and make nicotine addiction easier to start and harder to stop. National data show that nearly **9 out of 10 youth who use e-cigarettes are using flavored products**, highlighting how central flavors are to youth initiation.

The public-health consequences are significant:

- Tobacco use remains the **leading cause of preventable death** in the United States and Hawai‘i.
- Over **1,400 Hawai‘i residents die each year** due to tobacco-related disease, and many lose approximately a decade of life expectancy.
- Half of long-term smokers die from tobacco-related illnesses.
- In Hawai‘i, more than **13% of high school students and 10% of middle school students** reported e-cigarette use in recent youth surveys, showing the continued reach of nicotine products among our youth.
- Youth nicotine addiction disrupts healthy brain development and increases the risk of long-term dependence

Communities across Hawai‘i are ready to act. County governments, youth advocates, educators, and public health professionals have already done the work to pass local ordinances that reflect their residents’ priorities. Restoring county authority simply allows these local decisions to be implemented — a principle strongly supported by Hawai‘i voters, with polling showing broad public support for returning regulatory authority to counties. For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to **pass HB 1563 HD2**.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support.

Passing this bill will help prevent a new generation from becoming addicted to nicotine and will empower counties to continue leading with innovative, health-focused policy solutions.

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 2:21:56 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

In support of. Thank you.

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 2:46:21 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Strongly Opposed. The legislature is the best place for these types of bills to be heard.

Thanks,

Lani H.

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 2:53:24 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bob Grossmann, PhD	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The state public health infrastructure has gradually, weakened over the last 35 years (e.g., less outreach and health education on risks of smoking/vapping).

The bill would allow the counties to respond in potentially new ways to reduce harm-reduction.

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 3:51:35 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy Manali-Leonardo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a retired RN and I am in strong support of HB 1563.

Please allow the 2018 law to end so that counties can act to enforce the smoking products that are medically harming especially our youth and others who inhale secondhand smoke via our tradewinds and close condo and houses proximity.

Preventable health events are key.

Let our counties act by supporting this Bill.

Thank you.

Nancy Manali-Leonardo

808-542-1556

Date: March 2, 2026

To: The Honorable Chris Todd, Chair
The Honorable Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Finance

Re: Support for **HB1563 HD2**, Relating to Tobacco Products

Hrg: Wednesday March 4, 2026 at 10:00 am via Videoconference Conference Room 308

Aloha House Committee on Finance,

As a parent, community member and healthcare professional I am writing in **strong support of HB1563 HD2**, which repeals the preemption on county ordinances that regulate the sale of cigarettes, tobacco products, and electronic smoking devices.

Hawai'i's counties have historically been national leaders in tobacco regulation. However, since 2018, the counties have been blocked from addressing emerging issues involving tobacco products, including the use and impact of flavored tobacco products on our keiki.

Flavored tobacco products, especially e-cigarettes, attract children and teens. 90% of current middle and high school students who use e-cigarettes are using flavored products.

HB1563 HD2 will allow laws ending the sale of flavored tobacco products, which have already been passed in Honolulu, Hawai'i and Maui counties, to take effect.

82% of registered Hawai'i voters support returning this authority to their counties.

I **strongly support HB1563 HD2**, respectfully ask you to pass it out of committee.

Many thanks for your consideration,

Forrest Batz, PharmD
Keaau, HI

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee on Finance,

I am in support of HB1563 to restore county authority.

In my school and community, I have seen that vaping takes valuable time away from students' class time and leisure time. It is one of the worst habits a youth can pick up and it stays with them for the rest of their life, negatively impacting their health day by day. Moreover, even if someone does not vape, it still impacts youth because of the peer pressure surrounding them. When everyone around you is vaping it becomes more appealing.

I was in 8th grade when I first started vaping and this was a habit that I carried with me until my freshman year of high school. I had just got accepted to Kamehameha Kapālama and I brought my vape with me. Within a month of attending school, I got suspended for possession and drug usage. I could have gotten expelled and any chance I ever had of getting a good education and scholarships to college would have been gone just like that. It was after this that I made the decision to quit. But it was only after a horrible and life changing situation that moved me to do so. If I had not gotten in trouble at school I am not sure if I ever would have quit. Ultimately, vaping is so addictive and many people that do vape don't have a reason to quit until they are standing face to face with the consequences. This is why it is so important to stop the issue at the root. We need to get rid of accessibility because kids find ways to acquire tobacco products one way or another. As someone who used to vape, it's not worth it and it needs to be taken off the shelves immediately.

I hope you will consider stronger laws that heavily regulate the sales of tobacco products, or better yet, do away with them all together. It is crucial to protect our children, we are the future. Give power back to the county and let them protect their people!

Iwalani

Kailua-Kona

Aloha Honorable Chair and members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Gregory John Cachero, and I am a senior at Radford High School. I am in strong support of HB1563, which restores the county's authority to regulate tobacco sales / ends the sale of disposable e-cigarettes.

For far too long, I have noticed the rapid increase of e-cigarette use among youth. What was once alarming has now become almost commonplace in our schools and communities. In Hawai'i alone, 1,400 people die each year from tobacco-related illnesses, and troubling trends show that 8 out of 10 youth who have tried a tobacco product began with a flavored one. These products are designed to appeal to young people, and their easy accessibility only fuels addiction.

This issue is personal to me. As I have friends who have vaped, and I have seen firsthand how nicotine addiction has negatively affected their health, focus, and social lives. What often starts as curiosity quickly turns into dependence, and many young people do not realize the long-term consequences until it is too late.

This bill is not about punishment, it is about prevention and protection. By restoring local authority to regulate tobacco sales/ eliminating disposable e-cigarettes, you have the opportunity to safeguard the health of Hawai'i's youth and future generations.

I respectfully urge you to support this bill.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Gregory John
12th Grade
Honolulu

Chair Chris Todd, Vice Chair Jenna Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee on Finance,

I write this in full support of HB1563.

I am now a senior in high school, and stepping back onto that campus filled me with powerful childhood memories. That moment was shattered when my former kindergarten teacher showed me a gallon sized bag filled with disposable vapes taken from students. Children as young as kindergarten are being exposed to and harmed by vaping. That reality is unacceptable.

At my current school, Baldwin High School on Maui, the crisis is impossible to ignore. My peers and I avoid bathrooms during instructional hours because we fear walking into groups of students vaping. It is nearly impossible to enter a classroom without knowing that at least one vape is present. Vaping has become so common that it no longer shocks students, and that normalization is both sad and terrifying.

The most devastating consequence of this epidemic is the lives it destroys. Two years ago, in October, we lost a close friend. She was someone I grew up with and someone whose family was deeply connected to mine. I spent countless afternoons with her at the travel agency her parents owned, a place my family often visited. Out of respect for her and her family, I will not share her name.

She was consumed by the addictive grip of vaping and crushed by the harsh and judgmental environment that surrounds youth who struggle. She felt trapped, isolated, and unseen. She took her own life. Her death was not inevitable. It was the result of a system that failed to protect her.

Please do not allow her story to fade into silence. This issue has gone too far. It is happening in our schools, in our classrooms, and in our communities right now. Ending the youth vaping epidemic is a responsibility we owe to the friend we lost and to the lives that can still be saved.

I write this in full support of HB1563.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Jeremiah
Wailuku

Chair - Representative Chris Todd
Vice Chair - Representative Jenna Takenouchi
Members of the Committee on Finance

I write this in full support of HB1563.

In my school or community, I have noticed that vaping has become a trend and is often treated like it's harmless. I have seen students vaping in the bathrooms, at parties, and sometimes even just discussing it among themselves. This has created a trend even though the trend is not healthy or positive. Another thing is how easily youth can access a disposable vape.

Flavored tobacco products stand out to youth because of their lack of taste and appearance compared to plain/regular tobacco. Flavors and designs make teens think that products are fun, safe, and not addictive. However, it misleads teens into believing that it is safe without a full understanding of health risks and addictiveness.

I have seen how vaping affects my peers by increasing their stress, addiction, and distractions while in school. Some find it difficult to get through the day without having to vape, and both the curiosity and the addiction to vape have life-altering consequences.

One experience that showed me how serious this issue is was when I saw how casual vaping has become among students my age. I've seen peers rely on e-cigarettes to get through the school day, hitting them between classes or during breaks. What really stood out was when I was in 8th grade, just trying to go to the bathroom when school started and seeing 3 girls vaping. They saw me and said "You won't tell right?" and since I was new to the school and scared so I just nodded my head. They proceed to ask if I want a hit, I say no and leave. From then on I had seen that people vaping in the bathrooms was a common recurrence. Because of a vape, I couldn't even use the bathroom in peace and this is just in middle school.

Vaping causes problems for young people such as increased stress, dependence on nicotine, and difficulty focusing in school. I've also seen how it creates pressure for others to vape just to fit, even when they have no urge to do so. It changes the whole school environment and makes those unhealthy behaviors feel normal.

Local governments should have the authority to regulate tobacco sales because only the local government can truly reflect the needs of the people. The local government knows the people it serves best, especially the youth. In fact, the local government is the closest to the people it serves, and it is the very body that should be able to address the rapid rise of the youth's use of

vape products. By depriving the local government of the said regulatory power, the local government cannot serve the youth well.

In Hawai'i, three out of four countries have voted in favor of our bans, demonstrating public support for preventing youth from flavored tobacco products. They are the voice of our communities, health experts, and our young people who see firsthand how flavors attract and hook youth. The fact that most countries have acted shows that this is not a controversial issue- it is a shared priority.

I hope you will consider stronger laws that safeguard our youth against nicotine addiction. Please restore power to regulate tobacco sales to country governments and banning sales of those little electronic cigarettes. Stiffer country laws are necessary to prevent our children from being marketed with harmful tobacco products.

I hope future keiki won't have to deal with the pressures of vaping in school or dealing with health hazards of a nicotine high in general. I hope that no child feels as though vaping is just another necessity of being young and growing up.

I hope Hawai'i can be a safer place for kids by prioritizing youth health and restricting access to flavored and disposable tobacco products that are targeting our youth and trying to lure them into nicotine addiction and disease. Lawmakers are now presenting an opportunity to build a healthier school environment, community, and future for our youth.

Lily
Kapolei

Chair Chris Todd, Vice Chair Jenna Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee on Finance,

I am writing in full support of HB1563

In my school, I have witnessed peers fall unconscious due to the impacts of tobacco. I have witnessed multiple ambulances, police, and emergency responders rush to the gates of my school; causing panic and uncertainty. Not only is tobacco harmful for youth during immediate usage, but impacts the rest of their lives.

This issue matters to me personally because I have lost a family member to tobacco when I was younger. I remember sitting on the carpet with my younger cousin as we got told the obstructing news. Ever since that moment, I swore to myself that I would never put a finger on a tobacco product. To know that 2.25 million U.S. middle and high school students reported use of a tobacco product in 2024 worries me about the impact tobacco businesses grasp on the future generation.

In Hawai'i, three out of four counties have already passed flavor bans, which proves the urgency and reality of this tobacco epidemic.

I hope our future generations can live a full life without the disruptance or temptations of the tobacco industry. I believe our keiki should not be profited off of, but safeguarded through strong public health policies, education, and community-driven prevention efforts. Please pass HB1563.

Mia

Honolulu

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Roxan. I am a high school student from the Big Island, and I am here in support of HB1563 to restore county authority to regulate tobacco sales.

What urged me to speak today was something my sister told me about a coworker who couldn't get through a single shift without his vape. One day, he forgot it and asked his mom to drive from his house back to his workplace, just to bring it to him. When she told me this, his situation stayed with me. Not because it was perplexing, but because it felt normal.

The way we've validated this dependency worries me. We youth grow up watching adults rely on these products, and after a while it just feels like a part of everyday life. Kids in bathrooms 24/7 and asking other students if they carry a vape. These products are not harmless, they're already causing harm. In Hawai'i, about 1,400 people die each year from tobacco-related causes. They're sold as a safer alternative to tobacco, but they hook just as fast, and leave behind waste. Right in front of us, we can see the harm in schools, workplaces, and everywhere we go. Time is not the issue, children's lives are. Restoring county authority would let us stop this before more harm is perceived as normal.

As a student from Hilo, this step is necessary for the health of our keiki, our kupuna, and ourselves.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Mahalo.

Roxan Gel

Hilo

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in full support of HB1563.

My name is Brielle and I live on the Island of O'ahu. I am concerned about youth vaping because it will only get worse from what is happening in my community unless we act to stop vaping. It makes me worried about the health of youth and the environment that it affects. One example I can share is that, when I was at a store, I saw a younger girl (high school) buying a vape and got the most colorful vape. This is bad because the color and flavors attract our youth. Your support matters to students like me because you can make a difference to stop the issue. I hope you will consider stronger laws that prevent any form of vaping and cigarettes. I hope Hawai'i can be a safer place for kids. Mahalo for listening to my testimony.

Brielle
Grade 8

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Mao and I am a middle school student on O'ahu. I am writing in full support of HB1563.

I am concerned about youth vaping because I heard that vaping is very addicting and can result in a very high risk of diseases like cancer and even deaths. Vaping is way more addicting than tobacco and has many dangerous chemicals that get you a higher chance of cancer. One example I can share is from my friend in high school. Since students vape in school bathrooms, other students don't want to use it because they are scared of getting bullied by seeing the people vape. This results in students having to wait to use the bathroom until they get home. Helping to stop youth vaping would make our community healthier because it solves many problems. For example, there are many physical and mental problems from vaping, so stopping vapes could get people to maintain a healthy body. Stopping vapes could reduce pollution too.

I hope that you will consider passing HB1563 for kids to have a safer place to live. Thank you so much for caring about Hawai'i's youth.

Mao
Grade 8

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in full support of HB1563.

I am Airi and I am a middle schooler on O'ahu island. I am really concerned about youth vaping because it is very addicting and can affect our health really badly. Even if the student is not the smoker, inhaling the smoke can damage your health really bad. A time I realized vaping was a serious issue was when I heard about kids smoking at my school. My friends told me there was a kid smoking in the restroom. I never thought middle schoolers would vape, especially at school! Your support matters a lot because tobacco can crash that person's life. Once they touch tobacco, they will get addicted and can't go back to their healthy body.

I hope you will consider making the laws stronger so future students will have a bright healthy life. Please pass HB1563. Thank you so much for caring about Hawai'i's youth.

Airi

Grade 8

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in full support of HB1563.

My name is Elena and I live on the island of O'ahu. It makes me worried when I see all the problems vaping causes, especially in teens. When teens start vaping, they get addicted and eventually get hurt because of it. A time I realized vaping was a serious issue was when I was driving through the city and I saw vape shops with teens sitting outside, holding vapes in their hands. Your support matters to students like me because we know that vaping harms people, but some students don't know that. With your help, we could restore county authority to regulate tobacco sales. Many of the counties have ended the sale of flavored tobacco and you can allow them to regulate that by passing HB1563. I hope future students won't have to deal with seeing or hearing about their classmates vaping. Thank you for caring about Hawai'i's youth

Elena

Grade 7

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in full support of HB1563.

My name is Catherine and I'm concerned about youth vaping because it can cause major problems to the bodies of those who vape. The lungs, heart, and even the brain can be damaged. This can cause life-threatening changes and even death. But even though I don't vape, it still affects me because the loss of thousands of lives from just vaping is something I don't want to keep happening. Your support matters to students like me because being able to help stop this huge problem can benefit us even more by saving lives. I hope you will consider stronger laws that are able to protect younger kids from vaping more successfully in the future. Mahalo for listening to my testimony.

Catherine

Grade 7

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in full support of HB1563.

My name is 'Aukai and I'm in 7th grade. In my school and community, I've noticed that a lot of people vape around the community. At school, people vape in the bathroom so they won't get caught. Even if I don't vape, it still affects me because vaping can cause deaths, illnesses, and people and teens can become addicted to them over time. Your support matters to students like me because we can stop illnesses and deaths happening around the world and stop teens from vaping. I hope Hawai'i can be a safer place for kids by restoring county authority to regulate tobacco sales. If we can stop this, we can stop deaths, illnesses, and lung damage.

Mahalo for listening to my testimony.

'Aukai
Grade 7

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in full support of HB1563.

My name is Evan and I'm in 8th grade on the island of O'ahu. It makes me worried when there's youth on my island who are exposed to harsh vape chemicals that will affect their lives because there are companies who are targeting this audience group for money. A time when I realized vaping was a serious issue was when there were relatives of mine who couldn't last a simple 20 minutes without it. I believe you can help by taking action to become more strict on who can access vapes. I hope the outcome will lower the tobacco rates in all schools on O'ahu. The counties have passed a flavor ban in ¾ counties. Allow them to have authority to regulate sales.

Thank you for caring about Hawai'i's youth.

Evan

Grade 8

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in full support of HB1563.

My name is Paul and I am concerned about youth vaping. My reason for this is because my mom vapes and people at our school also vape. I'm speaking up for the kids that get addicted. Vaping within youth could be stopped because of their health and sports / people of sports teams are affected because their lungs are affected because of it. Also they can ruin their chances of having a good life. Please allow the counties to regulate tobacco sales by passing HB1563.

Paul

Grade 7

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in full support of HB1563.

My name is Kellan and I'm in 8th grade. I am concerned about youth vaping because it isn't good for them. One example I can share is my friend that I used to skate with had become addicted to vapes. It was a problem because he couldn't go 5 minutes without it. He also couldn't breathe when he got injured. I hope you will consider stronger laws that will stop youth vaping. Mahalo for listening to my testimony.

Kellan

Grade 8

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 6:47:19 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeff Stevens	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee,

The City is reckless on this topic. It will cause a lot of conflicts and leave the State helpless.

Regards,

Jeff Stevens

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 4:35:59 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice-Chair Takenouchi, and members of the Committee on Finance:

I am in strong support of HB 1563 HD2 to return local control to the counties as it relates to tobacco products. Please let the people decide on how best to address these important public health issues.

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable deaths and 1,400 people die in Hawai'i each year from tobacco use, cutting a decade off the average smoker's life. Half of smokers die from tobacco-related disease.

Unfortunately, in Hawai'i more than 13% of high schoolers and 10% of middle schoolers reported using e-cigarettes in 2023.

Our counties have been national leaders in tobacco regulation and it's time to end the 2018 state law blocking us from acting. Please listen to the people as 82% of registered Hawai'i voters support restoring county authority.

Mahalo for your attention and support of HB1563 HD2.

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 4:41:35 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

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HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 5:49:08 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cindy Nettles	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose all of this bill. Our liberties need protecting. HB1563 will create a compliance mess and trash our freedoms. Please don't let it leave commiitee. Mahalo.

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 6:10:59 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dallas Nelson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill belongs in the trash. Stop taking away our rights!

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 11:08:52 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bryan Mih	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Bryan Mih and I am a parent, pediatrician, and the medical director of the Kapi'olani Smokefree Families Program. For the health of our keiki and their families, I strongly support this measure. E-cigarettes or "vapes" are addicting increasing numbers of keiki to nicotine. The ability of each county to introduce new rules has a proven track record of improving the health of our population. These include increasing the age to purchase tobacco products to 21 years old, clean air laws, and smoke-free cars while keiki are present.

Nicotine is a highly addictive drug that impacts the adolescent brain, reducing impulse control and affecting mood. Once young people are addicted to nicotine, it is extremely difficult to quit. 90% of current middle and high school students that use e-cigarettes are using flavored e-cigarettes.

By allowing counties to enact stricter tobacco and nicotine control regulations than those found at the state level, we can more effectively protect the health of our keiki and their families. There is nothing more important than the health of our young people.

Please support this important bill. Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Bryan Mih, MD MPH FAAP

Pediatrician

Medical Director, Kapi'olani Smokefree Families

Testimony for HB1563 HD2, Relating to Tobacco Products

HEARING DATE: March 04, 2026

TO: House Committee on Finance

FROM: Laverne Moore, Retired Educator

POSITION: Support

To Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Laverne Moore, a retired teacher with 54 years of service in Hawaii's public schools. I am writing in **strong support of HB1563 HD2**, which would restore the authority of our counties to regulate the sale of tobacco products and electronic smoking devices.

The Classroom Reality

Throughout my career, I witnessed a heartbreaking shift. We moved from a time when teen smoking was nearly eradicated to a modern epidemic of "vaping" that has completely disrupted the learning environment. As an educator, I have seen:

- **The Targeted Marketing:** Students frequently carry devices designed to look like USB drives or highlighters, featuring flavors like *li hing mui* or mango that are clearly designed to lure Hawaii's keiki.
- **The Addictive Grip:** I have watched bright, capable students struggle to finish a single class period without needing a "hit," showing signs of nicotine withdrawal that lead to irritability, lack of focus, and anxiety.
- **The Health Impacts:** Students who were once active in sports now struggle with shortness of breath and persistent coughs, often unaware that some devices contain as much nicotine as [multiple packs of cigarettes](#).

Why This Bill Matters

According to the most recent data, nearly [1 in 3 Hawaii high schoolers](#) have tried vaping. Current state law (preemption) ties the hands of our local communities, preventing our counties from responding to this crisis with the speed and local insight they need.

Historically, Hawaii's most successful tobacco protections—including the "Tobacco 21" law—began at the **county level**. By passing HB1563 HD2, you are empowering our local leaders to once again take the lead in protecting our students from predatory marketing and lifelong addiction.

Our children deserve to grow up in an environment where their health is prioritized over the profits of the tobacco industry. As a teacher who has seen the "vape era" take root in our hallways, I urge you to **pass HB1563 HD2** and return the power to our counties to protect our keiki.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Laverne Moore, Retired Teacher

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 9:16:00 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Audrina Leolani Angelo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha my name is Audrina Angelo of Paauilo, Hāmākua. I am a certified Tobacco Treatment Specialist at Hamakua-Kohala Health Hawaii Island serving our adult population and I strongly support HB 1563 HD2. Over the years Hawaii Island has led the way in passing laws at the county level such as raising the age from 18 to 21, smoke and vape free environments including smoke free cars with keiki. At the present time while we are moving forward to protect our Keiki against big tobacco and vaping companies. We kindly ask your continued support and passing of HB 1563 HD2 to restore local control back to the counties to regulate tobacco sales. As a Tobacco treatment specialist, I provide counseling and cessation support to our adult population for nicotine addiction which is a HARD journey. As you may already know, tobacco is the leading cause of preventable death. Nicotine use includes Cigarettes, vapes, chew and pouches. Did you know that 1,400 Hawaii residents die each year from their tobacco use.

The residents of Hawaii believe in you. Let us protect them at the County level as we have with so much success. Bills in Honolulu county, Hawaii and Maui county to end the sale of flavored tobacco have already been signed by our mayors, we are ready!

Mahalo Nui loa,

Audrina

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 9:31:26 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
An Vo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee on Finance.

My name is An and I'm a college public health student on O'ahu. I'm testifying in strong support of HB1563 HD2 to restore county authority to regulate tobacco sales.

In high school, my classmates vaped in restrooms so often that I felt annoyed that the boys restroom was always closed, but the girls restroom was open. Years later, I am concerned that my college peers vape secretly during or on school grounds, even during class.

Local communities know the problems that affect our public health. We need local governments to have the authority to regulate tobacco sales because local people know what solutions we need, and we need solutions now. I hope Hawai'i will be run by the local government.

I urge you to support HB1563 HD2 to restore county authority to regulate tobacco sales. Mahalo for caring about Hawai'i's keiki and kupuna.

Mahalo nui loa,
An
Honolulu, HI

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 12:44:57 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mark Owens	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Opposed.

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice-Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members:

The Hawai'i Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (HAAP) would like to provide testimony in strong support of HB 1563 HD2, which provides a mechanism for enforcement of county regulations on tobacco products, including flavored tobacco products.

As pediatricians, we have witnessed increasing numbers of youth who become addicted to nicotine because of bright packaging, youth-targeted messaging, and flavors that are especially appealing to children, such as melon or pineapple. The colorful packaging, fruity flavors, and misconception that vaping is less harmful than cigarettes only serve to obscure the truth, which is that tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable deaths. Indeed, tobacco use reduces the average smoker's life expectancy by about a decade and causes significant avoidable healthcare costs. The youth vaping epidemic is only worsening over time, with more than 13% of high schoolers and 10% of middle schoolers in Hawai'i reporting using e-cigarettes (2023 data). As you may know, vape liquid contains high levels of nicotine, making it more addictive than cigarettes; this is in addition to dozens of other dangerous chemicals that can seriously harm a young person's lungs.

More than 200 pediatrician members of the Hawai'i Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics support returning authority to regulate tobacco products to the individual counties because we care for Hawai'i's keiki. We have seen first-hand the harmful impacts of nicotine addiction in our adolescent patients, and we strongly urge your support of this bill.

Maya Maxym, MD, PhD, FAAP

On behalf of the Hawai'i Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 2:20:03 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nicholas Winters	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB1563 will cause a lot of problems for retailers such as the one I'm involved with.

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 2:29:56 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joseph Kohn MD	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly Support HB1563 HD2

Hawai'i counties have been national leaders in tobacco regulation and it's time to end the 2018 state law that blocks them from acting. Flavored tobacco products attract teens and children. 90% of current middle and high school students that use e-cigarettes are using flavored e-cigarettes. Please pass this bill to allow laws ending the sale of flavored tobacco products to take effect in Honolulu, Hawai'i, and Maui County.

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 10:29:06 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lindsey Heathcock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear finance committee

As a pediatrician and parent I support this bill which would allow counties to enforce their tobacco control legislation.

Lindsey Heathcock

HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 10:35:39 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John A. H. Tomoso	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

03-03-26

RE: HB1563 HD2

Aloha,

I am in strong support of [HB 1563, HD2](#), which restores the counties' ability to regulate the sale of tobacco products, allowing for innovative policies at the local level. Besides, it is good public policy that protects our public health, intergenerationally.

Mahalo

John A. H. Tomoso+

51 Ku'ula St., Kahului, Maui, HI 96732--2906

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HB-1563-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/4/2026 6:41:03 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/4/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patricia Blair	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly support, must pass to protect children.