



**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

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February 4, 2026

TO: HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TECHNOLOGY
Representative Greggor Ilagan, Chair
Representative Ikaika Hussey, Vice Chair
Honorable Members

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

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

HEARING: Friday, February 6, 2026 @ 8:30 am; Conference Room 423

POSITION: SUPPORT with COMMENTS

Testimony:

SHPDA Strongly supports HB 1838, Relating to VISAS.

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.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

___ Jack Lewin, MD, Administrator, SHPDA



JOHN PELLETIER
CHIEF OF POLICE

POLICE DEPARTMENT

COUNTY OF MAUI

55 MAHALANI STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
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WADE M. MAEDA
DEPUTY CHIEF OF POLICE

February 4, 2026

Chair Gregor Ilagan
Vice Chair Ikaika Hussey
and Members
Committee on Economic Development and Technology
The Thirty-Third Legislature
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

SUBJECT: Testimony in support of H.B. 1838, Relating to Visas

Dear Chair Ilagan, Vice-Chair Hussey, and Committee Members:

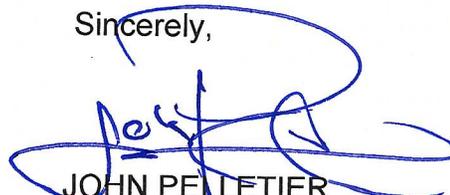
I am writing in strong support of HB 1838.

HB 1838 makes it easier and more consistent for immigrant victims of crime to obtain U and T visas, which are critical protections under federal law. By requiring clear written policies, trained staff, and public access to information, HB 1838 ensures that victims know their rights, and can safely assist law enforcement, participate in investigations, and have a fair chance to secure legal status. The Maui Police Department currently has a U-Visa policy in place for our immigrant community members who are victims of a crime and may need assistance.

Supporting this bill strengthens both victim protection and furthers community trust in law enforcement, while helping victims of crime recover from trauma without fear of immigration consequences.

For these reasons, I urge the Committee to support HB 1838.

Sincerely,



JOHN PELLETIER
Chief of Police

Testimony of Megahn Chun & Alex Villarino

In SUPPORT of HB1838

Representative Greggor Ilagan, Chair

Representative Ikaika Hussey, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: Feb 6th, 2026

Dear Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and members of the Committee on Economic Development and Technology

Our names are Megahn Chun and Alex Villarino, and we are **the owners of Mercado de La Raza**. We are submitting this testimony **in support of HB 1838**, a bill to establish **uniform statewide policies and processes** for U and T visa certifications for noncitizen survivors of crime here in Hawai'i.

We strongly 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.

- **Improve public safety by encouraging victims to report crimes.**

Research and best practices show that when victims feel safe coming forward, public safety outcomes improve for everyone. By reducing uncertainty and fear around the certification process, HB1838 helps immigrant victims report crimes and cooperate with law enforcement. This strengthens trust between immigrant communities and law enforcement and supports safer communities statewide.

- **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.

For these reasons, we respectfully ask the committee to **support HB 1838**. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Megahn Chun and Alex Villarino

Marchante LLC dba Mercado de La Raza

808.593.226

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 12:02:37 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Matthew B. Johnson	Pacific Gateway Center	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony of Pacific Gateway Center

In SUPPORT of HB1838

Representative Greggor Ilagan, Chair

Representative Ikaika Hussey, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: Feb 6th, 2026

Dear Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and members of the Committee on Economic Development and Technology

My name is Matthew B. Johnson, and I am the Executive Director of Pacific Gateway Center, an Immigrant Resource Center serving Hawai'i's immigrant and refugee communities since 1973. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 1838, a bill to establish uniform statewide policies and processes for U and T visa certifications for noncitizen survivors of crime here in Hawai'i.

Pacific Gateway Center supports HB 1838 because establishing uniform, statewide policies for U and T visa certifications ensures fairness, consistency, and timely protection for noncitizen survivors of crime across Hawai'i. Survivors of domestic violence, human trafficking, and other serious crimes often face fear, instability, and barriers to reporting abuse, especially when certification processes vary by county or agency.

Clear and consistent standards reduce confusion and delays, encourage cooperation with law enforcement, and help survivors access legal status, safety, and critical services needed to rebuild their lives. This bill aligns with PGC's mission to protect vulnerable immigrant and refugee communities, promote public safety, and ensure that survivors are treated with dignity and equity regardless of where they live in the state.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask the committee to support HB 1838. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Matthew B. Johnson
Executive Director

Pacific Gateway Center



COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TECHNOLOGY

Rep. Greggor Ilagan, Chair
Rep. Ikaika Hussey, Vice Chair

HEARING:

Friday, February 6, 2026 at 8:30 am | VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE | Conference Room 423
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT - HB 1838, RELATING TO VISAS

Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, 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 HB1838**, 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, requires each state and county certifying entity to adopt those policies and processes, and funds training so they comply with federal U and T visa requirements. *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.*

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, these 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.

HB1838 is a practical, targeted solution. By creating uniform statewide 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. 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.

We respectfully ask you to stand with Hawai'i's immigrant crime victims by **voting in support of HB1838**.

Sinceramente,

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

Veronica Mendoza
Maui Roots Reborn, *Founding Executive Director*
EPA Maui, *Founding Coalition Member*



www.hicir.org | Instagram @hicir
hicoalitionforimmigrantrights@gmail.com

**Testimony of Liza Ryan-Gill
In SUPPORT of HB1838 Relating to Visas**

Representative Ilagan, Chair
Representative Hussey, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: Feb 6th, 2026, 2pm Room 423

Dear Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and members of the Committee,

My name is **Liza Ryan-Gill**, testifying on behalf of the **Hawai‘i Coalition for Immigrant Rights (HCIR)**. HCIR is a coalition of **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.

We write in **strong support of HB1838**, which establishes **uniform statewide requirements** for U and T visa certification policies, processes and training.

HB1838 is a public safety and access-to-justice bill. U and T visas are federally created tools in immigration law that are meant to allow noncitizen survivors of qualifying crimes—including violent crimes, fraud, domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking—to come forward, cooperate with law enforcement investigations, and obtain a visa - thereby enabling them to stabilize their lives. They were created in federal immigration law to provide local law enforcement agencies the tools they need to fight crime in their communities. However, survivors in Hawai‘i often experience uncertainty and inconsistency when requesting the official law enforcement certification that is required (U visa) or often essential (T visa) to pursue that form of federal immigration relief. As a result, we are all less safe.

HB1838 addresses these gaps by setting clear, transparent, and legally aligned standards for state and county certifying law enforcement entities, including police departments and prosecutor’s offices. U and T visas are critical tools that support public safety by enabling law enforcement to investigate and prosecute serious crimes more effectively.

When immigrant victims fear that coming forward will expose them to immigration consequences, they are less likely to report crimes, cooperate with law enforcement, or provide essential evidence. This undermines investigations, weakens prosecutions, and allows perpetrators to remain at large. U and T visas help remove these barriers by providing a pathway for victims to safely engage with law enforcement.

However, individuals seeking U and T visas cannot apply without certification from a law enforcement agency confirming that they have been victims of qualifying crimes and have been helpful, are being helpful, or are likely to be helpful in the investigation or prosecution. Because



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federal law gives local agencies broad discretion to determine when and whether a victim has been sufficiently cooperative, this has resulted in a patchwork of inconsistent policies and practices across Hawai‘i.

As a result, similarly situated victims are treated differently depending on where they live or which agency they encounter. Many victims are unaware that U and T visas are available to them, do not know how to request a certification, or are discouraged from seeking help altogether. In some jurisdictions, law enforcement agencies do not provide certifications at all, creating unnecessary barriers that harm both victims and public safety.

HB1838 would promote consistency, fairness, and transparency statewide, ensuring that immigrant victims have meaningful access to these federal protections and that law enforcement agencies have clear guidance to support cooperation, accountability, and safer communities.

1) Enhances access to justice and community trust through transparent, consistent processes

HB1838 requires each certifying entity to **adopt a written policy and process**, make that policy **publicly available**, and designate at least one certifying official to review and respond to certification requests from victims of crimes. These requirements are practical and necessary. Survivors and their advocates should not have to guess how to request certification, who reviews requests, or what criteria are being applied. Clear statewide expectations promote fairness, reduce arbitrary outcomes, and build confidence that cooperation with law enforcement and the courts will be met with a consistent and lawful process.

Importantly, HB1838 also provides **core safeguards** that help prevent improper denials. The bill prohibits certifying entities from imposing requirements that are **more restrictive than federal law** and clarifies that certification cannot be conditioned on factors such as an active prosecution or conviction. This is essential: federal law recognizes that many survivors cannot safely participate in prosecution, and many cases do not proceed for reasons unrelated to credibility or harm.

2) Improves public safety by encouraging victims to report crimes and cooperate

Public safety is strongest when victims and witnesses feel safe engaging with systems of accountability. When immigrant survivors fear confusion, retaliation, or inconsistent treatment, crimes go unreported and traffickers and abusers remain in the community. HB1838 reduces these barriers by creating predictable timelines and transparent procedures.



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The bill requires responses within **45 days**, with an expedited **14-day** timeline for survivors facing urgent immigration consequences (such as removal proceedings or age-related eligibility concerns for qualifying family members). Predictable timelines matter: delays can make relief functionally inaccessible and can deter survivors from engaging at all. By reducing uncertainty, HB1838 supports safer communities statewide.

3) Ensures training, language access, confidentiality, and accountability

HB1838 is also legally sound because it pairs process requirements with **implementation supports and accountability measures**:

- **Training:** The Department of the Attorney General must provide training so certifying entities' policies comply with federal requirements, and the bill appropriates funds to support that training. Proper training is key to preventing unlawful denials and ensuring officials understand the purpose and limits of certification (which is not an immigration benefit decision, but a factual attestation used by federal adjudicators).
- **Language access protocols:** Requiring language access reduces inequities for limited-English-proficient survivors, who are disproportionately vulnerable to exploitation and less likely to seek help without clear communication.
- **Confidentiality protections:** The bill requires certifying entities to keep immigration status and personal identifying information confidential, a critical safeguard to prevent retaliation and protect survivor privacy.
- **Reporting:** Starting July 1, 2027, certifying entities must track requests, approvals, denials, timelines, and reasons for denial, and report annually to the Attorney General, who then aggregates and reports to the Legislature. These data are essential for oversight, continuous improvement, and ensuring uniform statewide access.

Finally, HB1838 provides an avenue for **judicial review** when an entity fails to respond on time or denies requests in violation of the chapter—an important accountability mechanism that encourages compliance and discourages arbitrary practices.

Conclusion

HB1838 strengthens Hawai'i's response to crime and trafficking by ensuring survivors have a fair, consistent pathway to request U and T visa certifications—grounded in federal law,



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supported by training, and accountable through reporting and review. We respectfully urge you to **PASS HB1838**.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Liza Ryan Gill

Executive Director

Hawai'i Coalition for Immigrant Rights

To: Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Members of ECD
Re: SUPPORT HB1838, HB1870, HB2445, HB1886, HB1839, HB2540
Hearing: Friday, Feb 6, 2026 — 8:30 AM

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

My name is Elsa West, and I submit testimony on behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union in strong support of HB1838, HB1870, HB2445, HB1886, HB1839, and HB2540. Together, these measures strengthen community safety, due process, and transparency—so immigrant and mixed-status families can access essential services without fear, and survivors can seek help and cooperate with authorities safely.

I believe immigrant and mixed-status families should feel safe in this place they've chosen to make their home. Hawai'i is a community, and what I find most important is the safety of everyone, no matter their origin and ethnicity. It pains me to see the state of this nation, and I hope that Hawai'i can be an exception to the inequality and injustice we are seeing.

I respectfully urge you to PASS these measures. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Elsa West
American Civil Liberties Union
edubjr2010@icloud.com

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 10:54:11 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Golojuch, Jr. (he/him)	Pride at Work – Hawai‘i	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Representatives,

Pride at Work – Hawai‘i is an official chapter of [Pride at Work](#) which is a national nonprofit organization that represents LGBTQIA+ union members and their allies. We are an officially recognized constituency group of the AFL-CIO that organizes mutual support between the organized Labor Movement and the LGBTQIA+ Community to further social and economic justice.

Pride at Work – Hawai‘i fully supports HB 1838.

We ask that you support this needed piece of legislation.

Mahalo,

Michael Golojuch, Jr. (he/him)

President

[Pride at Work – Hawai‘i](#)



Committee on Economic Development & Technology
Chair Greggor Ilagan, Vice Chair Ikaika Hussey
Friday, February 6, 2026
Room 423
HB1838 – RELATING TO VISAS

TESTIMONY

Judith Mills Wong, Legislative Committee, League of Women Voters of Hawaii

Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Committee Members:

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii supports HB1838.

The League supports immigration policies that are fair and humane and protect both citizens and residents of the United States.

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 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.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Eric Cohen

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Washington, D.C.

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February 5, 2026

Dear Chair Greggor Ilagan and Vice Chair Ikaika Hussey and Members of the Economic Development and Technology Committee:

I am the Legal Program Director at the Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC). The ILRC is a national non-profit organization that provides legal trainings, educational materials, and advocacy to advance immigrant rights. The ILRC's mission is to work with and educate immigrants, community organizations, and the legal sector to continue to build a democratic society that values diversity and the rights of all people. Since its inception in 1979, the ILRC has provided technical assistance on hundreds of thousands of immigration law issues, trained thousands of advocates and pro bono attorneys annually on immigration law, distributed thousands of practitioner guides, provided expertise to immigrant-led advocacy efforts across the country, and supported hundreds of immigration legal non-profit organizations in building their capacity. Through our close ties with the community, we have a profound awareness of the hurdles faced by qualified immigrant survivors of crime in filing immigration applications.

At the ILRC, I lead the ILRC's Immigrant Survivors Team and conduct frequent in-person and webinar trainings nationally on U visas, naturalization and citizenship, family-based immigration, and FOIA requests. I also provide technical assistance through the ILRC's Attorney of the Day program on a wide range of immigration issues, including U visas, T visas, VAWA, immigration options for youth, consequences of criminal convictions for immigration purposes, removal defense strategy, and eligibility for other forms of immigration relief, including family-based immigration, DACA, cancellation of removal, asylum, and naturalization.

I am writing to encourage Hawai'i to pass HB 1838. 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 safety 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 your consideration,

Alison Kamhi



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB1838 - RELATING TO VISAS

House Committee on Economic Development and Technology

Rep. Greggor Ilagan, Chair
Rep. Ikaika Hussey, Vice Chair

February 5, 2026

Dear Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Members of the Committee:

The Legal Clinic (TLC) strongly supports HB1838, which strengthens public safety by establishing fair and timely processes for noncitizen survivors of serious crime or human trafficking to obtain U or T visa certification from state and county agencies. 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. Ensuring equitable access to justice is central to our mission.

The U and T visa programs were created by Congress as critical public safety tools to assist in the detection, investigation, and prosecution of serious crimes, including domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking. These programs provide humanitarian protection to noncitizen victims, allowing them to safely report crimes and assist investigations without fear of immigration consequences. Certification confirming victimization and helpfulness is the required first step in applying for these visas. While 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. The absence of uniform statewide standards in Hawai'i has resulted in inconsistent practices across counties, leading to confusion, improper delays and denials, and unequal access to protection for survivors.

HB1838 addresses these challenges by establishing clear, consistent statewide standards aligned with federal law and best practices. The bill directs certifying entities to adopt written, publicly available certification policies, designate at least one certifying official to review requests, and comply with reasonable response timelines to ensure timely decisions - particularly important for survivors facing removal proceedings or other urgent immigration enforcement or filing deadlines. Requiring written explanations for certification denials and access to judicial review further promotes accountability and fairness.

HB1838 also provides funding to the Department of the Attorney General to support statewide training for certifying entities. Training is critical to ensure certifying officials understand certification standards, apply them consistently, and treat survivors fairly. HB1838 additionally safeguards survivor confidentiality and requires language access protocols to support individuals with limited English proficiency. Survivors of crime and trafficking often face significant trauma, fear of retaliation, and barriers to services. Strong confidentiality protections and language access policies are essential to building trust and encouraging cooperation with law enforcement.

HB1838 enhances public safety by supporting survivors and promoting fair and consistent certification practices statewide. When survivors trust they can report crimes without risking removal or unequal treatment, they are more likely to come forward, cooperate with investigations, and assist in holding offenders accountable.

We commend the Legislature's commitment to survivor protection and community safety and urge the Committee to pass HB1838.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christina Sablan', written in a cursive style.

Christina Sablan
Community & Policy Advocate



February 6, 2026

Members of the House Committee on Economic Development & Technology:

Chair Greggor Ilagan
Vice Chair Ikaika Hussey
Rep. Daniel Holt
Rep. Adrian K. Tam
Rep. Shirley Ann Temlo
Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita
Rep. Joe Gedeon

Re: HB1838 Relating to Visas

Dear Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Members of the House Committee on Economic Development & Technology:

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, I respectfully submit testimony in strong support of HB1838, 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.¹

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.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.

Sincerely,
Angelina Mercado, Executive Director

¹https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/data/fy24_immigration_applications_made_by_victims_of_abuse.pdf



Hawai'i

Committee: House Committee on Economic Development & Technology
Hearing Date/Time: Friday, February 6, 2026 8:30 am
Place: Conference Room #423 & Via Videoconference
Re: **Testimony of the ACLU of Hawai'i in SUPPORT of H.B. 1838, Relating to Visas**

Dear Chair Ilgan, Vice-Chair Hussey, and Members of the Committee:

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

HB 1838 will enhance 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 will improve public safety 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.¹ By reducing uncertainty and fear surrounding the certification process, HB 1838 helps victims report crimes and cooperate with law enforcement, supporting safer communities.

Ensure 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.

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

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mandy Fernandes'.

Mandy Fernandes
Policy Director

¹ 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>

ACLU of Hawai'i

The mission of the ACLU of Hawai'i is to protect the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the U.S. and State Constitutions. The ACLU of Hawai'i fulfills this through legislative, litigation, and public education programs statewide. The ACLU of Hawai'i is a non-partisan and private non-profit organization founded in 1965 that provides its services at no cost to the public and does not accept government funds.



Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair
Senator Sharon Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Committee on Economic Development

Friday, February 6, 2026
9:00AM - Conference Room 016
HB1838 - Relating to Visas - Support

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

HULI PAC strongly supports HB1838, which establishes uniform statewide requirements for the issuance of U and T visa certifications for noncitizen victims of crime, consistent with federal law. These certifications are an important tool to support access to justice and humanitarian relief for survivors who assist in the investigation or prosecution of qualifying crimes.

Currently, the lack of consistent policies and processes across state and county certifying entities creates uncertainty and uneven access for eligible victims. HB1838 addresses this by requiring clear written policies, defined response timelines, confidentiality protections, and language access protocols, helping ensure that survivors statewide are treated fairly regardless of jurisdiction.

By providing uniform standards and training through the Department of the Attorney General, this bill strengthens accountability, transparency, and compliance with federal requirements. These measures support a more accessible and reliable process for victims seeking certification and help reinforce trust in our systems of justice.

We respectfully urge the Committee to support passage of HB1838.

Mahalo.



Rep. Gregor Ilagan, Chair
Rep. Ikaika Hussey, Vice Chair

Committee on Economic Development & Technology

Friday, February 6, 2026
8:30AM Conference Room 423

RE: HB1838 - Relating to Visas - Strong Support

Dear Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Members of the Committees,

On behalf of the Chamber of Sustainable Commerce (CSC), we write in strong support of HB1838, which establishes uniform statewide policies and processes for U and T visa certifications for noncitizen survivors of crime. The Chamber of Sustainable Commerce represents more than 570 small businesses, sole proprietors and entrepreneurs across Hawai'i committed to a triple bottom line: people, planet and prosperity.

This bill strengthens public safety, workforce stability, and economic resilience for Hawai'i's working families and small businesses.

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

These visa programs are vital crime-fighting and community-stabilizing tools. They protect survivors, encourage cooperation with law enforcement, and support individuals who contribute meaningfully to Hawai'i's communities, workforce, and local economy.

From a small business perspective, HB1838 addresses real and ongoing challenges. Many survivors of crime are part of Hawai'i's essential workforce—working in agriculture, hospitality, caregiving, construction, and service industries. When victims are afraid to report crimes due to immigration uncertainty, exploitation persists, law enforcement cooperation declines, and responsible employers are placed at a disadvantage by bad actors who profit from fear and silence.

As we are witnessing, immigration issues are complex. Because of that complexity, some certifying entities are resistant to certifying victim helpfulness due to lack of understanding of the U or T visa process, limited resources, or inconsistent practices. As a result, noncitizen victims across the state face uneven and

Hawaii Legislative Council Members

Joell Edwards
Wainiha Country Market
Hanalei

Russell Ruderman
Island Naturals
Hilo/Kona

Dr. Andrew Johnson
Niko Niko Family Dentistry
Honolulu

Robert H. Pahia
Hawaii Taro Farm
Wailuku

Maile Meyer
Honolulu

Tina Wildberger
Kihei Ice
Kihei

L. Malu Shizue Miki
Abundant Life Natural Foods
Hilo

Chamber of
Sustainable Commerce
808.445.7606
P.O. Box 22394
Honolulu, HI 96823

unpredictable access to justice depending on where they live or which agency they encounter.

HB1838 directly addresses these gaps by requiring:

- Uniform statewide standards
- Clear, publicly available policies
- Timely responses to certification requests
- Training for certifying officials
- Prohibition on additional or more restrictive requirements beyond federal law

These reforms improve transparency, consistency, and fairness—while strengthening trust between communities, law enforcement, and government institutions.

By supporting the appropriate and consistent use of U and T visas, we ensure that vulnerable individuals can come forward safely, crimes can be reported and investigated, and workplaces can operate under fair and lawful conditions. This strengthens not only public safety, but also the economic and social fabric of our state.

For these reasons, the Chamber of Sustainable Commerce respectfully urges your support of HB1838. This bill helps ensure our immigration system remains fair, humane, effective, and aligned with Hawai'i's values—while supporting working families, ethical employers, and safer communities.

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 1:01:31 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Angela Young	CARES	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Support

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 4:33:02 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kayla Marie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this measure

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 10:34:53 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tim Huycke	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1838.

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 2:17:03 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Younghee Overly	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Thank you for this opportunity to support HB1838 which 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 from immigration proceedings. 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

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 8:49:53 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelle Bonk	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a supporter of Indivisible Hawai'i I ask you to pass this bill.
Thank you.

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 10:01:54 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Samuel M Mitchell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Samuel Mitchell

In SUPPORT of HB2445

To: Members of the Committee

My name is Samuel Mitchell and I submit testimony in strong support of HB2445, which requires the Department of Education to develop a clear emergency response plan for immigration enforcement activity at or near public schools.

Schools must be safe, stable places for students to learn. A standardized plan will give educators clear guidance, protect student safety and privacy, and reduce confusion and panic during emergencies—so learning can continue and families can trust that schools are prepared.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to PASS HB2445. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Samuel Mitchell

Makiki NB-10

808Unionist@gmail.com

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 11:03:32 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Katy Hintzen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I strongly support HB1838 as a critical measure to support those in our community that are the victims of crime and violence and need structures of support and safety. This bill will help to standardize, streamline, and decrease delays for survivors and make all of our communities safer. When survivors are not protected and supported it is less likely that crime will be reported and dealt with.

Thank you,

Katy

I am writing in strong support of HB1838 both personally and as a member of the Indivisible Hawaii State 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 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.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this Bill.

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 12:32:22 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Martha Nakajima	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. Thank you. Martha Nakajima, Honolulu, member of Indivisible

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 1:20:17 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy D Moser	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you

In Support of HB 1838 – Relating To Visas

Julia Pinkerton

Aloha ECD Committee Chairs, Senators Ilagan and Hussey and ECD Committee Members Holt, Tam, Templo, Yamashita, and Gedeon,

I'm a social work and psychology student at UH Manoa, and I would like to voice my enthusiastic support for HB 1838 – Relating to Visas.

Hawaii has long been home to countless immigrants who have built integral parts of our social fabric and want to support their neighbors. Immigrants in our communities want to help keep us safe and report criminals who harm our people, but are hindered by the threat of being torn away from their homes, their friends, and their families (Darehshori et al., 2025). The U and T visas would enable immigrants to stand with us against crime without fear of reprisals from the very law enforcement they are assisting. As things stand, violent criminals can easily weaponize the immigrants' fears of deportation and separation from their families to coerce them to stay silent and trapped with abusers who are free to continue harming them, their families, and their neighbors (Darehshori et al., 2025).

Furthermore, as our neighbors, immigrants have a place in our communities and hearts. How can we abandon the families growing alongside ours, who share their joys with us but are terrified that if they lean on us as we do them, we will only cast them aside? What kind of neighbors do we want to be to the people trying to be such good neighbors to us?

For all of these reasons, I enthusiastically support HB 1838 – Relating to Visas and ask you to do the same.

Mahalo for your time,

Julia Pinkerton

Works Cited

Darehshori, S., Wheeler, S., Palerm, S., Orloff, L., Cox, M., Pacheco, J., Castillo, E., Kazakina, A., & DeCarli, J. (2025, December 2). "*We need u.*" Human Rights Watch.
<https://www.hrw.org/report/2025/12/02/we-need-u/how-the-u-visa-builds-trust-counters-fear-and-promotes-community-safety721>

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 6:08:31 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elizabeth Weltin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of HB1838 both personally and as a member of the Indivisible Hawaii State 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 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.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this Bill.

Elizabeth Weltin as an individual citizen and on behalf of Ka'ū Voices-An Indivisible Chapter and member of the Indivisible Hawai'i Statewide Network (IHSN)

Testimony of Jeremiah Brown

In SUPPORT of HB1838

Representative Greggor Ilagan, Chair

Representative Ikaika Hussey, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: Feb 6th, 2026

Dear Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and members of the Committee on Economic Development and Technology:

My name is Jeremiah Brown, and I am a concerned resident of Hawai'i. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 1838, a bill to establish uniform statewide policies and processes for U and T visa certifications for noncitizen survivors of crime here in Hawai'i.

I strongly 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.

- Improve public safety by encouraging victims to report crimes.

Research and best practices show that when victims feel safe coming forward, public safety outcomes improve for everyone. By reducing uncertainty and fear around the certification process, HB1838 helps immigrant victims report crimes and cooperate with law enforcement. This strengthens trust between immigrant communities and law enforcement and supports safer communities statewide.

- 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.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask the committee to support HB 1838. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Jeremiah Brown

jeremiahbrown999@gmail.com

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 7:08:06 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
J U	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of standardizing U and T visa certification processes statewide to ensure it is consistent in providing protection for survivors.

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 7:29:42 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
muhtadia rice	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Representative Greggor Ilagan, Chair

Representative Ikaika Hussey, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: Feb 6th, 2026

Dear Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and members of the Committee on Economic Development and Technology

My name is Muhtadia Rice, and I am a resident of Kailua, Hawai'i and active community member. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 1838, a bill to establish uniform statewide policies and processes for U and T visa certifications for noncitizen survivors of crime here in Hawai'i.

I strongly 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.

- Improve public safety by encouraging victims to report crimes.

Research and best practices show that when victims feel safe coming forward, public safety outcomes improve for everyone. By reducing uncertainty and fear around the certification process, HB1838 helps immigrant victims report crimes and cooperate with law enforcement. This strengthens trust between immigrant communities and law enforcement and supports safer communities statewide.

- 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.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask the committee to support HB 1838. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Muhtadia Rice

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 7:50:43 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Judith White	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass,

Judith White, Psy.D.

Member, Hawaii Indivisible

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 8:51:37 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ashley de Coligny	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 1838, a bill to establish uniform statewide policies and processes for U and T visa certifications for noncitizen survivors of crime here in Hawai'i.

I strongly 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.

- Improve public safety by encouraging victims to report crimes.

Research and best practices show that when victims feel safe coming forward, public safety outcomes improve for everyone. By reducing uncertainty and fear around the certification process, HB1838 helps immigrant victims report crimes and cooperate with law enforcement. This strengthens trust between immigrant communities and law enforcement and supports safer communities statewide.

- 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.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask the committee to support HB 1838. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Ashley de Coligny, Kaneohe resident

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 10:35:58 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noelle Lindenmann	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair & Committee Members:

I am testifying in support of HB1838. This bill helps to protect survivors, strengthen public safety, and ensure fairness across our state.

U and T visas provide critical federal protections for noncitizen survivors of serious crimes and human trafficking. Certification from law enforcement, prosecutors, or courts is a required 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.

Legislation is needed to bring clarity, consistency, and fairness to U & T visa certification statewide.

A statewide framework will encourage crime reporting, protect survivors, build trust, and ensure equal access to justice across Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for this opportunity to provide testimony.

Noelle Lindenmann, Kailua-Kona

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 9:17:51 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deborah Harada	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

It is our kuleana to ensure safety and due process for everyone here in Hawai'i.

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 9:27:52 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shay Chan Hodges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill because it;

- Creates clear, consistent statewide processes for U/T visa certifications for survivors.
- Improves public safety by helping victims feel safe reporting and cooperating.
- Provides training to help agencies implement certifications fairly and lawfully.

Mahalo.

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 10:15:35 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lori Kizer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill and ask my elected officials to approve/pass. Mahalo.

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 10:35:35 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cristina De Leon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony of Cristina De Leon

In SUPPORT of HB1838

Representative Greggor Ilagan, Chair

Representative Ikaika Hussey, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: Feb 6th, 2026

Dear Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and members of the Committee on Economic Development and Technology

My name is Cristina De Leon, and I am a concerned resident of Hawai'i. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 1838, a bill to establish uniform statewide policies and processes for U and T visa certifications for noncitizen survivors of crime here in Hawai'i.

I strongly 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.

- Improve public safety by encouraging victims to report crimes.

Research and best practices show that when victims feel safe coming forward, public safety outcomes improve for everyone. By reducing uncertainty and fear around the certification process, HB1838 helps immigrant victims report crimes and cooperate with law enforcement. This strengthens trust between immigrant communities and law enforcement and supports safer communities statewide.

- 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.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask the committee to support HB 1838. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Cristina De Leon
949-892-9349

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 10:54:33 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deanna Espinas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Submitting in full support of this bill. Thank you!

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 11:11:11 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ezgi Green	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and members of the Committee on Economic Development and Technology,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 1838, which establishes uniform statewide policies for U and T visa certifications for noncitizen survivors of crime.

This bill will benefit our communities by:

Encouraging crime reporting. When survivors feel safe coming forward, they are more likely to report crimes and cooperate with investigations, which helps keep all of our communities safer.

Creating consistency and clarity. Uniform policies across agencies provide clear guidance for both survivors and certifying officials, making the process more accessible and predictable.

Supporting proper training. Training requirements help ensure that certifying officials understand the process and can serve survivors effectively while complying with federal and state law.

I respectfully ask for your support of HB 1838.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Ezgi Green

Waialua, O'ahu

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 11:17:43 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cheryl Bellamy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a member of Indivisible Hawaii, I support this bill.

Thank you

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 11:19:04 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amy Wake	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony of Rev. Amy Wake

In SUPPORT of HB1838

Representative Greggor Ilagan, Chair

Representative Ikaika Hussey, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: Feb 6th, 2026

Dear Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and members of the Committee on Economic Development and Technology

My name is Amy Wake and I am a concerned resident of Hawai'i and pastor at Wesley United Methodist Church in Kahala. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 1838, a bill to establish uniform statewide policies and processes for U and T visa certifications for noncitizen survivors of crime here in Hawai'i.

I strongly 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.

- Improve public safety by encouraging victims to report crimes.

Research and best practices show that when victims feel safe coming forward, public safety outcomes improve for everyone. By reducing uncertainty and fear around the certification process, HB1838 helps immigrant victims report crimes and cooperate with law enforcement. This strengthens trust between immigrant communities and law enforcement and supports safer communities statewide.

- 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.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask the committee to support HB 1838. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Rev. Amy Wake

Wesley UMC

pastoramywake@gmail.com

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 12:11:46 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy Convard	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony of Nancy Convard

In SUPPORT of HB1838

Representative Greggor Ilagan, Chair

Representative Ikaika Hussey, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: Feb 6th, 2026

Dear Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and members of the Committee on Economic Development and Technology

My name is Nancy Convard, and I am a concerned resident and community member of Hawai'i. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 1838, a bill to establish uniform statewide policies and processes for U and T visa certifications for noncitizen survivors of crime here in Hawai'i.

I strongly 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.

- Improve public safety by encouraging victims to report crimes.**

Research and best practices show that when victims feel safe coming forward, public safety outcomes improve for everyone. By reducing uncertainty and fear around the certification process, HB1838 helps immigrant victims report crimes and cooperate with law enforcement. This strengthens trust between immigrant communities and law enforcement and supports safer communities statewide.

• 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.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask the committee to support HB 1838. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

**Respectfully,
Nancy Convard**

nconvard@gmail.com

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 12:19:37 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Danielle Goren	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and members of the Committee on Economic Development and Technology

My name is Danielle Goren, and I am a concerned resident of Lahaina, Hawai'i. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 1838, a bill to establish uniform statewide policies and processes for U and T visa certifications for noncitizen survivors of crime here in Hawai'i.

I strongly 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.

- Improve public safety by encouraging victims to report crimes.

Research and best practices show that when victims feel safe coming forward, public safety outcomes improve for everyone. By reducing uncertainty and fear around the certification process, HB1838 helps immigrant victims report crimes and cooperate with law enforcement. This strengthens trust between immigrant communities and law enforcement and supports safer communities statewide.

- 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.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask the committee to support HB 1838. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Danielle Goren

Lahaina, Hawai'i

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 12:31:57 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Charles Walton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB1838 is very important to ensure that all counties within the State of Hawaii's can be unified under the same legal umbrella to support this very important cause. Immigrant victim's and witnesses should not have to fear deportation in order to cooperate with local law enforcement agencies. This Bill will provide that legal protection while ensuring that statewide police agencies are given training to understand and facilitate this long-standing Federal Mandate.

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 1:15:07 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Toni Symons	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 1:35:12 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nandita Sharma	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am opposed to HB1838, because it perpetuates the framework of "trafficking" that has done much harm to migrants. The legal framework of "anti-trafficking," in which T and U Visas were created and perpetuated, denies that US immigration policies are the primary reason migrants face fraud and abuse. US immigration policies provide very few opportunities for lawful and safe migration. Most people needed to move in order to live are forced to do so with the assistance of others. Some of the people who facilitate migration are solely motivated by profit. The "anti-trafficking" framework places all the responsibility for this situation on "traffickers" rather than where it belongs: US immigration policy and employers who benefit from exploiting workers given much fewer rights and entitlements in the US.

Supporting this legislation, while seemingly "helping" "victims of trafficking" only perpetuates this framework.

The anti-trafficking framework - as many researchers, including myself, have long noted - has led to greater harms being experienced by migrants. The clandestine journey is more expensive and unsafe, as people facilitating their journey are forced to take more unsafe routes to not be found by US immigration enforcement agents.

If we actually cared about the enormous vulnerabilities faced by migrants, especially undocumented migrants, we would not rely on U and T Visas that require them to cooperate with law enforcement agents while the state is absolved of its responsibility (and is instead seen as their "savior") but on reforming US immigration policies.

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 2:19:22 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessica Kuzmier	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I am writing in favor of HB1838 because I believe it will help protect noncitizens who are victims of crime. Mahalo for your consideration.

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 2:34:21 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Georgia L Hoopes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1838.

Mahalo!

Georgia Hoopes, Kalaheo

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 2:36:01 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dana Fulton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I **strongly support HB 1838**, which would establish **uniform statewide policies and procedures for U and T visa certifications** for noncitizen victims of crime and ensure consistency with federal laws and regulations. These certifications are vital because they are the gateway to U and T visas — humanitarian immigration statuses that allow eligible survivors of qualifying crimes to remain in the United States, access work authorization, and assist law enforcement where appropriate. Without certification, survivors face barriers to relief even when they meet federal eligibility criteria.

Right now, there are **no uniform or consistent standards across state and county agencies** for how and when these certifications are issued, which leads to **uneven access to justice and protection for survivors** statewide. This bill would require **every state and county certifying entity to adopt policies and processes** that align with federal requirements, making the process transparent, fair, and accessible for all eligible victims regardless of where they live.

The appropriation for the **Department of the Attorney General to provide training** is especially crucial, as it will equip law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, and other certifying officials with the knowledge and tools needed to correctly implement certification standards and comply with federal law. Proper training increases confidence, reduces errors or delays, and ensures survivors are treated with dignity and understanding.

This bill strengthens Hawai‘i’s commitment to justice, victim support, and public safety by expanding access to critical federal protections for survivors of violence, trafficking, and serious crime. For these reasons, I urge your **support of HB 1838**.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 3:41:49 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ana Trovinger	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

****Testimony of Ana Trovinger****

****In SUPPORT of HB1838****

Representative Greggor Ilagan, Chair

Representative Ikaika Hussey, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: Feb 6th, 2026

Dear Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and members of the Committee on Economic Development and Technology,

My name is Ana Trovinger, a passionate resident of Hawai'i. I am here to express my strong support for HB 1838, a transformative bill aimed at establishing uniform statewide policies and processes for U and T visa certifications for noncitizen survivors of crime in our beautiful state.

This bill is a beacon of hope, enhancing access to justice and fostering community trust. By mandating that law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, courts, and other certifying entities adopt clear and consistent policies, HB 1838 champions fairness and transparency. This clarity empowers survivors, assuring them that their cooperation will be met with support, thereby strengthening the bonds of trust between immigrant communities and public safety officials.

Moreover, this legislation is vital for our collective public safety. It encourages victims to come forward, as research shows that when individuals feel safe and secure, we all benefit from improved safety outcomes. By alleviating the fear and uncertainty surrounding the certification process, HB 1838 inspires immigrant victims to report crimes and engage with law enforcement. This ultimately fortifies safer communities throughout our state.

Additionally, the bill underscores the critical nature of proper training and accountability for certifying officials. The outlined training requirements are essential, preventing improper denials and ensuring adherence to legal standards. Well-trained officials will be equipped to uphold

victims' rights while protecting sensitive populations, fostering an environment where individuals can approach authorities with confidence, free from fear or misinformation.

For these reasons, I earnestly urge the committee to support HB 1838. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Ana Trovinger

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 3:52:04 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristen Kelly	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please protect survivors of crime and trafficking. Keep immigration status confidential.

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 4:05:52 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Collat	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of HB1838 both personally and as a member of the Indivisible Hawaii State 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 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.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this Bill.

Aloha, Michael

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 4:17:15 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shannon Rudolph	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 4:38:50 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daphne Loren	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony of Daphne Loren

In SUPPORT of HB1838

Representative Greggor Ilagan, Chair

Representative Ikaika Hussey, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: Feb 6th, 2026

Dear Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and members of the Committee on Economic Development and Technology

My name is Daphne Loren, and I am a concerned resident of Hawai'i. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 1838, a bill to establish uniform statewide policies and processes for U and T visa certifications for noncitizen survivors of crime here in Hawai'i.

To protect survivors of crime and promote justice,

I strongly 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.

- Improve public safety by encouraging victims to report crimes.**

Research and best practices show that when victims feel safe coming forward, public safety outcomes improve for everyone. By reducing uncertainty and fear around the certification process, HB1838 helps immigrant victims report crimes and cooperate with law enforcement. This strengthens trust between immigrant communities and law enforcement and supports safer communities statewide.

- **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.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask the committee to support HB 1838. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Daphne Loren

tea.loren.456@gmail.com | (510) 618-9231

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 4:42:53 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jordan Kapon Nakamura	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Jordan Kapon Nakamura and I'm submitting testimony in support of this bill which will provide needed protections for our immigrant 'Ohana residing and contributing to our communities. Our fascistic federal government is using immigration status as a political tool to carry out white supremacist displacement en masse, and Hawai'i has a duty to its population to protect those who call this place home and who rely on democratic due process and the purpose of the state to protect the rights of residents and uphold a humane and just state of affairs. This bill is a small step in ensuring there are state protections and legal options for our neighbors who are currently feeling defenseless against fascist threats of displacement. Mahalo for your consideration and commitment to the kokua of Hawai'i's people.

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 4:45:14 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julie Uyeno-Pidot	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and members of the committee,

I would like to submit testimony in strong support of HB 1838: Relating to Visas. In today's tumultuous political climate, it is critically important that consistent policies and procedures are applied to the distribution of U and T visa certifications. This consistency should help to avoid unnecessary actions by Department of Homeland Security or its affiliated agencies.

The purpose of these visas is to provide protection to witnesses or survivors of violent crimes or human trafficking who are assisting law enforcement in prosecuting such offenses. These brave individuals should not have to worry about being deported to their home countries, where they will face certain danger. As such, I request that you vote in favor of HB 1838.

**Mahalo,
Julie Uyeno-Pidot**

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 4:57:40 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Inge Detlefsen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

It's common sense that if we want to reduce crime, we cannot deport victims. Especially in trafficking cases, there would otherwise be complete impunity.

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 6:42:59 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy J. Budd	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To: Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Members of ECD

Re: SUPPORT **HB1838, HB1870, HB2445, HB1886, HB1839, HB2540**

Hearing: Friday, Feb 6, 2026 — 8:30 AM

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

My name is Nancy J. Budd and I submit this testimony in **strong support** of **HB1838, HB1870, HB2445, HB1886, HB1839, and HB2540**. Together, these measures strengthen community safety, due process and transparency. It is critical that our state provide these protections so all of our citizens, including vulnerable immigrant and mixed-status families in particular, can access essential services without fear and survivors can seek help and safely cooperate with authorities.

State and county participation in civil immigration enforcement near sensitive locations such as schools, health care facilities, libraries, shelters, and courts must be prohibited. People must be able to safely access education, health care, emergency services and courts without fear. Every day we see masked and violent federal “agents” attacking and abducting people, including minors, on streets, at schools and as they enter court buildings to attend hearings. This must stop.

Secretive or masked enforcement undermines due process and public trust. Transparency is essential to constitutional accountability—especially for immigrant communities.

287(g) programs lead to racial profiling, unlawful detention, and fear of law enforcement. Ending deputization keeps local resources focused on community safety—not federal immigration enforcement.

No one should be questioned by immigration authorities without understanding their rights. The TRUTH Act ensures consent, language access, and transparency—core principles of due process.

A single extra day in a sentence can trigger mandatory detention or deportation under federal law. This reform promotes proportional sentencing and prevents unnecessary family separation.

Survivors should never be punished for seeking help. Standardized policies ensure survivors can report crimes safely, support law enforcement investigations and prosecutions, and access the protections guaranteed under federal law.

Together, these bills

- Protect families from separation
- Strengthen public safety
- Increase trust in public institutions
- Uphold essential constitutional rights and due process
- Affirm Hawaii's commitment to dignity and justice for all

I respectfully urge you to **PASS** these measures. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Nancy J. Budd

Kaua'i Resident, attorney, and former Hawaii Board of Education member

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 6:45:11 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ken Stover	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

support

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 6:54:08 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James Tacker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1838

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 7:11:05 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jason Lewis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and members of the Committee on Economic Development and Technology

My name is Jason Lewis, and I am a concerned resident of Lahaina, Hawai'i. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 1838, a bill to establish uniform statewide policies and processes for U and T visa certifications for noncitizen survivors of crime here in Hawai'i.

I strongly 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.

Improve public safety by encouraging victims to report crimes.

Research and best practices show that when victims feel safe coming forward, public safety outcomes improve for everyone. By reducing uncertainty and fear around the certification process, HB1838 helps immigrant victims report crimes and cooperate with law enforcement. This strengthens trust between immigrant communities and law enforcement and supports safer communities statewide.

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.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask the committee to support HB 1838. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Jason Lewis, Lahaina, Hawai'i

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 7:33:13 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Manmeet Rana	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill should be passed to maintain due process.

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 7:48:53 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

To: Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Members of ECD

Re: SUPPORT HB1838, HB1870, HB2445, HB1886, HB1839, HB2540

Hearing: Friday, Feb 6, 2026 — 8:30 AM

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

I am writing to submit my personal testimony in *strong* support of HB1838, HB1870, HB2445, HB1886, HB1839, and HB2540. Together, these measures provide essential community safety tools and support due process and transparency. We owe these guidelines and safeguards to our extensive immigrant community, as well as in support of ourselves and our own personal liberties. All residents, regardless of status, deserve to live in our communities and access essential services without fear, and survivors can seek help and cooperate with authorities safely.

I strongly urge you to PASS these measures quickly out of committee and push for them to be also passed in the Senate where appropriate. From there please see they are expeditiously sent to the full legislature for emergency approval and forwarding to the Governor for signature. Time is of the essence.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

D. K. Lynn
Honolulu

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:13:43 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ruta Jordans	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:40:23 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gabrielle Clark	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To: Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Members of ECD
Re: SUPPORT HB1838, HB1870, HB2445, HB1886, HB1839, HB2540
Hearing: Friday, Feb 6, 2026 — 8:30 AM

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

My name is Gabrielle Clark and I submit testimony on behalf of myself in strong support of HB1838, HB1870, HB2445, HB1886, HB1839, and HB2540. Together, these measures strengthen community safety, due process, and transparency—so immigrant and mixed-status families can access essential services without fear, and survivors can seek help and cooperate with authorities safely.

I firmly believe that everyone, no matter their country of origin, deserves an equal opportunity to live a safe, happy, healthy life. No one should fear for their safety in the pursuit of this. No one, no child, should go to school wondering if they won't make it back home. No one should avoid treating their health conditions out of fear of being detained. Having protected spaces, law enforcement transparency & accountability, accessible legal information, due process & fair opportunities for visas protects the mental health, physical health, and overall wellbeing of our community members. We would all be better for it.

I respectfully urge you to PASS these measures. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Gabrielle Clark
O'ahu
gabbynclark@gmail.com / clarkgn@hawaii.edu

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:54:56 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kencho Gurung	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Kencho Gurung, and I submit testimony on behalf of myself in strong support of HB1838, HB1870, HB2445, HB1886, HB1839, and HB2540. Together, these measures strengthen community safety, due process, and transparency, so immigrant and mixed-status families can access essential services without fear, and survivors can seek help and cooperate with authorities safely.

We respectfully urge you to PASS these measures. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Kencho Gurung, Hilo

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 9:09:20 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Beth Anderson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of HB1838 both personally and as a member of the Indivisible Hawaii State 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 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.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this Bill.

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 9:32:44 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lee-Won Fulbright	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The measures in this bill are extremely important to me as a local Hawaii resident born and raised on Oahu, and to my community. Mahalo for fighting for immigrant justice and the safety of all people here.

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 9:42:45 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Yoon-Hi Fulbright	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Immigrant issues are very important to me. Please pass this bill.

Friday, February 6, 2026 8:30 a.m.
Conference Room 423 & Videoconference
State Capitol, 415 South Beretania Street

Testimony of Joey Badua

In SUPPORT of HB1838

Representative Greggor Ilagan, Chair

Representative Ikaika Hussey, Vice Chair

Dear Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and members of the Committee on Economic Development and Technology

My name is Joey Badua, and I am a concerned resident of Hawai'i. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 1838, a bill to establish uniform statewide policies and processes for U and T visa certifications for noncitizen survivors of crime here in Hawai'i.

I strongly support this bill because it will create uniform standards like **ensuring proper training and accountability for certifying officials**. 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. Look around - community trust is required for systems to work. Consistency across the state is key to strengthen public safety by creating a publicly available policy explaining how survivors can request certification. This bill provides standard deadlines for such requests and requirement to provide a written explaining if an agency denies a certification request. This provides predictability for the survivors which consequently reduces the suffering of confusion and helps law enforcement solve crimes.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask the committee to **support HB 1838**. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Joey Badua

PO Box 29724

Honolulu, HI 96820

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 10:28:39 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert Justice, M.D.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to strongly support HB1838 as a citizen and as a member of Indivisible Hawaii. 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 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.

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 10:34:23 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tina Even	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of HB1838.

Tina Marie Even
Waikoloa Village

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 10:35:50 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
LorrieAnn Santos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1838 and ask for your support of HB1838.

Support HB1838 because it creates clear, consistent statewide processes for U/T visa certifications for survivors.

Support HB1838 because it improves public safety by helping victims feel safe reporting and cooperating.

Support HB1838 because it provides training to help agencies implement certifications fairly and lawfully.

'o wau iho no,

Lorrie Ann Santos, Kane'ohe, O'ahu

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 3:58:27 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ana Flores-Garcia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF HB1838

Representative Greggor Ilagan, Chair
Representative Ikaika Hussey, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: February 6, 2026

Dear Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Members of the Committee on Economic Development and Technology,

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. By creating clear, uniform certification practices, HB 1838 would 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.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Ana Flores
anaflores.mpa@gmail.com

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 3:59:43 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert N Mansfield, Jr	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

IN SUPPORT OF HB1838

Aloha Representative Greggor Hagan, Chair, Representative Ikaika Hussey, Vice Chair, and members of thje Committee on Economic Development and Technology.

My name is Robert Nawahine Mansfield, Jr. and I am a concerned resident of Hawaii. Please support this bill. We need clear, consistent statewide processes for U/T visa certifications for survivors. This will improve public safety by assisting victims feel safe reporting and cooperating. It also provides proper training to help agencies implement certifications fairly and lawfully.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask the committee to **support HB 1838**. Mahalo

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 7:37:59 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Yvette Kay	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Yvette Kay and I am a resident of Kailua-Kona. My address is 77-356 Ainanani Street, Kailua-Kona, HI 96740.

I support HB1838. It is important to protect survivors of crime and trafficking. The policies for U&T visas must be consistent with federal laws and regulations. People's immigration status and personal identifying information must be kept confidential.

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 7:42:48 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gail Larson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am all for legislation to protect my fellow ohana here in Hawaii. I fear for their lives. Please pass this and all bills that protect their rights and all if our rights.

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 7:52:45 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
janet Matlock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am a resident of Hawai'i County in strong support of HB1838. Providing clear process to obtaining U and T Visas will enhance public safety and increase the public's faith in our law enforcement system.

Mahalo,

janet Matlock

Kailua Kona

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 7:58:00 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Peter Matlock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony of Peter Matlock

In SUPPORT of HB1838

Representative Greggor Ilagan, Chair

Representative Ikaika Hussey, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: Feb 6th, 2026

Dear Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and members of the Committee on Economic Development and Technology,

My name is Peter Matlock, and I am testifying in support of HB 1838 as a concerned Hawai'i resident living on Hawai'i Island.

We need uniform statewide policies and processes for U and T visa certifications to protect noncitizen survivors of crime.

Protecting those who have been harmed is basic Aloha, and this bill will enhance justice overall, build community trust, enhance public safety, and provide uniform standards and clarity for public officials.

I respectfully ask the committee to support HB 1838. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Peter Matlock

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 8:00:27 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alyce Dodge	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In SUPPORT of HB1838

Representative Greggor Ilagan, Chair

Representative Ikaika Hussey, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: Feb 6th, 2026

Dear Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and members of the Committee on Economic Development and Technology

My name is Alyce Dodge, and I am a concerned resident of Hawai'i. I am submitting this testimony **in support of HB 1838**, a bill to establish **uniform statewide policies and processes** for U and T visa certifications for noncitizen survivors of crime here in Hawai'i.

I strongly 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.

• Improve public safety by encouraging victims to report crimes.

Research and best practices show that when victims feel safe coming forward, public safety outcomes improve for everyone. By reducing uncertainty and fear around the certification process, HB1838 helps immigrant victims report crimes and cooperate with law enforcement. This strengthens trust between immigrant communities and law enforcement and supports safer communities statewide.

• 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.

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

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Alyce Dodge

Honolulu, Hawaii

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 8:19:45 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Terry McDonald	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

A uniform process makes sense. Strongly support

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 8:23:35 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kiara Womack	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 1838, a bill to establish uniform statewide policies and processes for U and T visa certifications for noncitizen survivors of crime here in Hawai'i.

If we don't support and protect survivors, the harm of violent crimes like human trafficking and assault spread.

Mahalo nui loa

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 8:29:50 AM

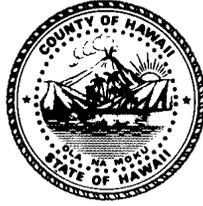
Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Renee Rabb	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

protect immigrants

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: February 4, 2026
TO: House Committee on Economic Development and Technology
FROM: Jennifer Kagiwada, Council Member
Council District 2
SUBJECT: HB1838

Aloha Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and 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,

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

Jenn Kagiwada

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 8:40:35 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nadine Dalton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Nadine, and I am a concerned community member. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 1838, a bill to establish uniform statewide policies and processes for U and T visa certifications for noncitizen survivors of crime here in Hawai'i.

I strongly support this bill because survivors deserve dignity, respect, and safety. Citizenship status should not be a barrier to reporting crimes, giving testimony, etc. In Hawai'i, statistics show that only a small percentage of eligible noncitizens are able to report crimes due to fear of deportation or lack of protection. Public safety depends on the same community it protects; if one person is vulnerable, we all are. It's our duty as a community to protect survivors and encourage justice.

Immigration status is irrelevant in this respect unless it is used as a tool to manipulate and/or silence survivors. In my opinion, this bill aims to minimize that by promoting fair, specific, transparent, and consistent policies to safeguard victims.

It's important that certifying officials have proper knowledge of the law and respect for the Constitution and the people it serves, regardless of immigration status, as the Constitution is for all people on American soil. Well-trained officials can be trusted to do a fair and unbiased job for every member of our community, and it's imperative that the funding is available for proper training.

Victims of human trafficking have suffered enormously, and I believe we have a humanitarian obligation to help them, starting with protected status in the USA, namely Hawai'i. They have enough obstacles in life; citizenship status should not be what makes or breaks a person or the justice they deserve.

Immigrants and visitors to Hawai'i deserve the protections provided by HB 1838, and I respectfully ask you to support them. Please pass HB 1838 so every survivor can speak and every neighbor can feel safe.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 9:09:30 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jenna Khan-Gates	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To: Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Members of ECD
Re: SUPPORT HB1838, HB1870, HB2445, HB1886, HB1839, HB2540
Hearing: Friday, Feb 6, 2026 — 8:30 AM

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

My name is Jenna Khan-Gates, and I submit testimony on behalf of myself in strong support of HB1838, HB1870, HB2445, HB1886, HB1839, and HB2540. Together, these measures strengthen community safety, due process, and transparency—so immigrant and mixed-status families can access essential services without fear, and survivors can seek help and cooperate with authorities safely.

I support HB1838 because it:

- Creates clear, consistent statewide processes for U/T visa certifications for survivors.
- Improves public safety by helping victims feel safe reporting and cooperating.
- Provides training to help agencies implement certifications fairly and lawfully.

We respectfully urge you to PASS these measures. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Jenna Khan-Gates

O'ahu resident

jennakhan7@gmail.com

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 9:09:36 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jonathan Simonds	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB1838. It's critical that those eligible for U and T visas are able to secure them as intended and feel comfortable reporting.

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 9:49:45 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Members of the Committee on Economic Development and Technology:

My name is Nanea Lo, and I am a concerned community member in Hawai‘i. I am submitting this testimony in strong support of HB1838, a bill to establish uniform statewide policies and processes for U and T visa certifications for noncitizen survivors of crime in Hawai‘i.

I support this measure because survivors of crime—regardless of immigration status—deserve fair, consistent treatment and access to protection when they cooperate with law enforcement. Clear statewide standards are essential to ensuring that survivors are not left vulnerable due to inconsistent practices across agencies or jurisdictions.

I strongly support this bill because it will:

Enhance access to justice and community trust.

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

Improve public safety by encouraging victims to report crimes.

Research and best practices show that when victims feel safe coming forward, public safety outcomes improve for everyone. By reducing uncertainty and fear around the certification process, HB1838 helps immigrant victims report crimes and cooperate with law enforcement, leading to safer communities statewide.

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 responsibilities, protect sensitive populations, and uphold victims’ rights—particularly for individuals who may otherwise avoid authorities due to fear or misinformation.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to support HB1838. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Nanea Lo, 96826

ACLU Hawai'i Member

Carbon Cashback Hawai'i Member

Hawai'i Workers Center Board Member

Honolulu Tenants Union Member

Hawai'i Tax Fairness Coalition

Clean Elections Hawai'i Member

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 10:23:40 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Betsy Scolnik	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Pass this now!!!!

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 10:23:40 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Betsy Scolnik	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Pass this now!!!!

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 11:54:28 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brodie Lockard	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of HB1838 both personally and as a member of the Indivisible Hawaii State 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 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.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this Bill.

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 12:42:58 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cynthia Groves	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT

COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TECHNOLOGY

Rep. Greggor Ilagan, Chair

Rep. Ikaika Hussey, Vice Chair

HEARING:

Friday, February 6, 2026 at 8:30 am

VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

Conference Room 423

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT - HB 1838, RELATING TO VISAS

Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, 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**, 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, requires each state and county certifying entity to adopt those policies and processes, and funds training so they comply with federal U and T visa requirements.

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 victim's U or T visa. U and T visa certifications are often the decisive factor in whether a survivor can obtain safety, stability, and lawful presence. 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.

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 has 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.

HB1838 is a practical, targeted solution. By creating uniform statewide 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. 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. I respectfully request that you stand with Hawai'i's immigrant crime victims and **vote in support of HB1838**.

Mahalo for supporting our most vulnerable community members,

Christine Andrews, J.D.

Wailuku, Maui

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 1:46:35 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Doris Matsunaga	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1838

DS Matsunaga

Waimea, Hawai'i Island

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 2:04:23 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jesse Hutchison	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you!

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 5:15:07 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
ANDREW ISODA	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In SUPPORT of HB1838

Representative Greggor Ilagan, Chair

Representative Ikaika Hussey, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: Feb 6th, 2026

Dear Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and members of the Committee on Economic Development and Technology

My name is Andrew Isoda, and I am a concerned resident of Hawai'i. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 1838, a bill to establish uniform statewide policies and processes for U and T visa certifications for noncitizen survivors of crime here in Hawai'i.

I strongly 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.

• Improve public safety by encouraging victims to report crimes.

Research and best practices show that when victims feel safe coming forward, public safety outcomes improve for everyone. By reducing uncertainty and fear around the certification process, HB1838 helps immigrant victims report crimes and cooperate with law enforcement. This strengthens trust between immigrant communities and law enforcement and supports safer communities statewide.

• 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.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask the committee to support HB 1838. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

**Respectfully,
Andrew Isoda
Lahaina, Mau'i**

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 5:48:53 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mardi Jaskot	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony of Mardi Jaskot

In SUPPORT of HB1838

Representative Greggor Ilagan, Chair

Representative Ikaika Hussey, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: Feb 6th, 2026

Dear Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and members of the Committee on Economic Development and Technology

My name is Mardi Jaskot and I am a concerned resident and voter in Hawai'i. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 1838, a bill to establish uniform statewide policies and processes for U and T visa certifications for noncitizen survivors of crime here in Hawai'i.

I strongly 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.

- Improve public safety by encouraging victims to report crimes.

Research and best practices show that when victims feel safe coming forward, public safety outcomes improve for everyone. By reducing uncertainty and fear around the certification process, HB1838 helps immigrant victims report crimes and cooperate with law enforcement. This strengthens trust between immigrant communities and law enforcement and supports safer communities statewide.

- 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.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask the committee to support HB 1838. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Mardi Jaskot

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 6:45:16 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ann Dorsey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I urge you to support HB 1838, a bill to establish uniform statewide policies and processes for U and T visa certifications for noncitizen survivors of crime here in Hawai'i.

I strongly 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.

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Research and best practices show that when victims feel safe coming forward, public safety outcomes improve for everyone. By reducing uncertainty and fear around the certification process, HB1838 helps immigrant victims report crimes and cooperate with law enforcement. This strengthens trust between immigrant communities and law enforcement and supports safer communities statewide.

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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.

Thank you

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 8:40:36 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Meadow Dawn Stassens	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and members of the Committee on Economic Development and Technology

My name is Meadow Dawn Stassens, and I am a concerned resident of Hawaii. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 1838, a bill to establish uniform statewide policies and processes for U and T visa certifications for noncitizen survivors of crime here in Hawai'i.

I strongly 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.

- Improve public safety by encouraging victims to report crimes.

Research and best practices show that when victims feel safe coming forward, public safety outcomes improve for everyone. By reducing uncertainty and fear around the certification process, HB1838 helps immigrant victims report crimes and cooperate with law enforcement. This strengthens trust between immigrant communities and law enforcement and supports safer communities statewide.

- 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.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask the committee to support HB 1838. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Meadow Dawn Stassens

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 9:31:55 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jahnavi Stassens	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and members of the Committee on Economic Development and Technology

My name is Jahnavi Richter Stassens, and I am a concerned resident of Hawaii. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 1838, a bill to establish uniform statewide policies and processes for U and T visa certifications for noncitizen survivors of crime here in Hawai'i.

I strongly 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.

- Improve public safety by encouraging victims to report crimes.

Research and best practices show that when victims feel safe coming forward, public safety outcomes improve for everyone. By reducing uncertainty and fear around the certification process, HB1838 helps immigrant victims report crimes and cooperate with law enforcement. This strengthens trust between immigrant communities and law enforcement and supports safer communities statewide.

- 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.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask the committee to support HB 1838. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Jahnavi Richter Stassens

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 9:34:47 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maria Welvaert	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT Hb2445 protecting students and providing training and emergency response.

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/5/2026 9:58:54 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary Lu Kelley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Mary Lu Kelley, and I am a member of the Hawai‘i Coalition for Immigrant Rights (HCIR), a coalition of immigrant-serving and immigrant-led organizations working statewide to advance policies that keep immigrant communities safe, healthy, and included.

I submit this testimony in strong support of HB1838

Support because:

- Creates clear, consistent statewide processes for U/T visa certifications for survivors.
- Improves public safety by helping victims feel safe reporting and cooperating.
- Provides training to help agencies implement certifications fairly and lawfully.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully,

MaryLu Kelley

Koloa, Kauai

Mkelley323@gmail.com

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 5:27:10 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
maile nakano	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Protect our neighbors!

Show aloha

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 6:36:55 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jason Nakano	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Jason Nakano. I am submitting testimony in support of HB1838 to establish uniform statewide policies and processes for U and T visa certifications for noncitizen survivors of crime here in Hawai'i. I strongly support the bill because it will promote consistent and fair access to the certification process. This will enhance public safety by encouraging victims to report crimes and remove perpetrators. I respectfully ask the committee to support HB1838.

Mahalo,

Jason Nakano

HB-1838

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 8:24:58 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rebecca Haynes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and members of the Committee on Economic Development and Technology

My name is Rebecca, and I am a concerned resident of Hawai'i (96789). I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 1838, a bill to establish uniform statewide policies and processes for U and T visa certifications for noncitizen survivors of crime here in Hawai'i.

I strongly 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.

- Improve public safety by encouraging victims to report crimes.

Research and best practices show that when victims feel safe coming forward, public safety outcomes improve for everyone. By reducing uncertainty and fear around the certification process, HB1838 helps immigrant victims report crimes and cooperate with law enforcement. This strengthens trust between immigrant communities and law enforcement and supports safer communities statewide.

- 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.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask the committee to support HB 1838. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Rebecca Haynes
beccah.haynes@gmail.com

