



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

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

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

**JOHN C. (JACK) LEWIN, MD**  
ADMINISTRATOR

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April 6, 2026

**TO:** SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS  
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

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

**RE:** **HB 1838-HD2-SD1 -- RELATING TO VISAS**

**HEARING:** Tuesday, April 7, 2026 @ 10:31 am; Conference Room 211

**POSITION:** SUPPORT with COMMENTS

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Testimony:

SHPDA strongly supports HB 1838-HD2-SD1, with comments.

The U and T visas are humanitarian forms of immigration relief for survivors of crime. They were created by Congress in 2000 under the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act. U visas are for victims of certain crimes who have suffered substantial physical or mental abuse and have information about the crime, while T visas are for victims of human trafficking who assist law enforcement in the investigation or prosecution of trafficking crimes. Both visas provide legal status, work authorization, and a pathway to permanent residency. They also encourage victims to cooperate with law enforcement without fear of deportation.

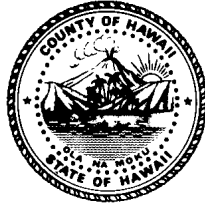
These visa programs are vital tools that protect victims of crime and individuals who contribute significantly to our communities.

As we are witnessing, immigration issues are complex. Because of the complexities, some entities are resistant to certify victim helpfulness due to lack of understanding about the U or T nonimmigrant status process or the lack of resources, among other reasons. Absent uniform standards for U and T visa certifications, noncitizen victims face inconsistent access to justice. Uniform policies and training of individuals involved will help to address these inconsistencies. By supporting use of U and T visas, we ensure that vulnerable individuals can come forward without fear, assist law enforcement, and help strengthen the fabric of our society. I urge you to support these essential pathways so that our immigration system remains fair, humane, and effective.

Thank you for hearing HB 1838-HD2-SD1 and mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

■ -- Jack Lewin, MD, Administrator, SHPDA

**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: April 6, 2026  
TO: Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
FROM: Jennifer Kagiwada, Council Member  
Council District 2  
SUBJECT: HB1838 HD2 SD1

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and esteemed Committee Members,

I am writing in **strong support of HB 1838**. I support this bill because it will:

- **Enhance access to justice and community trust.**

By requiring that law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, courts, and other certifying entities adopt clear, consistent policies, this bill promotes fairness and transparency in the certification process. This gives survivors confidence that their cooperation will be supported, which in turn strengthens trust between immigrant communities and public safety officials.

- **Ensure proper training and accountability for certifying officials.**

The bill's training requirements for state and county certifying officials are critical to preventing improper denials and ensuring compliance with federal and state law. Well-trained officials are better equipped to understand their roles and responsibilities, protect sensitive populations, and uphold victims' rights. This is especially important for individuals who may otherwise avoid authorities due to fear or misinformation.

Mahalo,

Jenn Kagiwada



*Cade Watanabe, Financial Secretary-Treasurer*

*Gemma G. Weinstein, President*

*Eric W. Gill, Senior Vice-President*

April 3, 2026

Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Sen. Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair  
Sen. Sharon Moriwaki, Vice Chair

### **Testimony in Support of HB 1838**

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members:

UNITE HERE Local 5 represents over 10,000 working people in the hotel, food service and health care industries across Hawaii. We are in support of HB 1838, which will set up standardized procedures for non-citizen crime victims to apply for U and T visa status. This will allow them to avoid deportation as local law enforcement finds and prosecutes perpetrators. It would be very helpful to have standardized procedures to ensure the same level of protection is provided to everyone experiencing these difficult situations.

Thank you.



COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS  
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

HEARING:  
Tuesday, April 7, 2026 at 10:31 am  
Conference Room 211 & Videoconferenc

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1838, HD2, SD1 - RELATING TO VISAS.

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Senator Hashimoto and Senator DeCoite of Maui, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Veronica Mendoza, Founding Executive Director of Roots Reborn and a founding coalition member of El Pueblo en Acción (EPA) Maui - *The People in Action Maui*. Roots Reborn **strongly supports with comments HB 1838, HD2, SD1**, Relating to Visas, which establishes uniform statewide requirements for policies and processes for the issuance of U and T visa certifications for noncitizen victims of crime consistent with federal laws and regulations governing U and T visas, requires each certifying entity to adopt a policy and process for the issuance of U and T visa certifications, consistent with those statewide requirements, and appropriates funds to the Department of the Attorney General to provide training to certifying entities on all federal and state requirements for U and T visa certifications.

Roots Reborn is a grassroots, multicultural immigrant-justice and disaster-response organization serving migrant and immigrant communities on Maui and beyond. We operate the first Maui-based immigration legal aid program, providing pro bono services. We support community members with document replacement, complex immigration cases, and defense against policies that undermine immigrant rights, including for clients seeking U and T visas. U visas serve immigrant victims of qualifying crimes, and T visas serve victims of human trafficking; in both cases, a law enforcement or government-signed certification (Form I-918B for U visas or I-914B for T visas) confirming a victim's helpfulness in detecting, investigating, or prosecuting crime or trafficking is essential to their federal applications.

Under federal law, U and T visa certifications are discretionary, but in practice they are often the decisive factor in whether a survivor can obtain safety, stability, and lawful presence. We see daily how inconsistent or unclear local policies and ad hoc practices for issuing these certifications can delay or derail a victim's case. Attorneys and legal staff must navigate different expectations and procedures from one agency to another, and survivors bear the costs in time, uncertainty, and exposure to continued violence or exploitation.

For Maui clients, many of whom are also wildfire survivors, U and T visa certification delays compound trauma. Victims of domestic violence and trafficking are especially vulnerable; they must weigh the risk of reaching out for help when they do not know whether a certifying agency will respond promptly, at all, or according to any clear standard. Uneven processes and uncertain use of discretion around U and T visa certifications effectively retraumatize people who have already suffered serious harm and discourage them from cooperating with law enforcement, undermining community safety for everyone.

*Roots Reborn has successfully collaborated with the Maui Police Department to co-author MPD's current U-visa certification policy, which has been implemented and is working well in practice, giving us direct, practical insight into how effective policies can be designed and used on the ground.*

**House Bill 1838, HD2, SD1**, is a practical, targeted solution that creates uniform statewide requirements and requires every state and county certifying entity to adopt clear policies and processes that are supported by training from the Department of the Attorney General. This bill removes a major barrier for immigrant victims of crime seeking U and T visas and promotes consistency, transparency, and timely access to life-saving protections. Our communities' safety should not depend on whether a victim happens to live in a county with a well-developed U and T visa policy; statewide standards ensure that all survivors in Hawai'i can seek protection and cooperate with law enforcement without fear.

Sinceramente,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Veronica Mendoza', written over a white background.

Veronica Mendoza

Maui Roots Reborn, *Founding Executive Director*  
El Pueblo en Accion Maui, *Founding Coalition Member*



April 7, 2026

Members of the Senate Committee on Ways & Means:

Chair Donovan M. Dela Cruz  
Vice Chair Sharon Y. Moriwaki  
Rep. Lynn DeCoite  
Rep. Brandon J.C. Elefante  
Rep. Troy N. Hashimoto  
Rep. Lorraine R. Inouye  
Rep. Dru Mamo Kanuha  
Rep. Michelle N. Kidani  
Rep. Donna Mercado Kim  
Rep. Chris Lee  
Rep. Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III  
Rep. Glenn Wakai  
Rep. Kurt Fevella

Re: HB1838 HD2 SD1 Relating to Visas

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways & Means:

The Hawai'i State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (HSCADV) mission is to unite Hawai'i to end all forms of domestic violence. We are a statewide partnership of domestic violence programs and shelters.

On behalf of HSCADV and our 20 member programs statewide, I respectfully submit testimony in support of HB1838 HD2 SD1 which mandates the creation of uniform certification standards for U and T visas that:

- are aligned with federal law;
- requires written certification policies;
- statewide training for certifying entities;
- provides language access; and
- maintains victim confidentiality.

**Why this matters:**

The lack of certification standards is delaying victims' visa petitions/applications and jeopardizing their safety.

This is a problem because, by federal statute, no more than 10,000 principal U visas and 5,000 T visas may be granted in any fiscal year. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has reached this statutory cap every year since fiscal year 2010. **In Fiscal Year 2024, USCIS received 41,556 principal U visa petitions and 15,332 T visa applications. It takes approximately 5-7 years to process U visas, and 12-36 months to process T visas.**<sup>1</sup>

U and T visas provide critical federal protections for noncitizen survivors of serious crimes, including domestic violence and human trafficking. Certification from law enforcement, prosecutors, or the courts is required as a first step. Yet in Hawai'i, access to U and T visa certification varies by county and agency, creating unequal outcomes for survivors who otherwise qualify under federal law.

**Not only is this a delay in justice, but it is also a delay in victim safety.**

We respectfully urge passage of HB1838 HD2 SD1 with full funding. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.

Sincerely,  
Angelina Mercado, Executive Director

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<sup>1</sup>[https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/data/fy24\\_immigration\\_applications\\_made\\_by\\_victims\\_of\\_abuse.pdf](https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/data/fy24_immigration_applications_made_by_victims_of_abuse.pdf)



## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB1838, HD2, SD1 - RELATING TO VISAS

### Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Sen. Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair

Sen. Sharon Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: April 7, 2026 | Letter Date: April 6, 2026

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

The Legal Clinic (TLC) strongly supports HB1838, HD2, SD1, a measure that strengthens public safety and due process by establishing consistent statewide procedures for U and T visa certification for noncitizen survivors of serious crime and human trafficking. TLC is a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing justice for immigrants and migrants across Hawai'i through immigration legal services, community education, and policy advocacy. We also serve on the steering committee of the Campaign for Immigrant Justice alongside the Hawai'i Coalition for Immigrant Rights and the American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai'i, and this measure is among the campaign's top legislative priorities.

U and T visas are important public safety tools created by Congress to support the detection, investigation, prosecution, conviction, and sentencing of serious crimes, including domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking. These programs provide humanitarian protections that allow noncitizen survivors to report crimes and cooperate with the justice system without fear of immigration consequences. Certification confirming victimization and helpfulness is a required first step in the visa application process. Although federal law authorizes state and county law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, courts, and other entities to issue certifications, it does not require them to do so. In the absence of uniform statewide standards, practices have varied across counties and agencies, resulting in confusion, improper delays and denials, and unequal access to protection for survivors.

HB1838, HD2, SD1 addresses these gaps by establishing fair, transparent, and consistent certification practices statewide. The bill requires certifying entities to adopt written public policies, designate certifying officials, and comply with reasonable response timelines. It also includes critical provisions on confidentiality, language access, reporting, and training to support effective statewide implementation and survivor access to relief.

We sincerely appreciate the Legislature’s thoughtful consideration of stakeholder input and the amendments adopted throughout the legislative process. We are particularly grateful for the restoration of language recognizing state courts and judges as certifiers; clarification of the judicial review process; and improvements to the definition of “helpfulness” including a rebuttable presumption and recognition that requests for cooperation may come from certifying entities other than law enforcement.

Mahalo for your leadership in advancing survivor protection and public safety. HB1838, HD2, SD1 will strengthen trust in our justice system, remove barriers for survivors, and promote safer communities across Hawai`i. We urge the Committee to pass this measure.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of The Legal Clinic  
and Board President Amefil Agbayani,



Christina Sablan

Community & Policy Advocate

To: Senate Committee on Judiciary  
Re: **HB1838 HD2 SD1– Relating to Visas**  
Hawai'i State Capitol & Via Videoconference  
April 7, 2026, 10:31 AM

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in **SUPPORT of HB1838 HD2 SD1**. This bill establishes uniform statewide requirements for policies and processes for the issuance of U and T visa certifications for noncitizen victims of crime, requires each state and county certifying entity to adopt a policy and process for the issuance of U and T visa certifications consistent with those statewide requirements. It also appropriates funds for the Department of the Attorney General to provide training on federal and state requirements for U and T visa certifications.

Across our state, many mothers who are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or trafficking are raising children while navigating the criminal justice system. When a mother cooperates with law enforcement but cannot obtain timely certification for a U or T visa, her entire family is placed at risk. The fear of deportation or family separation can force mothers to choose between protecting their children and seeking safety.

For children, the consequences are profound. Instability in immigration status can mean housing insecurity, economic hardship, and ongoing exposure to trauma. When mothers are unable to secure legal protection, children may remain in dangerous situations or lose access to stability that supports healing and healthy development.

This bill provides clear timelines, written policies, and accountability so that families are not left in limbo due to inconsistent practices. The bill's training provisions will also help ensure that agencies respond in a trauma-informed and family-centered manner.

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

Sincerely,

Nicole Woo  
Director of Research and Economic Policy



[www.hicir.org](http://www.hicir.org) | Instagram @hicir  
[hicoalitionforimmigrantrights@gmail.com](mailto:hicoalitionforimmigrantrights@gmail.com)

Testimony of Liza Ryan-Gill

## **In SUPPORT of HB1838 HD2 SD1**

Dear Chair Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Sharon Y. Moriwaki, and members of the Committee on Ways and Means,

My name is Liza Ryan-Gill, and I submit this testimony in support of HB1838 HD2 SD1, which establishes uniform statewide requirements for U and T visa certification policies for noncitizen survivors of crime and trafficking, requires every certifying entity to adopt compliant policies, and appropriates funds for the Department of the Attorney General to train certifying officials.

I am the Co-director and Refounder of the Hawai‘i Coalition for Immigrant Rights (HCIR), and I am testifying on behalf of HCIR. HCIR is a coalition of more than 30 immigrant-serving and immigrant-led organizations across the pae ‘āina working to advance policies that protect immigrant and migrant communities and strengthen Hawai‘i as a place where all families can thrive. HB1838 is among the top legislative priorities of the Campaign for Immigrant Justice, a coordinated statewide coalition effort of which HCIR is a lead co-organizer alongside the ACLU of Hawai‘i and The Legal Clinic.

### **Survivors Should Not Face a Zip Code Lottery**

U and T visas are federal public safety tools created by Congress to help noncitizen survivors of qualifying crimes — including domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking — come forward, cooperate with investigations, and stabilize their lives. Certification confirming a victim's helpfulness is a required first step in the visa application process. But right now, Hawai‘i has no statewide policy requiring or standardizing that process. A survivor's access to this federally authorized protection depends entirely on which county or agency they happen to contact — and that agency's individual policies, if any exist at all.

This patchwork approach leads to inconsistent outcomes, improper delays and denials, and unequal access to protection based solely on geography. HB1838 HD2 SD1 fixes this by establishing a clear statewide baseline and requiring every certifying entity to follow it. When survivors trust that the process is fair, timely, and consistent, they are more likely to come forward — helping hold offenders accountable and making our communities safer.

### **Training Is the Bill's "Make It Work" Component — and Why WAM Matters**

The appropriation for the Department of the Attorney General to train certifying officials is not a peripheral budget item — it is the mechanism that makes the rest of the bill function. Even



[www.hicir.org](http://www.hicir.org) | Instagram @hicir  
[hicoalitionforimmigrantrights@gmail.com](mailto:hicoalitionforimmigrantrights@gmail.com)

well-intentioned certifying officials make errors without proper guidance on federal requirements, trauma-informed practices, and their own legal obligations. Without training, agencies may inadvertently deny certifications that survivors are entitled to, impose improper delays, or apply inconsistent standards that undermine the very uniformity the bill is designed to create.

This Committee's support for the appropriation is essential to prevent those failures and to ensure that Hawai'i's certification system is grounded in federal law and best practices. The investment is modest relative to the public safety benefits: more survivors coming forward, more offenders held accountable, and stronger cooperation between immigrant communities and law enforcement.

### **This Is a Public Safety Bill**

U and T visas exist specifically because Congress recognized that survivors cannot cooperate with law enforcement if they fear deportation. When the certification process is confusing, unpredictable, or inaccessible, crimes go unreported and offenders remain in the community. A consistent, transparent system builds trust, increases cooperation, and supports law enforcement and prosecutors in holding perpetrators accountable. HB1838 HD2 SD1 strengthens Hawai'i's response to crime and trafficking — for the benefit of all residents, regardless of immigration status.

Across HCIR's member organizations, we work with survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and trafficking who have been failed by an inconsistent system — who approached one agency and were turned away, or who waited months without a response, or who never knew certification was an option at all. This bill changes that.

### **Conclusion**

HB1838 HD2 SD1 has passed the House with strong support and cleared the Senate Judiciary Committee. It comes before Ways and Means for the final committee vote before the floor. The appropriation it carries is essential — not optional — to making the bill's statewide standardization promise real. HCIR and our 30+ member organizations urge this Committee to support both the policy and the funding.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the Committee PASS HB1838 HD2 SD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully,



[www.hicir.org](http://www.hicir.org) | Instagram @hicir  
[hicoalitionforimmigrantrights@gmail.com](mailto:hicoalitionforimmigrantrights@gmail.com)

Liza Ryan-Gill

Co-director and Refounder



April 6, 2026

Position: **SUPPORT** of **HB1838 HD2 SD1**, Relating to Visas

**To:** Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair  
Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

**From:** Llasmin Chaine, LSW, Executive Director, Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women

**Re:** Testimony in **SUPPORT** of **HB1838 HD2 SD1**, Relating to Visas

Hearing: Tuesday, April 7, 2026, 10:31 a.m.  
Conference Room 211, State Capitol

The Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women is dedicated to advancing the rights and well-being of women and girls in Hawaii, with a particular focus on those who are most vulnerable to violence, exploitation, and discrimination. The Commission **supports HB1838 HD2 SD1**, as **it seeks to standardize and improve the process by which noncitizen victims of crime, including survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking, can access U and T visa certifications**, by establishing clear, uniform statewide requirements. These visas provide a critical pathway to safety and justice for individuals who have suffered serious crimes and are willing to assist law enforcement.

By establishing uniform statewide requirements and mandating consistent policies across state and county certifying entities, this **bill addresses longstanding barriers to equitable access for noncitizen victims**. Inconsistent practices and lack of clear guidance have historically resulted in confusion, delays, and, in some cases, the denial of protections for those most in need. The bill's provisions for training and resource allocation to certifying officials are especially vital, as they **will help ensure that staff are equipped with the knowledge and sensitivity required to handle these cases appropriately** and in accordance with federal law.

HB1838 HD2 SD1 aligns with best practices recognized nationally, which emphasize the importance of clear, survivor-centered protocols and interagency coordination in the certification process. **By supporting a more uniform, transparent, and accessible system, Hawaii can better fulfill its obligations to protect crime victims, promote public safety, and uphold the dignity of all residents.**

We respectfully urge this Committee to **pass HB1838 HD2 SD1**.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony.



Committee on Ways and Means  
Chair Donovan Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Sharon Moriwaki

4/7/2026 @ 10:31 in CR 211 & Videoconference  
HB1838 HD2 SD1 U and T Visa Certification; Uniform Statewide Requirements

TESTIMONY

Stephen Munkelt, Legislative Committee, League of Women Voters of Hawaii

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members:

**The League of Women Voters of Hawaii supports BILL NUMBER  
HB1838 HD2 SD1**

The League of Women Voters believes that immigration policies should promote reunification of immediate families; meet the economic, business, and employment needs of the United States; and be responsive to those facing political persecution or humanitarian crises. This bill is critical to enhance access to pathways for immigration relief, especially at a time when so many other avenues are narrowing. U nonimmigrant status and T nonimmigrant status are tools created by Congress to improve public safety as well as provide humanitarian relief and stability for noncitizen survivors.

HB 1838 strengthens statewide practices for U and T visa certifications consistent with federal law and aligns with many states around the country which have also enacted state laws, including California where I am based. HB 1838 establishes uniform, transparent, and accountable policies and procedures statewide for law enforcement, prosecutors, courts, and other certifying agencies when responding to U and T visa certification requests.

In particular, HB 1838 has the following key provisions that reflect best practices nationally and will help create uniform and equitable access for immigrant survivors of crime: requiring state and county certifying entities to adopt written policies and procedures and make them publicly accessible; designation of at least one certifying official in each certifying entity; reasonable timelines for responses ; required written explanations for denials; judicial review for

certification delays or denials; training for certifying; and reporting requirements.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Stephen Munkelt



Committee: Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Hearing Date/Time: Tuesday, April 07, 2026, at 10:31 AM  
Place: Conference Room 211 & via Videoconference  
Re: Testimony of the ACLU of Hawai'i in SUPPORT of HB 1838, HD2, SD1 Relating to Visas

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and members of the Committee:

On behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai'i, I write in strong support of HB 1838, HD2, SD1, which would establish uniform statewide policies and processes for U and T visa certifications for noncitizen crime survivors in Hawai'i.

**HB 1838, HD2, SD1 enhances access to justice and strengthen community trust.**

By requiring law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, courts, and other certifying entities to adopt clear, consistent policies, this bill promotes fairness and transparency in the certification process. Standardized procedures give survivors confidence that their cooperation will be supported, which strengthens trust between immigrant communities and public safety officials.

**HB 1838, HD2, SD1 promotes safe communities by encouraging crime reporting.**

Evidence shows that when victims feel safe coming forward, public safety outcomes improve for all community members, as fear of deportation reduces crime reporting among immigrant communities.<sup>1</sup> By reducing uncertainty and fear surrounding the certification process, this measure helps victims report crimes and cooperate with law enforcement, supporting safer communities.

**HB 1838, HD2, SD1 ensures proper training and accountability for certifying officials.**

The bill's training requirements for state and county certifying officials are essential to preventing inappropriate denials and ensuring compliance with federal and state law. Well-trained officials are better equipped to understand their responsibilities, protect vulnerable populations, and uphold victims' rights—particularly important for individuals who may otherwise avoid authorities due to fear or misinformation.

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<sup>1</sup> Reva Dhingra et al., "Immigration Policies and Access to the Justice System: The Effect of Enforcement Escalations on Undocumented Immigrants and Their Communities," *Political Behavior* 44 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11109-020-09663-w>

For these reasons, I respectfully ask the committee to support HB 1838, HD2, SD1.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mandy Fernandes". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Mandy Fernandes  
Policy Director  
ACLU of Hawai'i

*With more than 4,000 Hawaii-based members, the mission of the American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai'i is to protect the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the United States and Hawai'i State Constitutions through legislative, litigation, and public education work. The ACLU of Hawai'i is a non-partisan and private non-profit organization that provides its services at no cost to the public and does not accept government funds. The ACLU of Hawai'i has been serving our communities in Hawai'i for over 60 years.*

**HB-1838-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/2/2026 8:26:02 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/7/2026 10:31:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tim Huycke	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1838.

**HB-1838-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/3/2026 11:08:23 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/7/2026 10:31:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Gail Morrison	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of HB1838 HD2 both personally and as a member of the Indivisible Hawaii Statewide Network (IHSN). This Bill would add a new Chapter to the Hawaii Revised Statutes setting standardized procedures for applying for U and T visa status for noncitizen victims of crime. These visas were established by Congress to protect noncitizen victims of human trafficking or other crimes to avoid deportation by immigration authorities while assisting local law enforcement to find and prosecute the perpetrators.

Everyone in the community is harmed when serious crimes are not reported to the authorities or prosecuted. Noncitizen residents may be afraid to report crimes or assist in investigation and prosecution if they face deportation by coming forward. These special visa categories are intended to protect victims who come forward to assist law enforcement from immigration proceedings.

The application for these visas must be filed with federal authorities by local law enforcement and prosecuting agencies. Since the application is a discretionary process there are significant differences in filing across Hawaii's agencies and islands. This bill is an important step toward providing support for noncitizens who have been victimized, and a step toward more effective prosecution of human traffickers and criminals.

I urge you to Pass HB1838 HD2.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this Bill.

Gail Morrison, Honolulu

**HB-1838-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/3/2026 12:26:52 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/7/2026 10:31:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jesse Hutchison	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I'm writing in strong support. Thank you!

**HB-1838-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/3/2026 2:08:12 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/7/2026 10:31:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Brodie Lockard	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

**HB-1838-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/3/2026 4:40:22 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/7/2026 10:31:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kehaulani Coleman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you

**HB-1838-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/3/2026 4:42:52 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/7/2026 10:31:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kristy Gund	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of HB1838 HD2 both personally and as a member of the Indivisible Hawaii Statewide Network (IHSN). This Bill would add a new Chapter to the Hawaii Revised Statutes setting standardized procedures for applying for U and T visa status for noncitizen victims of crime. These visas were established by Congress to protect noncitizen victims of human trafficking or other crimes to avoid deportation by immigration authorities while assisting local law enforcement to find and prosecute the perpetrators.

Everyone in the community is harmed when serious crimes are not reported to the authorities or prosecuted. Noncitizen residents may be afraid to report crimes or assist in investigation and prosecution if they face deportation by coming forward. These special visa categories are intended to protect victims who come forward to assist law enforcement from immigration proceedings.

The application for these visas must be filed with federal authorities by local law enforcement and prosecuting agencies. Since the application is a discretionary process there are significant differences in filing across Hawaii's agencies and islands. This bill is an important step toward providing support for noncitizens who have been victimized, and a step toward more effective prosecution of human traffickers and criminals.

I urge you to Pass HB1838 HD2.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this Bill.

**HB-1838-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/3/2026 4:47:57 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/7/2026 10:31:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
john savino	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of HB1838 HD2 both personally and as a member of the Indivisible Hawaii Statewide Network (IHSN). This Bill would add a new Chapter to the Hawaii Revised Statutes setting standardized procedures for applying for U and T visa status for noncitizen victims of crime. These visas were established by Congress to protect noncitizen victims of human trafficking or other crimes to avoid deportation by immigration authorities while assisting local law enforcement to find and prosecute the perpetrators.

**HB-1838-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/5/2026 8:53:32 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/7/2026 10:31:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jane Aquino	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**I am writing in strong support of HB1838 HD2 both personally and as a member of the Indivisible Hawaii Statewide Network (IHSN). This Bill would add a new Chapter to the Hawaii Revised Statutes setting standardized procedures for applying for U and T visa status for noncitizen victims of crime. These visas were established by Congress to protect noncitizen victims of human trafficking or other crimes to avoid deportation by immigration authorities while assisting local law enforcement to find and prosecute the perpetrators.**

**Everyone in the community is harmed when serious crimes are not reported to the authorities or prosecuted. Noncitizen residents may be afraid to report crimes or assist in investigation and prosecution if they face deportation by coming forward. These special visa categories are intended to protect victims who come forward to assist law enforcement from immigration proceedings.**

**The application for these visas must be filed with federal authorities by local law enforcement and prosecuting agencies. Since the application is a discretionary process there are significant differences in filing across Hawaii's agencies and islands. This bill is an important step toward providing support for noncitizens who have been victimized, and a step toward more effective prosecution of human traffickers and criminals.**

**I urge you to Pass HB1838 HD2.**

**Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this Bill. Jane Aquino, Indivisible**

**HB-1838-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/5/2026 10:42:32 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/7/2026 10:31:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Younghee Overly	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for this opportunity to support HB1838. This bill is an important step toward providing support for noncitizens who have been victimized, and a step toward more effective prosecution of human traffickers and criminals.

Younghee Overly, a member of Indivisible Hawaii

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS  
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

HEARING: Tuesday, April 7, 2026 at 10:31 am, Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1838, HD2, SD1 - RELATING TO VISAS.

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Senator Hashimoto for my district, Senator DeCoite of Maui, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Christine Andrews and I am a long-term resident of Wailuku, Maui. I am also an attorney licensed in the state of Hawaii for over 25 years and a founding coalition member of El Pueblo en Acción (EPA) Maui — The People in Action Maui. I am writing today in **strong support of HB1838, HD2, SD1**, Relating to Visas, which establishes uniform statewide requirements for policies and processes for the issuance of U and T visa certifications for noncitizen victims of crime that are consistent with federal laws and regulations governing U and T visas; requires each state and county certifying entity to adopt a policy and process for the issuance of U and T visa certifications, consistent with those statewide requirements; and appropriates funds for the Department of the Attorney General to provide training to certifying entities and certifying officials on all federal and state requirements for U and T visa certifications.

Under federal law, U and T visa certifications are discretionary. Unfortunately, inconsistent or unclear local policies and practices for issuing these certifications can delay or derail a crime or trafficking victim's U or T visa. These certifications are often the decisive factor in whether a survivor can obtain safety, stability, and lawful presence. Attorneys and staff must navigate different expectations and procedures from one agency to another, and survivors bear the costs in time, uncertainty, and exposure to continued violence or exploitation.

On Maui, where many visa applicants are also wildfire survivors, the stress of the wildfires has contributed to conditions of increased domestic violence and exploitation. Delays in the processing of U & T visa certifications by law enforcement agencies have the unintended consequence of compounding trauma. Victims of domestic violence and trafficking are especially vulnerable; they must weigh the risk of reaching out for help when they do not know how or if a certifying agency will respond. Uneven processes and uncertain use of discretion around U and T visa certifications effectively retraumatize people who have already suffered serious harm and discourage them from cooperating with law enforcement, undermining community safety for everyone.

I want to share a personal story from my experience as an EPA Maui volunteer. I was called to a small business on Maui, where an employee was in a private area inside while federal agents were outside waiting to take the person into detention. The employee was lawfully present in the U.S. as the spouse of a citizen, but due to domestic violence in the marriage, the immigration process had changed. I witnessed a legally-present victim of domestic violence who was unable to navigate the immigration consequences of their abuse expeditiously be taken into ICE custody while their shocked employer and fellow employees watched crying.

House Bill 1838, HD2, SD1 can help avoid this kind of tragedy, where a victim of domestic violence is detained or deported because the system does not protect them in a timely manner. Creating uniform statewide U and T visa certification requirements, and requiring every state and county certifying entity to adopt clear policies and processes that are supported by training from the Department of the Attorney General, is an important step forward in supporting crime victims. As I have witnessed, delays have consequences and accountability is necessary.

**I strongly support HB 1838, HD2, SD1** as it removes a major barrier for immigrant victims of crime seeking U and T visas and promotes consistency, transparency, and timely access to life-saving protections. Our communities' safety should not depend on whether a victim happens to live in a county with a well-developed U and T visa policy; statewide standards ensure that all survivors in Hawai'i can seek protection and cooperate with law enforcement without fear. I respectfully request that you stand with Hawai'i's noncitizen crime victims and **vote in support of HB 1838, HD2, SD1**.

Mahalo for supporting our most vulnerable community members,

Christine Andrews, J.D.

**HB-1838-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/5/2026 9:26:13 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/7/2026 10:31:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ana Laura Flores-Garcia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF HB1838**

Dear Chair Dela Cruz. Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Committee:

I am a Manoa resident submitting this testimony in strong support of HB 1838, which establishes uniform statewide policies and processes for U and T visa certifications for noncitizen survivors of crime in Hawai'i.

In my ten years of experience working for the Mexican Consulate in New York and Philadelphia, I witnessed firsthand how U and T visas can be life-changing tools for survivors of serious and often violent crimes. When survivors understand the process and trust that certifying agencies will treat them fairly, they are far more likely to come forward, cooperate with investigations, and seek protection.

U and T visas are federally established mechanisms designed to support public safety and survivor protection, but their effectiveness depends heavily on consistent and transparent implementation at the state and local level. Specially, since there is a cap of 10,000 yearly U visas available and 5,000 T visas nationwide. By creating clear, uniform certification practices, HB 1838 would benefit crime victims and strengthen systems that already exist, improve trust between immigrant communities and law enforcement, and ultimately make Hawai'i's communities safer for everyone.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to support HB 1838 HD2 SD1.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Ana Flores  
anaflores.mpa@gmail.com

**HB-1838-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/5/2026 11:56:03 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/7/2026 10:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and WAM Committee members,

I write in strong **support of HB1838 HD2 SD1**, which establishes uniform statewide requirements for policies and processes for the issuance of U and T visa certifications for noncitizen victims of crime and trafficking, requires each state and county certifying entity to adopt a compliant policy and process, and appropriates funds for the Department of the Attorney General to provide training to certifying entities and officials on all federal and state requirements.

Survivors of serious crimes and trafficking should not face a “zip code lottery” when seeking U or T visa certification. Right now, a survivor’s access to a federally authorized protection pathway depends on which county or agency they contact — not on the merits of their case. HB1838 HD2 fixes this by creating clear, uniform statewide standards so that every certifying entity in Hawai‘i follows the same requirements. When survivors trust that the process is fair, timely, and consistent, they are more likely to come forward — helping hold offenders accountable and making our communities safer.

Training is equally essential. Even well-intentioned certifying officials make errors without proper guidance on federal requirements, trauma-informed practices, and their own legal obligations. The AG training funded by this bill reduces improper denials, unnecessary delays, and inconsistent practices statewide. This is a public safety bill as much as an immigrant rights bill: U and T visas exist specifically because Congress recognized that survivors cannot cooperate with law enforcement if they fear deportation. HB1838 HD2 passed the House with strong support. The Senate Judiciary Committee can now advance it toward Ways and Means and final passage.

Please **PASS HB1838 HD2 SD1**.

Mahalo,

Thaddeus Pham

**HB-1838-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 7:43:02 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/7/2026 10:31:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Joie Yonamine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of HB1838 HD2 both personally and as a member of the Indivisible Hawaii Statewide Network (IHSN). This Bill would add a new Chapter to the Hawaii Revised Statutes setting standardized procedures for applying for U and T visa status for noncitizen victims of crime. These visas were established by Congress to protect noncitizen victims of human trafficking or other crimes to avoid deportation by immigration authorities while assisting local law enforcement to find and prosecute the perpetrators.

Everyone in the community is harmed when serious crimes are not reported to the authorities or prosecuted. Noncitizen residents may be afraid to report crimes or assist in investigation and prosecution if they face deportation by coming forward. These special visa categories are intended to protect victims who come forward to assist law enforcement from immigration proceedings.

The application for these visas must be filed with federal authorities by local law enforcement and prosecuting agencies. Since the application is a discretionary process there are significant differences in filing across Hawaii's agencies and islands. This bill is an important step toward providing support for noncitizens who have been victimized, and a step toward more effective prosecution of human traffickers and criminals.

I urge you to Pass HB1838 HD2.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this Bill.

Joie Yonamine

**HB-1838-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 8:23:15 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/7/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Diann Karin Lynn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**HB1838 HD2 SD1 — U and T Visa Certifications: Uniform Statewide Requirements and AG Training**

I am a supporter of the Legal Clinic in their campaign for immigrant justice and defense of due process for all.

The first and most important responsibility of government is to protect its people – citizen and immigrant, legal or no – against all enemies, foreign and domestic. Protection of constitutional rights – Federal and State – is paramount.

In this case of this bill, I am writing in SUPPORT because it

- Establishes uniform, statewide standards for U/T visa certifications for crime / trafficking survivors.
  - These visas are for noncitizen victims of specific crimes, including human trafficking, domestic violence, and sexual assault.
  - This bill ends the “zip code lottery,” ensuring survivors get consistent, fair process regardless of which county/agency they contact.
- Requires that all certifying entities adopt compliant policies.
- Appropriates Attorney General training funds and ensures AG training to reduce improper denials.

I am not opposed to enforcement of law. U/T visas exist so crime survivors can cooperate with law enforcement, but this bill protects them from misapplication of the law.

**PLEASE VOTE AYE AND FAST TRACK THIS BILL TO THE GOVERNOR’S DESK.**

Mahalo  
Diann K Lynn  
Mō’ili’ili

**HB-1838-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 8:53:03 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/7/2026 10:31:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
James E Raymond	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you. I am a member of Indivisible Windward.

**Testimony of HAWAII FILIPINO LAWYERS ASSOCIATION (HFLA)  
In SUPPORT of HB1838 HD2 SD1**

Senate Committee on Ways and Means (WAM)

Chair: Sen. Donovan M. Dela Cruz  
Vice Chair: Sen. Sharon Y. Moriwaki

Hearing Date: April 7, 2026

Dear Chair Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Sharon Y. Moriwaki, and members of the Committee on Ways and Means,

My name is Wilfredo Tungol, chair of HFLA Advocacy Committee. HFLA submits this testimony in **support of HB1838 HD2 SD1**, which establishes uniform statewide requirements for U and T visa certification policies for noncitizen survivors of crime and trafficking, requires every certifying entity to adopt compliant policies, and appropriates funds for the Department of the Attorney General to train certifying officials. HFLA supports protection of survivors of crime and human/sex trafficking and keeping them in the community to help in the prosecution of their perpetrators.

Survivors of serious crimes and trafficking in Hawai‘i currently face a zip code lottery: their access to a U or T visa certification — a federally authorized protection pathway — depends on which agency they contact, not their case. HB1838 HD2 SD1 creates uniform statewide standards so every certifying entity follows the same requirements. When survivors know the process is fair and consistent, they are more likely to come forward — helping hold offenders accountable and making communities safer.

AG-funded training is equally critical. Even well-intentioned officials make errors without proper guidance on federal requirements and trauma-informed practices. This is a public safety bill as much as an immigrant rights bill: U and T visas exist precisely because Congress recognized that survivors cannot cooperate with law enforcement if they fear deportation. Having passed the House and Senate JDC, this bill comes before Ways and Means for the final committee vote before the floor.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the Committee **PASS HB1838 HD2 SD1**.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Wilfredo Tungol  
HFLA Advocacy Chair  
808-387-7412

**HB-1838-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 10:19:55 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/7/2026 10:31:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Christian Marquez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Dear Chair Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Sharon Y. Moriwaki, and members of the Committee on Ways and Means,**

**My name is Christian Marquez, and I submit this testimony in support of HB1838 HD2 SD1, which establishes uniform statewide requirements for U and T visa certification policies for noncitizen survivors of crime and trafficking, requires every certifying entity to adopt compliant policies, and appropriates funds for the Department of the Attorney General to train certifying officials.**

**Survivors of serious crimes and trafficking in Hawai'i currently face a zip code lottery: their access to a U or T visa certification — a federally authorized protection pathway — depends on which agency they contact, not their case. HB1838 HD2 SD1 creates uniform statewide standards so every certifying entity follows the same requirements. When survivors know the process is fair and consistent, they are more likely to come forward — helping hold offenders accountable and making communities safer.**

**AG-funded training is equally critical. Even well-intentioned officials make errors without proper guidance on federal requirements and trauma-informed practices. This is a public safety bill as much as an immigrant rights bill: U and T visas exist precisely because Congress recognized that survivors cannot cooperate with law enforcement if they fear deportation. Having passed the House and Senate JDC, this bill comes before Ways and Means for the final committee vote before the floor.**

**For these reasons, I respectfully request that the Committee PASS HB1838 HD2 SD1.**

**Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.**

**Sincerely,**

**Christian Marquez**

**HB-1838-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 10:37:01 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/7/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
George "Bud" Antonelis. PhD	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**HB1838 HD2 SD1 — U and T Visa Certifications: Uniform Statewide Requirements and AG Training**

I am a supporter of The Legal Clinic in their campaign for immigrant justice and defense of due process for all.

The first and most important responsibility of government is to protect its people – citizen and immigrant, legal or no – against all enemies, foreign and domestic. Protection of constitutional rights – Federal and State – is paramount.

In this case of this bill, I am writing in SUPPORT because it

- Establishes uniform, statewide standards for U/T visa certifications for crime / trafficking survivors.
  - These visas are for noncitizen victims of specific crimes, including human trafficking, domestic violence, and sexual assault.
  - This bill ends the “zip code lottery,” ensuring survivors get consistent, fair process regardless of which county/agency they contact.
- Requires that all certifying entities adopt compliant policies.
- Appropriates Attorney General training funds and ensures AG training to reduce improper denials.

I am not opposed to enforcement of law. U/T visas exist so crime survivors can cooperate with law enforcement, but this bill protects them from misapplication of the law.

**PLEASE VOTE AYE AND FAST TRACK THIS BILL TO THE GOVERNOR'S DESK.**

**HB-1838-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 10:48:00 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/7/2026 10:31:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nancy D Moser	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

in support

## **Testimony In SUPPORT of HB1838 HD2 SD1**

Senate Committee on Ways and Means (WAM)

Chair: Sen. Donovan M. Dela Cruz  
Vice Chair: Sen. Sharon Y. Moriwaki

Hearing Date: April 7, 2026

Dear Chair Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Sharon Y. Moriwaki, and members of the Committee on Ways and Means,

My name is Jeremiah Brown and I submit this testimony in **support of HB1838 HD2 SD1**, which establishes uniform statewide requirements for policies and processes for issuing U and T visa certifications for noncitizen victims of crime, requires each state and county certifying entity to adopt a compliant policy and process, and appropriates funds for the Department of the Attorney General to provide training on all federal and state requirements for U and T visa certifications.

Survivors of serious crimes and trafficking should not face a “zip code lottery” when seeking U or T visa certification. HB1838 HD2 SD1 creates clear, consistent statewide standards so victims and survivors can access fair and timely certification processes regardless of which county or agency they interact with. This measure also strengthens public safety. When survivors trust that coming forward will not create additional harm, confusion, or arbitrary delays, they are more likely to report crimes and cooperate with investigations—helping hold offenders accountable and keeping our communities safer.

Finally, training is essential for effective implementation. Funding for Attorney General training will help certifying entities and officials understand federal requirements, reduce errors and delays, and promote consistent practices statewide.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the Committee **PASS HB1838 HD2 SD1**.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,  
Jeremiah Brown  
Waialua, Oahu

**HB-1838-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 3:01:47 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/7/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amanda Christie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony of Amanda Christie

In SUPPORT of HB1838 HD2 SD1

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Senate Ways and Means committee,

My name is Dr. Amanda Christie. I am a current resident of Makiki, and an educator who often ties classroom content to the on-going community work of the Hawai'i Coalition for Immigrant Rights and The Legal Clinic. I submit this testimony **in support of HB1838 HD2 SD1**, which establishes uniform statewide requirements for policies and processes for the issuance of U and T visa certifications for noncitizen victims of crime that are consistent with federal laws and regulations governing U and T visas. Requires each state and county certifying entity to adopt a policy and process for the issuance of U and T visa certifications, consistent with those statewide requirements. Appropriates funds for the Department of the Attorney General to provide training to certifying entities and certifying officials on all federal and state requirements for U and T visa certifications.

Today (April 6, 2026), the long-running publication *Mother Jones* published an in-depth story about a woman named Carmen. Carmen's story highlights the essential nature of uniform state-level U and T visa certification processes. According to the article,

"Carmen F., an immigrant from South America, called the police [to respond to her husband's ongoing domestic abuse]. He was soon deported. Then she applied for a U visa, a special visa that gives crime victims a pathway to permanent residency in the United States if they cooperated with law enforcement to get their perpetrators off the streets. Unfortunately, the wait time to receive one of these visas is often more than 15 years. There's a massive backlog, and in the meantime the Trump administration has been deporting the applicants, contrary to longstanding Immigration and Customs Enforcement policy...Last year, ICE detained Carmen (not her real name) and deported her and her young son back to their homeland—where her abusive ex was awaiting them at the airport ([citation](#))."

A lack of fair, transparent, and uniform U and T visa certification processes at the state level in Hawai'i continues to put so many individuals, just like Carmen, in serious, on-going danger.

As a National Immigrant Women's Advocacy Project 2024 report outlines, Congress initially "created the U and T visas in order to strengthen the justice system's ability to detect, investigate, prosecute, convict and sentence perpetrators of domestic violence, child abuse, sexual assault, stalking, human trafficking and other criminal activities. One significant way to achieve these goals was to offer much needed protection, safety, and stability through immigration relief, protection from deportation, employment authorization, and a path to lawful permanent residency to immigrant victims of these offenses who mustered the courage to report crime victimization to government officials." The benefits of uniform statewide policies for U and T visa certifications include ensuring the future safety of noncitizen survivors of crime in Hawai'i, reducing the risk of deportation for vulnerable crime survivors, and fighting crime across communities. As of today, approximately 20 states have already passed legislation securing more uniform U AND T visa certification processes. Hawai'i should be the next state to join this collective group by passing HB1838 HD2 SD1 today.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Amanda Christie