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Testimony of the Professional and Vocational Licensing Division

Before the
House Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce
Tuesday, February 10, 2026
2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 329 & Via Videoconference

On the following measure:
H.B. 1849, RELATING TO LICENSING

Chair Matayoshi and Members of the Committee:

My name is Cindy Matsushita, and I am the Administrator for the Professional and Vocational Licensing Division of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs ("Department"). The Department offers comments on this bill.

The purpose of this bill is to allow a person to provide an individual taxpayer identification number in lieu of a social security number in the person's application for a professional or vocational license within the department of commerce and consumer affairs, given that the person satisfies all other requirements to be licensed, is not violating any laws regarding employment, and can show proof of continued residence in the State.

While the Department appreciates the intent of this bill, the collection of social security numbers in license applications is performed pursuant to 42 United States

Testimony of DCCA

S.B. 2771

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Code §666(a)(13)(a), which provides in part that, in order to effectuate child support enforcement:

“(a)...each State must have in effect laws requiring the use of the following procedures...

(13) Recording of Social Security Numbers in Certain Family Matters. –
Procedures requiring that the social security number of –

(A) any applicant for a professional license, driver’s license, occupational license, recreational license, or marriage license be recorded on the application”

Accordingly, any amendment to HRS §436B-10 to the contrary would be in violation of federal law.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

Testimony of the Hawai'i Real Estate Commission

**Before the
House Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce
Tuesday, February 10, 2026
2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 329 & Via Videoconference**

**On the following measure:
H.B. 1849, RELATING TO LICENSING**

Chair Matayoshi and Members of the Committee:

My name is Derrick Yamane, and I am the Chairperson of the Hawai'i Real Estate Commission ("Commission"). The Commission offers comments on this bill.

The purpose of this bill is to allow a person to provide an individual taxpayer identification number ("ITIN") in lieu of a social security number in the person's application for a professional or vocational license within the department of commerce and consumer affairs and sit for a real estate licensing examination, given that the person satisfies all other requirements to be licensed, is not violating any laws regarding employment, and can show proof of continued residence in the State.

Currently, a social security number is produced as evidence that the real estate examination candidate is a United States citizen, a United States national, or an alien authorized to work in the United States. This requirement is used to conform to the federal mandate found in 42 United States Code section 666, requiring individual states provide effective support for child support enforcement programs.

In this proposal, a real estate licensing candidate may present an ITIN, take and pass the license examination, and apply for and receive state approved licensure. However, according to the Internal Revenue Service's guidance¹, an ITIN does not authorize its holder to work. If the individual is not authorized to work, the Commission is concerned that this may create potential civil liability on the candidate's employer or the hiring brokerage firm.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

¹ <https://www.irs.gov/individuals/international-taxpayers/individual-taxpayer-identification-number-itin-reminders-for-tax-professionals>, 2/6/2026



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

LATE

Testimony of the Hawai‘i Coalition for Immigrant Rights

In SUPPORT of HB1849

Relating to Licensing

Hearing: Tuesday, February 10, 2026, 2:00 PM (CPC), Room 329 & Videoconference

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

My name is Liza Ryan Gill, testifying on behalf of the **Hawai‘i Coalition for Immigrant Rights (HCIR)**, a coalition of immigrant-serving and immigrant-led organizations working statewide to advance policies that protect immigrant and migrant communities and strengthen our shared future. HCIR respectfully submits this testimony **in strong support of HB1849**.

HB1849 is an important measure that promotes fairness, economic opportunity, and public safety by improving access to professional and occupational licensing. It removes barriers currently in place requiring applicants for professional or vocational licensing to be United States citizens, United States nationals, or persons with work visas. Allows applicants to provide individual tax identification numbers in lieu of social security numbers if all other requirements are met.

Licensing systems play a critical role in determining who is able to work, support their families, and contribute fully to Hawai‘i’s economy. When licensing barriers are overly restrictive, unclear, or disconnected from public safety objectives, they can unnecessarily exclude qualified individuals—particularly immigrants, migrants, and workers from marginalized communities—from lawful employment and career advancement. HB1849 helps ensure that licensing processes are transparent, equitable, and focused on competence rather than exclusion.

For immigrant and mixed-status families, access to licensure can be transformative. It allows individuals to work in regulated professions, reduce economic instability, and better support their households and communities. Fair licensing policies also strengthen consumer protection and public confidence by bringing more workers into regulated systems rather than pushing them into informal or unlicensed work.

Importantly, HB1849 advances sound public policy. A licensing framework that is fair and accessible supports workforce development, addresses labor shortages, and helps Hawai‘i remain economically resilient. When skilled individuals are able to obtain licenses and work legally, the entire state benefits through increased tax revenue, safer services, and stronger local economies.

HB1849 reflects Hawai‘i’s values of inclusion, opportunity, and common-sense governance. It recognizes that public safety and economic vitality are best served when licensing laws are clear, reasonable, and applied equitably.



www.hicir.org | Instagram @hicir
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For these reasons, the **Hawai'i Coalition for Immigrant Rights respectfully urges the Committee to PASS HB1849.**

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

With gratitude,

Liza Ryan Gill
Hawai'i Coalition for Immigrant Rights (HCIR)



COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE

Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair

Rep. Tina Nakada Grandinetti, Vice Chair

HEARING:

Tuesday, February 10, 2026 at 2:00 pm

Conference Room 329 and Via Videoconference

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1849 - RELATING TO LICENSING.

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Nakada Grandinetti, 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 HB 1849**, Relating to Licensing, which removes the barrier requiring applicants for professional or vocational licensing to be United States citizens, United States nationals, or persons with work visas, and allows applicants to provide individual tax identification numbers in lieu of social security numbers if all other requirements are met.

Roots Reborn is a grassroots, multicultural immigrant-justice and disaster-response organization serving migrant and immigrant communities on Maui and beyond. Born out of the August 2023 wildfires, we immediately stepped in to move aid, navigate systems alongside families, and build the trusted relationships that still anchor our work today. What began as wildfire response has grown into essential infrastructure for immigrant communities facing overlapping crises—from recovery and housing instability to shifting federal policies, increased enforcement, and rising fear.

In our work we have identified risks to our community presented by unnecessary barriers, such as the current limitations on professional and vocational licensing. HB 1849 seeks to address this barrier, helping communities such as Maui meet unmet workforce development challenges while providing increased stability for professional and vocational licensing applicants. For example, on Maui there are chronic shortages of staffing for licensed personnel such as teachers and educational paraprofessionals, paralegals and legal assistants, interpreters and medical service providers. We have documented an especial shortage in the area of language access and special needs.

People seeking professional or vocational licensing are currently caught in an impossible position. They have needed skills to help serve unmet employment demand, but they are unable to get the proper professional or vocational license due to their migration status, and they are unable to navigate immigration matters without proper licensing. This is the catch-22 that HB 1849 has been designed to remedy. HB 1849 will open pathways to meet workforce demand while helping people legally navigate the immigration system, thereby creating stability and benefits for employees, workplaces, and the communities that they serve. For this reason, Roots Reborn respectfully requests that you vote **in support of HB 1849**.

Sinceramente,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Veronica Mendoza'.

Veronica Mendoza

Maui Roots Reborn, *Founding Executive Director*

El Pueblo en Accion Maui, *Founding Coalition Member*

LATE



Testimony of
Pacific Resource Partnership

Hawai'i State Legislature
Honorable Members of the House Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection (CPN)
Tuesday, Feb. 10, 2026

Subject: Opposition for HB1849 – Relating to Licensing

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Grandinetti, and members of the committee:

Pacific Resource Partnership (PRP) is a nonprofit organization that represents the Hawai'i Regional Council of Carpenters, the largest construction union in the state with approximately 6,000 members, in addition to more than 250 diverse contractors ranging from mom-and-pop owned businesses to national companies.

PRP Hawai'i submits this testimony in opposition to HB1849, which removes citizenship, nationality, or work authorization requirements for professional and vocational licenses under the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs (DCCA), allowing applicants to provide an individual taxpayer identification number (ITIN) in lieu of a social security number while requiring proof of continued physical residence in the state.

While the bill aims to expand access to licensing, it undermines critical accountability mechanisms that protect Hawai'i consumers, particularly in high-stakes fields like construction, where contractor licenses ensure responsibility to the communities that are being served. Requiring a contractor's license is fundamental to maintaining accountability in the construction industry, as it ties licensees to verifiable identities and legal standing within the United States. By allowing non-citizens and non-permanent residents to obtain such licenses without U.S. citizenship, nationality, or work authorization, HB1849 would make it easier for bad actors to commit fraud, substandard work, or other violations. Victims of such misconduct would face significant barriers to recourse, as offenders could flee Hawai'i or the country entirely, evading enforcement, restitution, or legal consequences. We must continue to hold licensees accountable, and ensuring they are trackable within the United



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States — through citizenship or authorized status — preserves the ability to secure justice for defrauded consumers.

The bill's requirement for “continued physical residence in the state” is insufficient, as it does not prevent non-citizens from being deported, relocating voluntarily, or disappearing without a trace, leaving residents to bear the financial and safety burdens left behind.

This measure conflicts with PRP Hawai'i's mission to advocate for policies that protect vulnerable residents, promote economic fairness, and address our state's high cost of living. Fraudulent or unaccountable contractors often lead to costly repairs, legal battles, and increased insurance premiums, disproportionately harming low- and middle-income families already struggling with housing affordability and everyday expenses. For instance, shoddy construction work can result in unsafe homes or inflated project costs, exacerbating the financial strain on kama'āina and contributing to homelessness. Instead of lowering barriers in ways that invite exploitation, we should strengthen consumer protections to ensure all licensees are fully accountable and invested in our community's long-term well-being.

PRP Hawai'i urges the committee to hold or defer HB1849 to safeguard consumers and maintain the integrity of our licensing system.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Andrew Pereira

Andrew Pereira

Director of Public Affairs
Pacific Resource Partnership
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HB-1849

Submitted on: 2/7/2026 12:57:55 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alyssa Los	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Alyssa Los and I am a registered dietitian, nurse and nurse practitioner student located in Oahu. I strongly support HB1849, which prohibits licensing boards from requiring U.S. citizenship as a condition for obtaining a professional or vocational license in Hawai‘i.

HB1849 is a commonsense measure that aligns professional licensing with what truly matters: education, training, competency, and ethical practice—not nationality or citizenship status. When individuals meet all professional qualifications, citizenship requirements become unnecessary barriers that limit opportunity, workforce capacity, and access to essential services.

I submit this testimony as a registered dietitian practicing in Hawai‘i. In my profession, there is a significant lack of racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity. This gap directly impacts patient care. Hawai‘i is one of the most diverse states in the nation, yet many residents struggle to access culturally competent nutrition counseling that reflects their lived experiences, traditional foods, family structures, and cultural health beliefs.

Culturally concordant care improves trust, communication, adherence, and health outcomes. When patients can work with providers who understand their cultural context—or who share similar backgrounds—they are more likely to engage in care and make sustainable changes. Excluding qualified immigrants from licensure reduces the diversity of the healthcare workforce and makes it harder to meet the needs of Hawai‘i’s communities.

HB1849 would expand pathways for highly trained and qualified immigrants to enter licensed professions, including healthcare, education, and technical trades. This not only strengthens Hawai‘i’s workforce but also helps address shortages in critical fields while improving equity and access to services.

Importantly, this bill does not lower professional standards. All applicants would still be required to meet the same rigorous licensing requirements. HB1849 simply ensures that licensure is based on competence and qualifications—not citizenship status.

By passing HB1849, Hawai‘i affirms its commitment to fairness, inclusion, workforce development, and high-quality care for all residents.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to pass HB1849.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony and for your continued service to the people of Hawai'i.

Sincerely,
Alyssa Los, RD, RN
Makiki, Oahu

HB-1849

Submitted on: 2/7/2026 3:11:24 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/10/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Thank you

COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE

Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair

Rep. Tina Nakada Grandinetti, Vice Chair

HEARING:

Tuesday, February 10, 2026 at 2:00 pm

Conference Room 329 and Via Videoconference

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1849 - RELATING TO LICENSING.

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Nakada Grandinetti, 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 **strongly support HB 1849**, Relating to Licensing, which removes the barrier requiring applicants for professional or vocational licensing to be United States citizens, United States nationals, or persons with work visas, and allows applicants to provide individual tax identification numbers in lieu of social security numbers if all other requirements are met.

Early in my career, I was the founding Program Manager of the Women in Technology Project, where I worked on equity in STEM as a workforce development issue for many years, and wrote over ten peer-reviewed papers on best practices in the field. In that capacity I identified barriers to workforce development, those elements in the training to workforce pipeline that led to shortages of skilled workers, especially in our neighbor island community. As a volunteer with El Pueblo en Acción (EPA) Maui – The People in Action Maui, I have also witnessed how barriers to employment based solely on immigration-related issues not only harms people who have skills to offer our communities but harms the community as a whole. For example, our local schools have chronic teacher shortages. The shortage is served with stop-gap measures, such as employing teachers here from other countries on J-1 visas. But a J-1 visa is not an immigration visa, it does not provide a mechanism by which those teachers on that visa can migrate here permanently. Once the term of their visa is over, they have no other mechanism by which to stay. They return to their home country and our school loses experienced teachers who have been integrated into our community as valued professionals.

Existing barriers to provisional and vocational licensing by foreign workers means that, for example, teachers licensed in another country are unable to use that professional license as a means to immigrate to help permanently join our teaching staff. HB 1849 seeks to address this barrier, helping communities such as Maui meet unmet workforce development challenges while providing increased stability for professional and vocational licensing applicants. On Maui there are chronic shortages of staffing for licensed personnel such as teachers and educational paraprofessionals, paralegals and legal assistants, interpreters and medical service providers.

People seeking professional or vocational licensing are currently caught in an impossible position. They have needed skills to help serve unmet employment demand, but they are unable to get the proper professional or vocational license due to their migration status, and they are unable to navigate immigration matters without proper licensing. This is the catch-22 that HB 1849 has been designed to remedy. HB 1849 will open pathways to meet workforce demand while helping people legally navigate the immigration system, thereby creating stability and benefits for employees, workplaces, and the communities that they serve. I respectfully request that you vote **in support of HB 1849**.

Mahalo nui for your wisdom in recognizing the solution presented by HB 1849 and how it will benefit communities like mine.

Christine Andrews, J.D.

Wailuku, Maui