



OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 1960 HD1
RELATING TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Ke Kōmike Hale o ka Ho‘okolokolo a me ke Kuleana Hawai‘i
(House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs)
Ke Kapitala ‘o Hawai‘i
(Hawai‘i State Capitol)

Pepeluali 24, 2026

2:00 PM

Lumi 325

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, a me Members of Ke Kōmike Hale o ka Ho‘okolokolo a me ke Kuleana Hawai‘i:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS HB1960 HD1**, which requires the Department of the Attorney General to develop a human trafficking awareness training program. Furthermore, it requires transient accommodations employers and contractors to provide training for their employees, maintain records, post signage, and implement reporting and prevention policies, including policies to report suspected trafficking. This measure represents an important step toward strengthening Hawai‘i’s ability to identify, prevent, and respond to human trafficking, particularly in sectors where trafficking is known to occur.

Human trafficking is a pervasive and deeply harmful form of exploitation that disproportionately impacts vulnerable populations, including Native Hawaiians. Hawai‘i’s geographic isolation, high tourism volume, and economic disparities create conditions in which traffickers can exploit individuals while remaining difficult to detect. Workers in the transient accommodations sector are uniquely positioned to identify warning signs of suspected trafficking and intervene appropriately when equipped with proper training and reporting procedures. By providing standardized, trauma-informed training and clear reporting procedures, this measure strengthens early identification and intervention, which are critical to protecting victims and disrupting trafficking activity.

Native Hawaiians face disproportionate vulnerability to trafficking due to longstanding structural inequities, including housing instability, economic hardship, and historical trauma. The Office of Hawaiian Affairs and the Hawai‘i State Commission on the Status of Women’s Missing and Murdered Native Hawaiian Women and Girls Task Force Report found that Native Hawaiian girls and women are overrepresented among trafficking victims in Hawai‘i.¹ Programs serving trafficking survivors in Hawai‘i similarly report that

¹ Office of Hawaiian Affairs and Hawai‘i State Commission on the Status of Women, *Holoī ā nalo Wāhine ‘Ōiwi: Missing and Murdered Native Hawaiian Women and Girls Task Force Report (Part I)* (2022), <https://www.oha.org/wp-content/uploads/MMNHWG-Report-Web.pdf>

Native Hawaiian females constitute a significant proportion of those receiving services. These disparities underscore the urgent need for prevention-oriented measures that improve awareness, strengthen reporting systems, and protect individuals before exploitation escalates.

This measure advances a proactive, prevention-focused approach by ensuring that workers are equipped with the knowledge to recognize and report suspected exploitation safely and effectively. Increasing awareness within the transient accommodations sector strengthens coordination between workers, service providers, and law enforcement, and helps ensure that victims are identified earlier and connected to appropriate support. Accordingly, OHA urges this Committee to **PASS HB1960 HD1** to strengthen Hawai'i's human trafficking prevention efforts, protect vulnerable individuals, and advance the safety and wellbeing of Native Hawaiian communities and all residents of our state.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



MIKE LAMBERT
Director

ERNEST J. ROBELLO
Deputy Director
Administration

SYLVIA LUKE
LT GOVERNOR
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STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT
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JARED K. REDULLA
Deputy Director
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TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 1960, HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING
Before the House Committee on
JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
Tuesday, February 24, 2026, 2:00 PM
State Capitol Conference Room 325
Testifier: Jared Redulla

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee:

The Department of Law Enforcement (DLE) supports House Bill 1960, House Draft 1. This bill requires the Department of the Attorney General to develop a Human Trafficking Awareness Training Program to educate and train workers in the transient accommodations sector. It further requires transient accommodations employers and third-party contractors to periodically provide human trafficking awareness training to certain employees and contract workers, maintain records of such training, post required signage, and develop and implement a human trafficking prevention policy that includes procedures for reporting suspected human trafficking. The bill also establishes penalties for noncompliance and requires the Department of Law Enforcement to adopt rules to further its provisions.

The DLE supports this bill as human trafficking is among the most serious and pervasive crimes affecting our communities and visitors in Hawai'i. Hawai'i's significant tourism industry and transient accommodations sector present unique vulnerabilities that traffickers frequently exploit. Hotels, vacation rentals, and other transient

accommodations are well-documented venues where human trafficking activity often occurs, making it critically important that employees and contract workers in this sector be trained and equipped to recognize and report suspected trafficking.

The training program contemplated by this bill is a meaningful and proactive step toward combating human trafficking at the community level. By requiring employers and third-party contractors in the transient accommodations sector to ensure their workers receive periodic awareness training, this bill creates a front-line network of informed individuals who can help identify and report suspected trafficking to law enforcement. This type of community-based vigilance is an essential complement to DLE's investigative and enforcement efforts.

The requirement to post signage and develop a human trafficking prevention policy with clear reporting procedures further strengthens the framework established by this bill. These measures ensure that both workers and potential victims are made aware of available resources and reporting channels, which is critical to the identification and rescue of trafficking victims and the prosecution of those who exploit them.

The DLE looks forward to adopting the rules necessary to implement the provisions of this bill and to working collaboratively with the Department of the Attorney General, transient accommodations employers, and other stakeholders to ensure effective implementation of this important public safety measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.



FEBRUARY 24, 2026

HOUSE BILL 1960 HD1

CURRENT REFERRAL: JHA

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Kris Coffield,
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David Negaard,
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Director

Corey Rosenlee,
Director

Amy Zhao,
*Policy and Partnerships
Strategist*

POSITION: SUPPORT

Imua Alliance supports HB 1960 HD1, relating to human trafficking, which requires the Attorney General to create a human trafficking awareness training program for the transient accommodations industry and requires visitor industry employers to provide training, maintain records, post signage, and implement reporting and prevention policies.

Imua Alliance is a Hawai‘i-based organization dedicated to ending gender and sexual exploitation, and advancing human rights. We appreciate this measure, which recognizes the need for public-private collaboration to prevent human trafficking and sexual exploitation associated with our visitor industry.

Each of the survivors we have assisted has suffered from complex and overlapping trauma, including post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and anxiety, dissociation, parasuicidal behavior, and substance abuse. Trafficking-related trauma can lead to a complete loss of identity. A victim we cared for in 2016, for example, had become so heavily trauma bonded to her pimp that while under his grasp, she couldn’t remember her own name. Yet, sadly, many of the victims with whom we work are misidentified as so-called “voluntary prostitutes” and are subsequently arrested and incarcerated, with no financial resources from which to pay for their release.

Sex trafficking is a profoundly violent crime. At least 23 percent of trafficking victims in Hawai‘i report being first exploited before turning 18, according to a recent report, with the average age of

trafficked keiki's initial exposure to exploitation being 11. Based on regular outreach and monitoring, we estimate that approximately 150 high-risk sex trafficking establishments operate in Hawai'i. In a recent report conducted by the State Commission on the Status of Women, researchers from Arizona State University found that 1 in every 11 adult males living in our state buys sex online. When visitors are also counted, that number worsens to 1 in every 7 men walking the streets of our island home, a daily online sex buyer market of 18,614 for O'ahu, and a total sex buyer population for Honolulu of 74,362.

ASU's findings are grim, but not surprising to local organizations that provide services to survivors of sex trafficking. Imua Alliance, for example, has trained volunteers to perform outreach to victims in high-risk locations, like strip clubs, massage parlors, and hostess bars. More than 80 percent of runaway youth report being approached for sexual exploitation while on the run, over 30 percent of whom are targeted within the first 48 hours of leaving home. With regard to mental health, sex trafficking victims are twice as likely to suffer from PTSD as a soldier in a war zone.

Human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation are global and local concerns, and Hawai'i's unique tourism economy heightens risks. According to the National Human Trafficking Hotline, transportation, tourism, and hospitality industries are among the top sectors where traffickers recruit, exploit, and conceal victims, often using legitimate travel networks, hotels, and rental services to facilitate exploitation and conceal abuse.

Hawai'i welcomed over 9.7 million visitors in 2024, generating significant economic activity, but also creating environments where traffickers can operate with anonymity and access. According to statewide law enforcement and service provider reports, trafficking cases often intersect with the visitor economy, especially in areas with high hotel density, nightlife, and short-term rentals. Survivors report being moved between Kailua-Kona, Waikiki, Lihu'e, and other tourism hubs where traffickers leverage tourist demand for commercial sex.

Airports, hotel chains, and rental platforms provide the infrastructure that traffickers use to recruit, house, and move victims, while obscuring their activities among legitimate visitors. The visitor industry is not inherently a source of harm, but it

occupies critical vantage points for identifying and preventing exploitation. Hotels, airlines, tour operators, and other tourism stakeholders intersect with residents and visitors daily. With appropriate training and protocols, they can serve as first responders who identify red flags and connect survivors to help.

Other states and regions have adopted targeted partnerships with the visitor sector. In Orlando and Orange County, Florida, the Haven for Hope initiative works with major hotel chains and airport personnel to implement human trafficking recognition training, compliance protocols, and reporting mechanisms. Hotels in the region have reported increased victim identification and law enforcement referrals after staff participated in structured education programs.

Similarly, in Las Vegas, Nevada, the Hotel Safety Alliance is a consortium of hospitality providers, law enforcement, and NGOs that meets quarterly to share intelligence, adopt best practices, and implement staff training. Their programs include protocols for responding to suspected trafficking in licensed premises and standardized reporting tools.

These models demonstrate how structured visitor industry engagement can disrupt trafficking networks and strengthen community awareness.

With aloha,

Kris Coffield

President, Imua Alliance



February 23, 2026

Position: **SUPPORT** of **HB1960 HD1**, Relating to Human Trafficking

To: Representative David A. Tarnas, Chair
Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

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

Re: Testimony in **SUPPORT** of **HB1960 HD1**, Relating to Human Trafficking

Hearing: Tuesday, February 24, 2026, 2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 325, State Capitol

The Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women is committed to advancing gender equity and protecting vulnerable populations from exploitation, including human trafficking. The Commission **supports HB1960 HD1**, as it **addresses the need for increased awareness and proactive measures within the transient accommodations sector**, a known risk area for trafficking activity, and **establishes a consistent framework for education and prevention**.

Mandating regular training, recordkeeping, and the posting of informational signage ensures that employees are equipped to recognize and respond to signs of trafficking. These requirements align with best practices in other jurisdictions, where increased awareness and clear reporting procedures have been shown to improve early identification and intervention. The bill's focus on prevention policy development, training documentation, and reporting protocols within businesses creates a culture of accountability and vigilance, which is essential for disrupting trafficking networks.

The Commission appreciates the Legislature's commitment to community safety and **urges passage of HB1960 HD1**.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony.

HB-1960-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2026 6:56:52 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, Support 1960 HB RELATING TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING.

INCLUDE MANDATED BY LAW TO REPORT LIKE SOCIAL WORKERS, PROBATION OFFICERS, CHILD WELFARE WORKERS

William Caron
Testimony in Support
HB1960 HD1
House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs
Tuesday, February 24, 2026, 2 PM

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

I am testifying in strong support of HB1960, which requires the Department of the Attorney General to develop a Human Trafficking Awareness Training Program for workers in the transient accommodations sector and establishes clear requirements for employer training, record-keeping, signage, and prevention policies. This bill transforms good intentions into enforceable action and places Hawai'i at the forefront of the fight against modern slavery.

The Reality of Trafficking in Hawai'i

Human trafficking is not a problem that happens somewhere else. It happens here, every day, on every island. Jessica Munoz, founder and CEO of Ho'ōla Nā Pua, which combats sex trafficking, has stated plainly: "Children being sold for sex is happening every single day across our state on every single island."¹

The data bear this out. Between 2019 and 2021, surveys of social service clients across five islands found that 26.7% of respondents had experienced sex trafficking, with 23.7% trafficked before the age of 18.² Native Hawaiians are disproportionately represented, with studies showing that 64% to 77.3% of sex trafficking victims identify as Native Hawaiian³—a reflection of systemic vulnerabilities rooted in historical trauma, economic marginalization, and intergenerational poverty.

The demand that fuels this exploitation is staggering. A 2018 study found that approximately one in every eleven adult males with an 808 area code is an online sex shopper. When nonresidents are included, an estimated 74,362 sex shoppers are potentially active in the islands.⁴

Hotels: The Front Lines of Exploitation

¹ Richardson, Mahealani, "Visitor and nonprofit leaders fight sex trafficking in Hawai'i," *Hawaii News Now*, February 12, 2026.

<https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/2026/02/13/visitor-nonprofit-leaders-fight-against-sex-trafficking>

² The Law Office of Jennifer M. Merkle, "Uniting to Increase Community Awareness - Human Trafficking in Hawai'i," 2023.

<https://www.jmmerklelaw.com/2023-crime-and-the-chinatown-downtown-neighborhood-honolulu-hawaii>

³ Ibid.

⁴ Thirtieth Legislature Of The State Of Hawai'i, "Senate Bill 2041," 2020.

https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/sessions/session2020/bills/SB2041_.HTM

According to the National Human Trafficking Hotline, hotels and motels are a common venue for sex trafficking due to the ease of access for buyers, the ability to pay in cash and maintain secrecy, and the lack of facility maintenance or upkeep expenses that might otherwise draw attention.⁵ As John Tobon of Homeland Security Investigations Honolulu has warned: “If you own or work for a hotel, there is human trafficking happening in your hotel.”⁶

Yet without training, workers cannot identify what they are seeing. According to advocacy group Businesses Ending Slavery and Trafficking, only 8% of hoteliers can identify instances of sex or human trafficking before training, while 44% of employees recognized cases afterward.⁷ This is not a failure of individual vigilance; it is a failure of institutional preparation. HB1960 addresses that failure directly.

What HB1960 Does

This bill requires the Department of the Attorney General to develop a comprehensive Human Trafficking Awareness Training Program tailored to the transient accommodations sector. It then requires employers to:

- Provide periodic training to employees and contract workers.
- Maintain records of training completion.
- Post signage with reporting information in prominent locations.
- Develop and implement a human trafficking prevention policy that includes clear procedures for reporting suspected trafficking.

The bill also establishes penalties for noncompliance and requires the Department of Law Enforcement to adopt implementing rules.

Crucially, the training is designed to protect workers as well as potential victims. As Rosanna Maietta of the American Hotel & Lodging Association has noted: “What we don’t want to do is have a housekeeper get into harm’s way by calling attention. Instead it teaches them very specifically, here’s what to look for and if you see this, here’s who to go talk to.”⁸

What Workers Will Learn

Training under this program would teach hospitality workers to recognize warning signs such as:

- Individuals who appear to be under someone else's control.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ “Hawaii visitor industry event focuses on sex trafficking,” *AP News*, November 6, 2019. <https://apnews.com/travel-and-tourism-general-news-560a14ed5d2e4bd1b0900321a77b61e0>

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Richardson, 2026.

- People who are not allowed to speak for themselves or who have someone else speaking for them.
- Guests who request rooms away from staff or who refuse housekeeping services.
- Multiple unrelated individuals coming and going from a single room.
- Signs of physical abuse, malnourishment, or fear.
- Individuals who are not in possession of their own identification or travel documents.

As Jessica Munoz explained: “If you have a pimp or the person who’s selling the youth, they will have rented the hotel room, or they rented another person’s name and they’ll have multiple people coming and going.”⁹

Building on Industry Partnership

This bill does not impose an unfunded mandate on an unwilling industry. Major hospitality companies are already committed to this work. As Trevor Bracher of Marriott has stated: “There are 700,000 people wearing a Marriott nametag. And that’s many pairs of eyes. When educated properly and trained on what to look for, we can use those eyes for good.”¹⁰

The American Hotel & Lodging Association is actively campaigning with “No Room for Trafficking” and supporting this legislation. Ho’ōla Nā Pua, which provides prevention training and care for exploited children, is also backing HB1960. This is a partnership between government, industry, and advocates—precisely the kind of collaboration that makes policy effective.

Closing Loopholes, Creating Accountability

Current law requires certain high-risk establishments—including those with liquor licenses, massage therapy establishments employing three or more people, and establishments employing erotic or nude dancers—to post National Human Trafficking Resource Center hotline information.¹¹ Penalties for violations were increased in 2020, and fines are now deposited into the Human Trafficking Victim Services Fund.¹²

But posting a sign, while necessary, is not sufficient. Workers need training to understand what they are seeing and clear protocols for how to respond. HB1960 moves beyond passive posting to active prevention.

A Bipartisan Priority

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ *AP News*, 2019.

¹¹ Thirtieth Legislature Of The State Of Hawai’i, 2020.

¹² Ibid.

HB1960 is part of the Hawai'i Women's Legislative Caucus 2026 bill package, introduced with bipartisan support. It reflects a deep commitment to protecting women, children, and families across our state. As Senator Lynn DeCoite has said: "These bills recognize the real challenges facing our communities and affirm that everyone deserves to live with safety, dignity, and compassion no matter where they live in our state."¹³

Conclusion

The transient accommodations sector is both a venue for trafficking and a critical front for intervention. The housekeepers, front desk staff, maintenance workers, and security personnel who move through hotels every day are potential first responders—if they know what to look for and how to act.

HB1960 gives them that knowledge. It equips thousands of hospitality workers with the training they need to identify exploitation, protect themselves and others, and connect victims with help. It establishes clear standards for employers and holds them accountable. And it affirms that, in Hawai'i, we will not look away from the most vulnerable among us.

I urge this committee to pass HB1960 and send a clear message that human trafficking has no place in our islands, and that our visitor industry will be part of the solution, not part of the problem.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

¹³ Tsai, Michael, "Legislative caucuses unveil 2026 bill packages," *Spectrum News*, January 30, 2026. <https://spectrumlocalnews.com/hi/hawaii/news/2026/01/30/legislative-caucuses-unveil-2026-bill-packages>

HB-1960-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2026 8:34:09 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

HB 1960 HD1 — Relating to Human Trafficking Awareness

Hearing: JHA February 24, 2026, 2:00 PM

Aloha,

My name is Dana Revilla, and I worked for 17 years as an adolescent substance use counselor, supporting at-risk youth and their families across Hawai‘i Island. I am testifying in strong support of HB 1960 HD1, which strengthens human trafficking awareness and training requirements within the transient accommodations sector.

In my work with youth, especially Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NH/PI) youth, I have seen how substance use, trauma, and exploitation often intersect. Many of the young people I served experienced housing instability, family violence, or disconnection from school and their ‘ohana. These vulnerabilities make them targets for traffickers who exploit their need for safety, belonging, or basic resources.

Statewide data reflects what I saw in practice. A 2020 study by the Hawai‘i State Commission on the Status of Women and the Arizona State University Office of Sex Trafficking Intervention Research found that over 1,400 individuals in Hawai‘i reported being sex trafficked, and more than 60% were first exploited as minors (Roe-Sepowitz & Jabola-Carolus, 2020). Native Hawaiian girls were disproportionately represented among those trafficked. These findings mirror the experiences of the youth I worked with, many of whom have moved through transient spaces where signs of exploitation were present but not recognized by staff. When adults in these settings are not trained to identify red flags, opportunities to intervene early are lost.

I am testifying because I have witnessed firsthand how deeply trafficking harms our community, especially NH/PI youth who already shoulder the burden of historical trauma, cultural displacement, and systemic inequality. I want the Committee to understand that prevention is possible, and that awareness from frontline workers can make a life-changing difference. If staff in transient accommodation had been trained to recognize signs of coercion, fear, or control, some of the youth I’ve worked with might have been connected to help sooner.

HB 1960 HD1 is practical, trauma-informed solution. Ensuring that workers who interact with guests have training and access to resources will help the workforce identify and respond to the

warning signs. This bill safeguards our community's most vulnerable youth from harm. I support this bill and investment in prevention, early intervention, and trauma-informed training for all sectors of work that engage with youth and other at-risk populations.

Mahalo, Chair Tarnas and members of the Committee, for considering my testimony. I appreciate your commitment to protecting Hawai'i's keiki and 'opio, and I hope you will support HB 1960 HD1 and the solutions it offers.

Respectfully submitted,

Dana A. Revilla, BA CSAC

To: Honorable Rep. David A. Tarnas, Chair
Honorable Rep. Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair
Members, House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

From: Katie Ann Smith

Re: HB1960, HD1

Date: Tuesday, February 24, 2026
2:00pm Conference Room 325

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

My name is Katie A. Smith, and I am writing to strong **support** of HB1960, HD1. As a social worker in my last semester of my MSW, I believe that training hospitality staff to recognize and report human trafficking is a critical step in protecting vulnerable individuals in our community. By the time human trafficking victims reach social workers they have already experienced too much. By training hotel and hospitality staff to recognize the signs of trafficking in this high-risks sector, we can intercept earlier, before they come into the attention of a social worker.

This bill provides necessary tools for the visitor industry to be proactive, including signage and reporting policies. Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to provide testimony and for considering this important legislation.

I urge the committee to pass HB1960.

Respectfully,

Katie A. Smith
MSW Graduate Student, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa
ksmith8@hawaii.edu

HB-1960-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 10:06:31 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaitonya Egan	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Dear members of the Committee, My name is Kaitonya Egan, and I support Bill 1960, which is related to human trafficking. Human trafficking is a very difficult and under taught and talked about exploitation that happens. This bill focuses on educating and training workers in the transient accommodation sector. As a worker in Waikiki working close to this sector, I can say firsthand that I lack knowledge in all aspects of human trafficking. I am unaware of how to identify individuals, how to respond and keep them safe if identified, and who to contact if human trafficking is identified. I know that I am not the only one. With us being in such a transient touristy place, making it safer for the people living here, and coming in and out, should be a top priority. This bill has the ability to make it safer, and if even one person could be saved from human trafficking through this program, that is someone's sister, daughter, or wife, who could get the chance at a new life because of this program. I feel it is our duty to give them that chance. I believe this bill can only benefit and educate people who need it, and this is why you should support Bill 1960.

HB-1960-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 9:36:26 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jett Jarrett	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha honorable chair and members of House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs. My name is Jett Jarrett from Kalaheo High School, Windward district of Oahu. I am writing to support HB1960. This bill requires the Department of the Attorney General to establish a human trafficking awareness program that requires employees and 3rd party contractors in the transient accommodation sector to be educated on human trafficking signs and prevention. This requires businesses to provide human trafficking awareness training for certain employees, keep records of the training, post signage, and implement a procedure for reporting suspected human trafficking.

This bill addresses the critical issue of trafficking within the transient accommodations sector in Hawai'i. According to a report by the Polaris project, "Survivors in Polaris focus groups also mentioned that these hotels are perceived by traffickers to have distracted and busy staff, which allows trafficking to go undetected". By implementing mandatory training, employees are updated and more aware of the signs of trafficking and how to safely address it.

According to the Polaris Project, 75% of trafficking survivors were involved in the hotel industry. This puts Hawai'i in a critical position, as its tourism industry results in hotels becoming unwitting participants in human trafficking. This bill addresses this issue by giving businesses resources to promote awareness of these suspicious activities.

Other states have also adapted guidelines for hotels to report suspected human trafficking activities. With the Texas legislature passing HB 390 that also requires proper signage and training for employees. Or California senate bill 970. This nationwide adoption of these policies demonstrate their necessity in our state that has a heavy influx of tourism and short-term stays.

With Hawai'i's reliance on tourism and hotels, it is crucial that these workers are trained to spot the early signs of human trafficking, and trained to address it safely. House Bill 1960 provides this training. To further Hawai'i's fight against the violent crime of trafficking, I urge you to vote yes for HB1960. Thank you for your time.

HB-1960-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 1:59:23 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/24/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara J. Service	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this bill to do all you can to prevent human trafficking.

Mahalo!

Barbara J. Service

February 23, 2026

TO: CHAIR TARNAS AND THE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

FROM: SHANA W. KUKILA, INDIVIDUAL

RE: HB21960 HD1 RELATING TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING

IN SUPPORT

To Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe and Committee Members,

I urge you to pass this bill with the following suggested amendments:

- Add in Educational workers in DOE and private schools throughout the state K-12+;
- Add in Healthcare workers throughout the state, particularly in emergency rooms;
- Provide added protections to reporters;
- Provide a process for students in public and private schools to report their knowledge of human or sex trafficking;
- Provide a process for the public to report on human or sex trafficking in the community;

Thank you for your time and consideration on this important bill.

Mahalo.