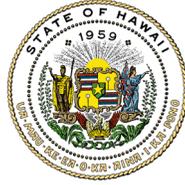


**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



**STEPHEN F. LOGAN**  
MAJOR GENERAL  
ADJUTANT GENERAL  
KA 'AKUKANA KENELALA  
**JAMES DS. BARROS**  
ADMINISTRATOR OF  
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT  
KAHU HO'OMALU PŪLIA

STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I  
**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**  
**KA 'OIHANA PILI KAUA**  
HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY  
4204 DIAMOND HEAD ROAD  
HONOLULU, HAWAI'I 96816-4420

STATE OF HAWAI'I  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 1976, HD1  
RELATING TO DEMENTIA

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
PUBLIC SAFETY

BY

JAMES DS. BARROS  
ADMINISTRATOR  
HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

February 11, 2026

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit **COMMENT** testimony on House Bill 1976 HD1.

While HIEMA supports the intent of this bill to provide dementia-specific training to first responders – to improve recognition, communication, and safety for individuals living with dementia, we note that HIEMA does not have first responder personnel. Its role is primarily focused on emergency management coordination, public notifications, and planning and support of emergency response operations.

Assigning training responsibilities for first responders to an agency without first responder staff may lead to confusion regarding implementation and accountability. It may be more appropriate and effective for this mandate to rest solely with agencies and departments that directly employ first responders, such as county fire departments, law enforcement agencies, and emergency medical services, as well as departments that specifically deal with individuals requiring mental health support. These agencies have the necessary expertise and resources to address the unique challenges faced by both responders and the communities they serve.

In light of this, we believe it is crucial to clarify the role of HIEMA concerning training and operational responsibilities. HIEMA's primary function does not involve direct training for first responders. Instead, if HIEMA is required to assist in emergency situations, it should focus on identifying a select team – such as State Warning Point personnel – whose responsibility would be to manage incoming calls and provide support.

Thank you for your consideration of this important clarification to ensure effective and practical implementation of dementia-specific training requirements, and for the opportunity to provide comment testimony for House Bill 1976 HD1.

James Barros: [james.barros@hawaii.gov](mailto:james.barros@hawaii.gov); 808-733-4300



**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII  
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII

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

**CAROLINE CADIRAO**  
DIRECTOR  
Executive Office on Aging

Telephone  
(808) 586-0100

Fax  
(808) 586-0185

**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**  
**KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO**  
**EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON AGING**  
NO. 1 CAPITOL DISTRICT  
250 SOUTH HOTEL STREET, SUITE 406  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-2831

**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB1976 HD1  
RELATING TO DEMENTIA**

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY  
Rep. Della Au Belatti, Chair  
Rep. Kim Coco Iwamoto, Vice Chair

Testimony of Caroline Cadirao  
Director, Executive Office on Aging  
Attached Agency to the Department of Health

Hearing: Tuesday, February 10, 2026, 8:40 A.M.

Conference Room: 411

- 1 **EOA Position:** The Executive Office on Aging (EOA), an attached agency to the Department of
- 2 Health (DOH) supports HB1976 HD1.
- 3 **Purpose:** This measure mandates dementia-specific training annually for all first responders in
- 4 Hawai'i, including law enforcement officers, fire first responders, and emergency medical
- 5 services personnel. Additionally, it requires the Executive Office on Aging to review and
- 6 recommend curricula focused on recognizing the signs of Alzheimer's and related dementias.
- 7 Hawai'i's aging population continues to grow, and our community—including first responders—
- 8 needs the situational awareness and skills necessary to effectively interact with individuals who
- 9 may have Alzheimer's disease or related dementias.

1    **Recommendations:** EOA supports this measure to ensure that Hawai‘i’s first responders receive  
2    dementia training. EOA defers to the Hawai‘i Emergency Management Agency, Fire  
3    Departments, and the Law Enforcement Standards Board for implementation.  
4  
5    Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

## Testimony to the House Committee on Public Safety Wednesday, February 11, 8:40 AM, Room 411 and Videoconference

2026 Hawaii  
Leadership Board

RE: House Bill No. 1976 House Draft 1 – RELATING TO DEMENTIA

Travis Kikuchi, *Chair*  
Senior Vice President  
Central Pacific Bank

Lori McCarney, *National*  
Board Member Community  
Advocate

Tricia Medeiros, *Past Chair*  
Chief Operating Officer  
The Plaza Assisted Living

Gina Fujikami, *MD*  
The Queen's Medical  
Center

Kai Ohashi,  
Financial Advisor Edward  
Jones

Michael Robinson,  
Vice President Hawaii Pacific  
Health

Kimberly Soares, *Vice*  
President Atlas Insurance

Gino Soquena,  
Executive Director  
Hawaii Building and  
Construction Trade Council

Gordon Takaki, *Past*  
President Hawaii Island  
Chamber of Commerce

Cary Tanaka,  
Past President  
Island Insurance  
Companies

Caroline Witherspoon,  
President Becker  
Communications

LJ R. Duenas,  
Executive Director  
Alzheimer's Association

Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Coby Chock, Director of Public Policy and Advocacy for the Alzheimer's Association, and we strongly support HB1976 HD1 to require one hour of dementia-specific training annually for all first responders statewide.

This is a public safety bill. Dementia is already part of first responders' day-to-day work and the risk is growing. Today, an estimated 31,200 Hawai'i residents aged 65+ live with Alzheimer's and this number is rising. People living with dementia have 1,248 emergency department visits per 1,000 persons annually, reflecting frequent encounters with police, EMS, and fire personnel. Up to 60 percent will wander at some point, often repeatedly, and can become lost, anxious, afraid, agitated, or aggressive. These realities create avoidable crises when responders have not been trained to recognize symptoms, communicate effectively, and de-escalate.

Hawai'i's first responders are also facing more frequent and intense wildfires and disaster evacuations. In these high-stress events, a person with dementia may not understand commands, resist evacuation, or become combative out of fear. A one-hour, evidence-based annual refresher gives responders practical tools to keep everyone safer.

HB1976 HD1 is practical, **no-cost**, and ready now. The bill directs the Executive Office on Aging (EOA) to review and recommend at least one no-cost, one-hour training that aligns with best practices, including recognition, assessment, communication, de-escalation, abuse and neglect identification, caregiver engagement, disaster response, and safe return. The Alzheimer's Association already offers a free one-hour online training for first responders, and our Hawai'i chapter has partnered with Honolulu Police Department to provide in-person dementia training to new recruits at no cost. Agencies can meet this requirement without new appropriations while ensuring statewide consistency.

Implementation is straightforward:

- EOA publishes a vetted list that includes at least one no-cost option.
- Departments select from the list and deliver a minimum of one hour annually to all personnel.
- The bill sets clear timelines so implementation is reasonable while also ensuring training begins promptly, with completion of the first annual cycle in 2028.

Why this matters now: With more kūpuna living with dementia in our communities, first responders are the front line of safety. A missed diagnosis on a call can escalate quickly into injuries, restraints, or unnecessary transports. A short, standardized training improves recognition, reduces conflict, prevents avoidable ED visits, and supports faster safe reunification when someone wanders. It also protects responders by giving them proven strategies to manage behavior and communicate under stress.

HB1976 HD1 delivers immediate public safety benefits at no cost to departments, improves outcomes for families, and strengthens Hawai'i's disaster readiness. I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB1976 HD1.

Mahalo for your consideration. Please contact Coby Chock at 808-451-3410 or ckchock@alz.org with any questions.

Coby Chock  
Director, Public Policy and Advocacy  
Alzheimer's Association - Hawaii

**HB-1976-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 5:07:53 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/11/2026 8:40:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Louis Erteschik	Hawaii Disability Rights Center	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This training would be very valuable to those who interact with these individuals, particularly so they don't mistake the symptoms for something else that could lead to very negative consequences.



February 7, 2026

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

My name is Tori Carapelho, and I am submitting testimony on behalf of Hear 4 Hope in **strong support of HB1976.**

Hear 4 Hope works with individuals and families impacted by hearing loss, and we are deeply aware of the growing body of research showing that untreated hearing loss is associated with an increased risk of cognitive decline and dementia. In many cases, individuals may be in the early stages of cognitive impairment without a formal diagnosis, yet begin to act out of character due to confusion, fear, or difficulty understanding what is happening around them.

In emergency or high-stress situations, these communication and cognitive challenges can easily be misunderstood as noncompliance, agitation, or inappropriate behavior. When this occurs, individuals may be treated harshly or unfairly, not because of intent, but because their condition is not recognized.

HB1976 takes an important and compassionate step by ensuring first responders receive dementia-specific training that supports recognition, communication, and de-escalation. This type of training helps protect the dignity and safety of individuals experiencing cognitive or communication challenges, while also supporting first responders in doing their jobs safely and effectively.

For these reasons, Hear 4 Hope supports HB1976 and appreciates the Legislature's attention to this growing public health and public safety issue.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tori Carapelho".

Tori Carapelho

Hear 4 Hope



1001 Bishop Street | Suite 625 | Honolulu, HI 96813-2830  
1-866-295-7282 | Fax: 808-536-2882  
aarp.org/hi | [aarphi@aarp.org](mailto:aarphi@aarp.org) | [twitter.com/AARPHawaii](https://twitter.com/AARPHawaii)  
[facebook.com/AARPHawaii](https://facebook.com/AARPHawaii)

**The State Legislature**  
**House Committee on Public Safety**  
**Wednesday, February 11, 2026**  
**Conference Room 411, 8:40 a.m.**

TO: The Honorable Della Au Belatti, Chair  
FROM: Keali'i S. López, State Director  
RE: Support for H.B. 1976, HD 1 Relating to Dementia

Aloha Chair Au Belatti, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Keali'i Lopez, and I am the State Director for AARP Hawai'i. AARP is a nonpartisan, social impact organization that advocates for individuals age 50 and older. We have a membership of nearly 38 million nationwide and nearly 135,000 in Hawaii. We advocate at the state and federal level for the issues that matter most to older adults and their families.

AARP Hawai'i is in support of House Bill 1976, HD1, which ensures that law enforcement officers, firefighters, and emergency medical services personnel have the practical skills needed to respond safely to dementia-related situations. Individuals living with dementia often display confusion, fear, or agitation—not resistance or intentional noncooperation. Proper training enables first responders to identify these behaviors, avoid unnecessary escalation, and support safer outcomes for both the individual and the responding team.

First responders regularly encounter individuals with dementia, often without the benefit of specialized training. HB 1976, HD1 provides them with tools that enhance safety, reduce stress, and improve decision-making during high-pressure incidents. People living with dementia experience disproportionately high rates of emergency department visits—many of which are avoidable with appropriate on-scene assessment and response. Dementia-specific training helps first responders determine when transport is necessary and when other care pathways are more appropriate, reducing strain on hospitals and improving outcomes for families.

With increased wildfire threats and emergency evacuation scenarios across Hawai'i, dementia training becomes essential. Individuals with dementia may not understand evacuation instructions or may resist leaving familiar surroundings. Equipping first responders with appropriate communication and safety strategies ensures better protection of vulnerable kūpuna during disasters.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of H.B. 1976, HD1.

**HB-1976-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 8:38:19 AM

Testimony for PBS on 2/11/2026 8:40:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Glen Higa	Hawaii Parkinson Association	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and members of the committee,

My name is Glen Higa, and I live in Kalihi. I am the President of the Hawaii Parkinson Association and I am in strong support of HB1976 HD1 which would establish dementia training for first responders across the state to ensure the safety of those living with Alzheimer's.

In addition to the people in Hawaii living with Alzheimer's disease, there are also over 8,000 people living with Parkinson's disease and many remain in their homes and communities. As dementia progresses, people may become confused, disoriented, frightened, or unable to communicate clearly. Six in ten people living with dementia will wander, often repeatedly, and may get lost even in familiar places. When first responders encounter someone with dementia who is scared or unable to understand commands, situations can escalate quickly.

At the same time, Hawai'i's first responders are dealing with increasing medical emergencies, natural disasters, and more frequent wildfires, all of which require rapid action and clear communication. A person with dementia may not respond in expected ways during an evacuation, a traffic stop, or a medical call, placing both the individual and responders at risk.

This bill simply requires one hour of dementia-specific training each year for first responders. The Alzheimer's Association already provides this training at no cost, and it covers communication techniques, de-escalation strategies, recognizing signs of dementia, and how to safely assist a person who is lost or distressed. This short training can prevent injuries, reduce unnecessary hospitalizations, and help responders bring people home safely.

I respectfully urge you to support this bill so that Hawai'i's first responders have the tools they need to interact safely and effectively with people living with dementia, and so families can feel more confident that their loved ones will be treated with understanding and care during an emergency.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,

Glen Higa

**HB-1976-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 8:31:53 AM

Testimony for PBS on 2/11/2026 8:40:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tony S Vericella	Alzheimer's Caregiving & The Caregivers	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony on HB1976 HD1

RELATING TO DEMENTIA

Wednesday, February 11, 8:40 PM

Conference Room 411 & Videoconference

State Capitol - 415 South Beretania Street

Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Tony Vericella, and I live primarily in Waimea on the Big Island.

My wife, Dana Mehau-Vericella, was diagnosed with early onset Alzheimer's seven + years ago. She's now in the late stages and has been unable to do any activity of daily life for the last five years. Our family has been providing all of her care here in the family home on the Big Island.

In September 2023, we launched an approved tax-exempt 501 (c)(3), Alzheimer's Caregiving & The Caregivers.

Our goal is simple – to pass on the healing, the strength, and the power that comes from understanding and sharing experiences. We have but one mission – *to prepare, equip, and provide evolving support to “families” caregiving for loved ones diagnosed with the progressive and debilitating effects of Alzheimer’s/Dementia.*

I am in strong support of HB1976 HD1 which would the establishment of dementia training for first responders across the state to ensure the safety of those living with Alzheimer's.

Hawai‘i has more than 31,000 residents living with Alzheimer’s disease, and many remain in their homes and communities. As dementia progresses, people may become confused, disoriented, frightened, or unable to communicate clearly. Six in ten people living with dementia will wander, often repeatedly, and may get lost even in familiar places. When first responders

encounter someone with dementia who is scared or unable to understand commands, situations can escalate quickly.

At the same time, Hawai'i's first responders are dealing with increasing medical emergencies, natural disasters, and more frequent wildfires, all of which require rapid action and clear communication. A person with dementia may not respond in expected ways during an evacuation, a traffic stop, or a medical call, placing both the individual and responders at risk.

This bill simply requires one hour of dementia-specific training each year for first responders. The Alzheimer's Association already provides this training at no cost, and it covers communication techniques, de-escalation strategies, recognizing signs of dementia, and how to safely assist a person who is lost or distressed. This short training can prevent injuries, reduce unnecessary hospitalizations, and help responders bring people home safely.

I respectfully urge you to support this bill so that Hawai'i's first responders have the tools they need to interact safely and effectively with people living with dementia, and so families can feel more confident that their loved ones will be treated with understanding and care during an emergency.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,

Tony Vericella

Alzheimer's Caregiving & The Caregivers

[www.alzcaregiving.org](http://www.alzcaregiving.org)



**Testimony to the House Committee on Public Safety  
Wednesday, February 11, 2026; 8:40 a.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 411  
Via Videoconference**

**RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 1976, HOUSE DRAFT 1, RELATING TO DEMENTIA.**

Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Primary Care Association (HPCA) is a 501(c)(3) organization established to advocate for, expand access to, and sustain high quality care through the statewide network of Community Health Centers throughout the State of Hawaii. The HPCA **SUPPORTS** House Bill No. 1976, House Draft 1, RELATING TO DEMENTIA.

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

This bill, as received by your Committee, would require annual dementia-specific training for all first responders in Hawaii and ensure that training content addresses: recognition, assessment, and communication; abuse and neglect identification; caregiver engagement; disaster response; and safe return.

The bill would take effect on July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion.

According to the Center for Disease Control:

- Alzheimer's disease is one of the top 10 leading causes of death in the United States;
- The 6<sup>th</sup> leading of death among US adults; and
- The 5<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death among adults aged 65 years or older.

In 2023, an estimated 6.7 million Americans aged 65 year or older had Alzheimer's disease. **This number is projected to nearly triple to 14 million people by 2060.**

**Testimony on House Bill No. 1976, House Draft 1**  
**Wednesday, February 11, 2026; 8:40 a.m.**  
**Page 2**

Further, death rates for Alzheimer's disease are increasing, unlike heart disease and cancer death rates that are on the decline. Dementia, including Alzheimer's disease, has shown to be under-reported in death certificates and therefore the proportion of older people who die from Alzheimer's may be considerably higher.

In Hawaii, Alzheimer's disease is a growing public health crisis:

- 29,000 people aged 65 and older are living with Alzheimer's in Hawaii;
- 6.7% of people aged 45 and older have subjective cognitive decline;
- 60,000 family caregivers bear the burden of the disease in Hawaii;
- 91 million hours of unpaid care are provided by Alzheimer's caregivers;
- \$1.9 billion is the value of the unpaid care; and
- \$240 million is the cost of Alzheimer's to the State Medicaid Program.

For these reasons, the HPCA has worked closely with the Hawaii Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association on this issue. We are honored to partner with them and urge your favorable consideration.

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

February 9, 2026

House Committee on Public Safety  
Chair Della Au Belatti  
Vice Chair Kim Coco Iwamoto  
Members of the Committee

**Re: HB 1976 HD 1 – Relating to Dementia – SUPPORT**

Aloha kākou!

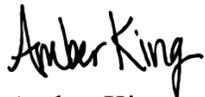
Leading Age Pacific West is pleased to support House Bill 1976 which revises training requirements for specified first responders to require one hour of dementia-specific training to assist in their interactions with individuals living with Alzheimer’s disease or related types of dementia

LeadingAge Pacific West is a leading advocate for quality, mission-driven housing, care and services for older adults. Our nonprofit members include providers of affordable senior housing, residential care facilities for the elderly (assisted living), life plan communities, skilled nursing care, home and community-based services, home health and hospice care.

Currently, there are over 31,200 individuals in Hawaii living with Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias, which accounts for 11.3% of adults over the age of 65<sup>1</sup>. In addition, Alzheimer’s disease is the 5th leading cause of death in Hawaii. HB 1976 will provide first responders with the necessary information and tools to respond to situations involving individuals with cognitive diseases and allow them to better support those individuals and their families.

HB 1976 is a small step toward supporting individuals living with Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias. For these reasons, LeadingAge Pacific West is pleased to support HB 1976 and thanks you for your leadership on this important measure. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at [aking@leadingagepacificwest.org](mailto:aking@leadingagepacificwest.org).

Sincerely,



Amber King  
Vice President, Legislative Affairs

---

<sup>1</sup> State data provided by: [Alzheimer's Association](http://Alzheimer's Association)

To: Chair Belatti  
Vice Chair Iwamoto  
Members of the Committee on Public Safety

Re: **HB 1976 HD1 – RELATING TO DEMENTIA**  
**Wednesday, February 11, 2026**  
**Testimony in Strong Support**

My name is Steven Tam, and I am submitting testimony in strong support of HB 1976 HD1, which would require annual dementia-specific training for first responders across Hawai‘i. I support this bill in memory of my father and three uncles, all of whom passed away from Alzheimer’s disease. Like many families in Hawai‘i, we often found ourselves in situations where confusion or disorientation could quickly become stressful or unsafe. Those experiences are why it’s so important to me that first responders have the tools they need when they meet someone living with dementia.

Today, more than 31,000 people in Hawai‘i are living with Alzheimer’s, and over 62,000 family caregivers are helping them every day. As our population ages, these numbers will continue to rise. First responders will be called on more often to help families like mine. But right now, Hawai‘i does not have a statewide requirement for dementia-specific training. This means responders may not have the same level of preparation, and families may not get the support they need during a crisis.

HB 1976 HD1 would change that by making sure all first responders receive consistent dementia training. In 2025, as an Alzheimer’s Association volunteer Community Educator, I had the opportunity to provide this type of training to Honolulu Police Department recruits. We talked about communication, de-escalation, recognizing signs of Alzheimer’s, and how to safely help someone who is lost or distressed. What stood out to me was how much the recruits appreciated learning these skills. It was clear that this training can make encounters safer and less stressful for everyone involved.

The Alzheimer’s Association Hawai‘i Chapter already offers this training at no cost, and agencies can use these resources without needing additional funding. This makes the bill both practical and affordable.

HB 1976 HD1 will help keep our communities safe, support first responders, and protect our kūpuna and their families. It is a simple, meaningful step that will make a real difference.

I respectfully urge you to pass HB 1976 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

**Steven Tam**

**HB-1976-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 11:06:32 AM

Testimony for PBS on 2/11/2026 8:40:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Brian Seabaugh	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and members of the committee,

My name is Brian Seabaugh, and I live in Kailua. My grandmother passed away from dementia and I am a caretaker for a father and 2 aunties that live with Alzheimers. I am in strong support of HB1976 HD1 which would the establishment of dementia training for first responders across the state to ensure the safety of those living with Alzheimer's.

Hawai'i has more than 31,000 residents living with Alzheimer's disease, and many remain in their homes and communities. As dementia progresses, people may become confused, disoriented, frightened, or unable to communicate clearly. Six in ten people living with dementia will wander, often repeatedly, and may get lost even in familiar places. When first responders encounter someone with dementia who is scared or unable to understand commands, situations can escalate quickly.

At the same time, Hawai'i's first responders are dealing with increasing medical emergencies, natural disasters, and more frequent wildfires, all of which require rapid action and clear communication. A person with dementia may not respond in expected ways during an evacuation, a traffic stop, or a medical call, placing both the individual and responders at risk.

This bill simply requires one hour of dementia-specific training each year for first responders. The Alzheimer's Association already provides this training at no cost, and it covers communication techniques, de-escalation strategies, recognizing signs of dementia, and how to safely assist a person who is lost or distressed. This short training can prevent injuries, reduce unnecessary hospitalizations, and help responders bring people home safely.

I respectfully urge you to support this bill so that Hawai'i's first responders have the tools they need to interact safely and effectively with people living with dementia, and so families can feel more confident that their loved ones will be treated with understanding and care during an emergency.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,

Brian Seabaugh

**HB-1976-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 12:17:06 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/11/2026 8:40:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
LJ Duenas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure.

**HB-1976-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 2:07:24 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/11/2026 8:40:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jo Hittner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony on HB1976 HD1

RELATING TO DEMENTIA

Wednesday, February 11, 8:40 PM

Conference Room 411 & Videoconference

State Capitol - 415 South Beretania Street

Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and members of the committee,

My name is Jo Hittner and I live in Hilo. I have friends who are caregivers for spouses with diagnoses of dementia or Alzheimer's. The friends are limited to outside activities including such as grocery shopping, getting together with friends, or attending church activities because they are concerned about the spouse wandering and/or getting lost or confused when they are left alone. When the caregiver is not with their spouse one of their main concerns is how the spouse will respond when approached by strangers, among whom may be first responders. I am in strong support of HB1976 HD1 which would be the establishment of dementia training for first responders across the state to ensure the safety of those living with Alzheimer's.

Hawai'i has more than 31,000 residents living with Alzheimer's disease, and many remain in their homes and communities. As dementia progresses, people may become confused, disoriented, frightened, or unable to communicate clearly. Six in ten people living with dementia will wander, often repeatedly, and may get lost even in familiar places. When first responders encounter someone with dementia who is scared or unable to understand commands, situations can escalate quickly.

At the same time, Hawai'i's first responders are dealing with increasing medical emergencies, natural disasters, and more frequent wildfires, all of which require rapid action and clear communication. A person with dementia may not respond in expected ways during an evacuation, a traffic stop, or a medical call, placing both the individual and responders at risk.

This bill simply requires one hour of dementia-specific training each year for first responders. The Alzheimer's Association already provides this training at no cost, and it covers communication techniques, de-escalation strategies, recognizing signs of dementia, and how to safely assist a person who is lost or distressed. This short training can prevent injuries, reduce unnecessary hospitalizations, and help responders bring people home safely.

I respectfully urge you to support this bill so that Hawai'i's first responders have the tools they need to interact safely and effectively with people living with dementia, and so families can feel more confident that their loved ones will be treated with understanding and care during an emergency.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,

Jo Hittner

**HB-1976-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 2:50:51 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/11/2026 8:40:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rosalie Char	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and members of the committee,

My name is Rosalie Char, and I live in Kaneohe. Although I do not have any close personal connections to the disease, many friends and neighbors have. I have heard some horrifying stories of family members wandering away from home and not being able to find them for hours. I am in strong support of HB1976 HD1 which would the establishment of dementia training for first responders across the state to ensure the safety of those living with Alzheimer's.

Hawai'i has more than 31,000 residents living with Alzheimer's disease, and many remain in their homes and communities. As dementia progresses, people may become confused, disoriented, frightened, or unable to communicate clearly. Six in ten people living with dementia will wander, often repeatedly, and may get lost even in familiar places. When first responders encounter someone with dementia who is scared or unable to understand commands, situations can escalate quickly.

At the same time, Hawai'i's first responders are dealing with increasing medical emergencies, natural disasters, and more frequent wildfires, all of which require rapid action and clear communication. A person with dementia may not respond in expected ways during an evacuation, a traffic stop, or a medical call, placing both the individual and responders at risk.

This bill simply requires one hour of dementia-specific training each year for first responders. The Alzheimer's Association already provides this training at no cost, and it covers communication techniques, de-escalation strategies, recognizing signs of dementia, and how to safely assist a person who is lost or distressed. This short training can prevent injuries, reduce unnecessary hospitalizations, and help responders bring people home safely.

I respectfully urge you to support this bill so that Hawai'i's first responders have the tools they need to interact safely and effectively with people living with dementia, and so families can feel more confident that their loved ones will be treated with understanding and care during an emergency.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,

Rosalie Char

**HB-1976-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 4:27:44 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/11/2026 8:40:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lila Mower	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly support.

**HB-1976-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 12:17:25 PM

Testimony for PBS on 2/11/2026 8:40:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Barbara J. Service	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass HB1976. It must be mandatory for First Responders to have basic (one hour) training in dealing with individuals who have dementia. The Zoom training is offered free of charge through the Alzheimer's Association.

Mahalo!

Barbara J. Service MSW

ChildWelfare Supervisor (ret.)

Passionate Kupuna advocate

**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 2657  
RELATING TO ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND RELATED DEMENTIAS RESEARCH**

**COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

**Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair**

**Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair**

**COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

**Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair**

**Senator Angus L.K. McKelvey, Vice Chair**

Aloha Chair Mercado Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Tani Kalei Salazar and I'm a Social Worker, born and raised in Honolulu, testifying as an individual in support of the intent of SB 2657. Three of my grandparents lived with dementia. Our 'ohana experienced the struggles of not knowing what type of dementia they had and not knowing what kinds of treatment or care options there were.

I support the establishment of an Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Research Center of Hawai'i within the University of Hawai'i John A. Burns School of Medicine. This would build capacity in our state to more resources for local research on interventions to ensure they are appropriate for our diverse island population. When we met with other community stakeholders, this was a priority shared by several community members, organizations, and caregivers from various backgrounds.

I appreciate the sustainability of these efforts with the new positions and the collaboration outlined in this measure.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

*Tani K. Salazar*

**Tani Kalei Salazar, LSW, MSW**

To: Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair  
Representative Kim Coco Iwamoto, Vice Chair  
Committee on Public Safety

From: Veronica Moore, Individual Citizen

Date: February 10, 2026

RE: House Bill 1976 HD1  
Measure Title: RELATING TO DEMENTIA.  
Report Title: Dementia; Alzheimer's Disease; First Responder Training; Executive  
Office on Aging; HIEMA; Counties; Law Enforcement Standards Board; DOH

To All Concerned,

My name is Veronica Moore and I support House Bill 1976 HD1. Thank you for introducing this bill.

Sincerely,

Veronica M. Moore

**Testimony on HB1976 HD1  
RELATING TO DEMENTIA  
Wednesday, February 11, 8:40 PM  
Conference Room 411 & Videoconference  
State Capitol - 415 South Beretania Street**

Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and members of the committee,

My name is Calvin Hara, and I reside in Kaimuki. My career was in senior care and long term care in California and Hawai'i. Throughout those years, I have been with residents with Alzheimer's disease. The disease still exists and there is no cure. I have also been a family caregiver for loved ones with dementia.

There are situations where a loved one with dementia wanders from home and first responders are alerted to help find the missing person. It is those cases where having first responders with dementia training will enable the responder to be aware of how to approach and help someone with dementia and related behaviors.

Hawai'i's first responders are dealing with increasing medical emergencies, natural disasters, and more frequent wildfires, all of which require rapid action and clear communication. A person with dementia may not respond in expected ways during an evacuation, a traffic stop, or a medical call, placing both the individual and responders at risk.

This bill simply requires one hour of dementia-specific training each year for first responders. The Alzheimer's Association already provides this training at no cost, and it covers communication techniques, de-escalation strategies, recognizing signs of dementia, and how to safely assist a person who is lost or distressed. This short training can prevent injuries, reduce unnecessary hospitalizations, and help responders bring people home safely.

Please support this bill for kupuna, loved ones with early onset Alzheimer's and others with cognitive impairment.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,

Calvin Hara