



STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
'A'UNIKE MOKU'ĀPUNI NO KA NĀ KĀWAI KULA
PRINCESS VICTORIA KAMĀMALU BUILDING
1010 RICHARDS STREET, Room 122
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
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March 25, 2026

The Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
The Thirty-Third Legislature
State Capitol State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Senator San Buenaventura and Committee Members:

SUBJECT: HB 2009 HD2 Relating to Family Caregiver Support

The Hawai'i State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) provides comments, appreciating the intent of HB 2009 HD2, which extends childcare subsidies to disabled parents or guardians, regardless of their employment status. Requires the Department of Human Services to evaluate caregiver capacity and dependent-care responsibilities when determining eligibility for Medicaid Home- and Community-Based Services. Requires the Department of Human Services to update its health and functional assessment protocols related to at-risk needs determinations.

We understood it would address a longstanding gap affecting parents and guardians with disabilities whose caregiving capacity may be substantially impaired due to disability or serious medical conditions. However, after reviewing the testimony submitted by the Department of Human Services, we recognize that the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), the federal funding source that supports Hawai'i's childcare subsidy program, is governed by federal eligibility requirements that generally require parents to be working, in education, or in job training. CCDF is administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services through the Administration for Children and Families and does not currently permit eligibility based solely on parental disability status.

We further understand that if Hawai'i were to expand eligibility to include caregiver capacity without meeting federal CCDF participation requirements, those childcare subsidies would not qualify for federal funding match and would instead require 100 percent State general funds for both benefits and administration.

The Council continues to believe that caregiver capacity should be evaluated accurately and not presumed. HB2009 HD2 raises an important policy question: how Hawai'i can better support parents

with disabilities whose access and functional needs affect caregiving, without jeopardizing federal funding streams or creating unintended fiscal consequences.

For example, a single parent who acquires a disability, such an injury requiring the use of a wheelchair, may experience a sudden and significant change in their ability to safely lift, transport, or supervise a young child. In such circumstances, caregiving limitations are real and functional, even if the parent is not engaged in employment, education, or job training under current federal childcare eligibility standards.

The Council encourages dialogue between the Department of Human Services and the Hawai'i Disability Rights Center to explore compliant and fiscally responsible approaches that address the longstanding gap affecting parents and guardians with disabilities whose care giving capacity may be substantially impaired due to disability or serious medical conditions, while preserving federal funding integrity.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments for HB 2009 HD2.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daintry Bartoldus".

Daintry Bartoldus
Executive Administrator

HB-2009-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 6:16:09 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Louis Erteschik	Testifying for Hawaii Disability Rights Center	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

There are a few distinct important provisions in this bill. The first extends child care subsidies to disabled parents or guardians, regardless of their employment status. This is clearly a good policy. While we understand that the current law may have contemplated that the subsidy was needed for individuals who were away from the home because they were working, the reality is that if the parent has a disability, while they may be physically present in the home, their ability to provide child care may be equally impacted. For that reason the disability needs to be factored in to the overall needs of the household. We do note the testimony of DHS regarding the ability to draw federal funds for that purpose. We are not unmindful of the significance of that and hope to explore solutions with the Department and this Committee.

Another requires the Department of Human Services to evaluate caregiver capacity and dependent-care responsibilities when determining eligibility for Medicaid Home- and Community-Based Services. The problem seems to be that when assessing a child for eligibility for Medicaid benefits the Department look to the parent as a natural support and potential source of assistance that can reduce the number of hours of outside services that the Department would be required to provide. However, we understand that even if the parent has a disability they do not take that into consideration and just say that that doesn't matter. That they are presuming their ability to provide care simply by virtue of being the parent. That does not make sense and is a clear gap in our service delivery system. Each case needs to be assessed on an individual basis based upon the actual needs and capabilities.

Along those lines, the other provision requires the Department of Human Services to update its health and functional assessment protocols related to at-risk needs determinations. Even the Department seems to admit this is needed. We have seen cases where determinations were made regarding one's level of disability that simply did not seem realistic or accurate. Much of the work that HDRC does in this area involves disputes between the needs of the person with the disability and the proposed services offered by the Department. While we advocate for our clients of course, all we ever seek is an accurate objective assessment. These individuals do not need to receive more services than they need- but they should not receive less.

We note that in prior testimony the State Council on Developmental Disabilities suggested continuing dialogue between our agency and the Department. We welcome that opportunity and would like to include the input of all relevant stakeholders.



Protect Democracy Move Forward

www.indivisiblehawaii.org
info@indivisiblehawaii.org

To: Hawai'i State Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Re: Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of HB2009 HD2

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, and the Members of Committee,

Members of Indivisible Hawai'i thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of HB2009 HD2 which extends child care subsidies to disabled parents or guardians, regardless of their employment status.

Childcare subsidies for disabled caregivers generally require that the parent be employed, in training, or in school, with eligibility often extending to children under 13 (or up to 18 if disabled). These eligibility rules often assume that family members can provide care for another household member without evaluating caregiver capacity, leaving families vulnerable when caregivers themselves face significant health or functional limitations. This gap can result in denial of essential services, increased caregiver strain, unsafe conditions for children or dependents, and even family separation or institutionalization.

Please pass HB2009 HD2. It would help disabled caregivers make ends meet.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Younghee Overly
Indivisible Hawai'i Working Families Team

The mission of the 14-chapter Indivisible Hawai'i Statewide Network (IHSN) is to protect Hawai'i and democracy by defending civil rights, communities and values, most importantly, Hawai'i's Constitutionally protected spirit of Aloha. In October 2025, IHSN with other partners turned out over 22,000 residents on all major islands to say No Dictators! and to stand up for democracy. This call-to-action was part of Indivisible national's mobilization of more than 7 million across the country as the voice of the people, committed to election integrity and to evolving as a place of equity, opportunity and peace.



March 25, 2026

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Angus L.K. McKelvey, Vice Chair
Committee on Health and Human Services

Re: H.B. 2009, H.D. 2, Relating to Family Caregiver Support

Hearing: Wednesday, March 25, 2026, 1:40 PM, Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, and the Members of the Committee:

Hawaii Women Lawyers is a lawyer's trade organization that aims to improve the lives and careers of women in all aspects of the legal profession, influence the future of the legal profession, and enhance the status of women and promote equal opportunities for all.

Hawaii Women Lawyers submits testimony in support of H.B. 2009, H.D. 2, which strengthens the safety net for families by extending childcare subsidies to children of disabled parents regardless of employment status, and by requiring the Department of Human Services to fairly evaluate caregiver capacity and dependent-care responsibilities in determining Medicaid eligibility for home- and community-based services.

H.B. 2009, H.D. 2 addresses a critical gap in state policy by ensuring that caregiving responsibilities and limitations of disabled parents are properly recognized and supported. Without these changes, families may face unjust denials of essential services or risk institutionalization of vulnerable household members. This bill upholds the dignity of disabled caregivers, promotes child safety, and aligns with federal guidance affirming that family support must be voluntary and feasible. It advances equity by ensuring that disabled parents are not unfairly excluded from support systems simply because they are unable to work.

For the above reasons, we support H.B. 2009, H.D. 2 and respectfully request that the Committee pass this measure.

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

To: House Committee on Health and Human Services **HB**
Re: **2009 HD 2– Relating to Family Caregiver Support**
Hawai'i State Capitol room 225 & Via Videoconference
March 25, 2026, 1:40 PM

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Mckelvey, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in **STRONG SUPPORT of HB 2009 HD2**. This bill extends child care subsidies to disabled parents or guardians, regardless of their employment status. Requires the Department of Human Services to evaluate caregiver capacity and dependent-care responsibilities when determining eligibility for medicaid home- and community-based services, and requires the Department of Human Services to update its evaluation form and functional assessment protocols related to level of care and at-risk needs determinations.

HCAN is dedicated to advancing policies that improve the well-being of Hawai'i's children and families, particularly by increasing access to affordable child care and strengthening support systems for those facing economic or health-related challenges. HB2009 HD2 is significant to our mission because it expands child care subsidies to disabled parents or guardians, regardless of employment status, and requires a more holistic approach to evaluating caregiver capacity for Medicaid home- and community-based services. These provisions directly address barriers that many families encounter when seeking care and support for their children.

Expanding child care subsidies to disabled parents or guardians, irrespective of employment status, recognizes the unique caregiving burdens faced by these families. Many disabled parents are unable to engage in traditional employment due to their health conditions, yet still require reliable child care to manage daily responsibilities and participate in their communities. By removing employment status as a barrier, the bill aligns with best practices in inclusive child welfare policy and helps ensure that all children, regardless of their parents' abilities, have access to safe and nurturing care environments.

Requiring the Department of Human Services to consider caregiver capacity and dependent-care responsibilities in Medicaid eligibility determinations is a positive step toward a more accurate and compassionate assessment process. Families with significant caregiving responsibilities often face complex needs that are not fully captured by current evaluation tools. Updating assessment protocols to reflect these realities will help ensure that families receive the appropriate level of support, reducing the risk of unnecessary institutionalization and promoting family stability.

This bill helps to ensure that children are cared for and caregivers are supported in equitable and concrete ways, improving the lives of keiki and families throughout the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. Please **PASS HB 2009 HD2**.

HB-2009-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 7:11:54 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Yvette Kay	Testifying for Kona Indivisible & Matriarchy Rising	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

What are Child Care Subsidies?

Child Care Subsidies are government-funded financial assistance programs designed to help low-income working families, or those in training/education, pay for, or reduce the cost of, childcare services. These programs, which may include vouchers or certificates, are usually managed at the state level to cover care in licensed facilities, homes, or before/after-school programs.

What problem is HB2009/SB2682 addressing?

Childcare subsidies for disabled caregivers generally require that the parent be employed, in training, or in school, with eligibility often extending to children under 13 (or up to 18 if disabled). These eligibility rules often assume that family members can provide care for another household member without evaluating caregiver capacity, leaving families vulnerable when caregivers themselves face significant health or functional limitations. This gap can result in denial of essential services, increased caregiver strain, unsafe conditions for children or dependents, and even family separation or institutionalization.

Furthermore, the federal medicaid rules do not provide clear guidance on evaluating caregiver capacity.

The purpose of HB1674/HB2009/SB2682 are to:

1. Extend child care subsidies to children of disabled parents regardless of their employment status;
2. Require the department of human services to evaluate caregiver capacity and dependent-care responsibilities when determining eligibility for medicaid home and community-based services; and
3. Require the department of human services to update its evaluation form and functional assessment protocols to ensure that families with disabled caregivers receive appropriate and timely support.

Reference: <https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/bessd/ccch-subsidies/>

My name is Yvette Kay and I am a resident of Kailua Kona in Hawai'i County. I am on the leadership team for Kona Indivisible and run the protest arm of Kona Indivisible named, Matriarchy Rising. I support this bill.

yvettekay_99@yahoo.com

96740

415-706-9638

HB-2009-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/20/2026 2:05:58 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

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

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, Support

2009 HB RELATING TO FAMILY CAREGIVER SUPPORT.

HB-2009-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 8:17:40 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

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

Comments:

Thank you. I am a member of Indivisible Windward.

HB-2009-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 9:42:57 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jane Aquino	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The purpose of HB1674/HB2009/SB2682 are to:

- 1. Extend child care subsidies to children of disabled parents regardless of their employment status;**
- 2. Require the department of human services to evaluate caregiver capacity and dependent-care responsibilities when determining eligibility for medicaid home and community-based services; and**
- 3. Require the department of human services to update its evaluation form and functional assessment protocols to ensure that families with disabled caregivers receive appropriate and timely support.**

I support this bill. Thank you, Jane Aquino, Indivisible

HB-2009-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 9:47:21 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

HB-2009-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 10:09:55 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ron Brown	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this compassionate and necessary measure!

HB-2009-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 12:29:41 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support HB2009.

HB-2009-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 1:09:35 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessie L Gonsalves	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support childcare subsidies for disabled parents or guardians

HB-2009-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 2:53:00 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support this bill.

HB-2009-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 8:51:14 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lily Troy MD	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I SUPPORT HB2009 - childcare subsidies for disabled parents or guardians

HB-2009-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 10:49:07 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support government-funded financial assistance programs designed to help low-income working families, or those in training/education, pay for, or reduce the cost of, childcare services.

Thank you, Gail Morrison, Honolulu

HB-2009-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/22/2026 1:50:12 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Calvin Black	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a member of Indivisible. Thank you for supporting this bill.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Angus L. K. McKelvey, Vice Chair

HEARING:

Wednesday, March 25, 2026 at 1:40 pm
Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

TESTIMONY IN **SUPPORT** OF HB 2009, HD 2 - RELATING TO FAMILY CAREGIVER SUPPORT.

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Christine Andrews and I am a long-term resident of Wailuku, Maui. I write to you today in **strong support of HB 2009, HD2, relating to family caregiver support**. House Bill 2009, HD1 extends child care subsidies to disabled parents or guardians, regardless of their employment status. It also requires the Department of Human Services to evaluate caregiver capacity and dependent-care responsibilities when determining eligibility for medicaid home- and community-based services. Finally, it requires the Department of Human Services to update its evaluation form and functional assessment protocols related to level of care and at-risk needs determinations.

Child care subsidies are government-funded financial assistance programs designed to help low-income working families, or those in training/education, pay for, or reduce the cost of, childcare services. These programs, which may include vouchers or certificates, are usually managed at the state level to cover care in licensed facilities, homes, or before/after-school programs.

Child care subsidies for disabled caregivers generally require that the parent be employed, in training, or in school, with eligibility often extending to children under 13 (or up to 18 if disabled). Unfortunately, eligibility rules often assume that family members are able to provide care for another household member without evaluating caregiver capacity. This leaves families vulnerable when caregivers themselves face significant health or functional limitations. This can result in denial of essential services, increased caregiver strain, unsafe conditions for children or dependents, and even family separation or institutionalization. Furthermore, federal medicaid rules do not provide clear guidance on evaluating caregiver capacity.

I request your support of HB2009, HD2 so that we can fill some of these gaps in child care subsidies in ways that better serve the real-life needs of disabled caregivers and their families. We all want a Hawai'i where our communities are able to have their basic needs met, where caregivers are supported, and where families are able to thrive.

Mahalo for what you do for your constituents and Hawai`i families,

Christine L. Andrews, J.D.
Wailuku, Maui

Eileen Cain
720 Mahi'ai St., Apt. E
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96826-5635
eileencaïn808@gmail.com
March 22, 2026

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair, Committee on **Health and Human Services**
Senator Angus L. K. McKelvey, Vice Chair,
and Members of the Committee on **Health and Human Services**

Testimony in Favor of HB2009 HD2, Relating to Family Caregiver Support

Passing this bill would ease the burden on families who need to have a family member function as a caregiver. This law would allow caregivers who are themselves unable to work to receive the subsidies for childcare.

Disabled caregivers should not be penalized by not being made ineligible to receive these subsidies. Being disabled is a hardship already.

Please vote yes on HB2009 HD2.

Mahalo,

Eileen Cain
Mō'ili'ili, Honolulu, Hawai'i

HB-2009-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 8:24:10 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kehaulani Coleman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you

HB-2009-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 5:25:38 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Denize Machit	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill. We need to focus on our most vulnerable communities. The people who care for those communities also must be focused on. These people's lives are already the most challenging in our state. Supporting them is the right thing to do.

Mahalo for allowing me to express my thoughts,

Denize Machit

HB-2009-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 8:01:08 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cory Harden	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha legislators,

I raised a special needs child as a single parent, despite my own disability, but could not have done it without help from service agencies and my family.

Please support this bill to:

Extend child care subsidies to children of disabled parents, working or not;

Require DHS to evaluate caregiver capacity and dependent-care responsibilities when determining eligibility for Medicaid home and community-based services;

Require DHS to update its evaluation procedures to ensure that families with disabled caregivers receive adequate support.

mahalo,
Cory Harden, Hilo
member, Indivisible

HB-2009-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 9:35:03 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

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

Comments:

Thank you!

HB-2009-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/23/2026 11:32:35 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair; Senator Angus L.K. McKelvey, Vice Chair; and Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services,

RE: HB2009 HD2

I am a resident of Kapolei and a member of Indivisible Hawai'i Statewide Network. I am writing to provide testimony in strong support of HB2009 HD2. The purpose of the Bill is to extend child care subsidies to children of disabled parents regardless of their employment status; to require the Department of Human Services to evaluate caregiver capacity and dependent-care responsibilities when determining eligibility for medicaid home and community-based services; and to require the Department of Human Services to update its evaluation form and functional assessment protocols to ensure that families with disabled caregivers receive appropriate and timely support.

Childcare subsidies for disabled caregivers generally require that the parent be employed, in training, or in school, with eligibility often extending to children under 13 (or up to 18 if disabled). These eligibility rules often assume that family members can provide care for another household member without evaluating caregiver capacity, leaving families vulnerable when caregivers themselves face significant health or functional limitations. This gap can result in denial of essential services, increased caregiver strain, unsafe conditions for children or dependents, and even family separation or institutionalization. Furthermore, the federal Medicaid rules do not provide clear guidance on evaluating caregiver capacity.

For these reasons I urge you to pass this Bill. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Robert L. Justice, M.D.

HB-2009-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 9:20:52 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nathan Leo Braulick	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo,

Nathan Leo Braulick

96826

HB-2009-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 10:20:21 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marcela Montalto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Providing childcare subsidies for parents or guardians with disabilities promotes equity and independence by ensuring they have the support needed to care for their families and participate in the workforce. This policy recognizes the additional challenges disabled caregivers may face, reduces financial strain, and helps create more inclusive communities where all families have the opportunity to thrive.

HB-2009-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/24/2026 11:51:03 AM

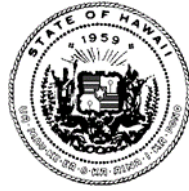
Testimony for HHS on 3/25/2026 1:40:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha, I am testifying in support for HB 2009. I support extending childcare subsidies to our disabled population. Mahalo for your taking my views into consideration.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



RYAN I. YAMANE
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

March 24, 2026

LATE

TO: The Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 2009 HD2 – RELATING TO FAMILY CAREGIVER SUPPORT.**

Hearing: Wednesday, March 25, 2026, Time 1:40 p.m.
Conference Room 225 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of the bill and provides comments. DHS respectfully requests that any appropriation not replace or reduce budget priorities identified in the executive budget.

The Department recognizes the need to support families with significant caregiving challenges to ensure the safety and well-being of their children. The proposed measure illustrates the difficulty of achieving uniformity across programs regulated by different federal laws and regulations, and of addressing service gaps.

The federal child care subsidy program, Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) does not provide subsidies or payments to parents who are not in need of child care due to their employment, job training, or schooling, as proposed by this measure. To establish such a subsidy program or payment would require state general fund appropriations for benefits, administrative, and operational costs.

Additionally, for the committee's information, a parent with a disability may apply for financial assistance through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program or may seek Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)

benefits if they meet the Social Security Administration's disability criteria. A child may also be eligible for SSI based on the child's disability or receive dependent benefits if the disabled parent receives SSDI.

DHS respectfully notes that the federal CCDF cannot be used to implement this eligibility expansion under the federal regulations and the State's approved 2025 – 2027 CCDF Plan. Unfortunately, parents with disabilities are not included in the definition of "protective services" approved by the federal Office of Child Care. Consequently, federal CCDF funds may not be used to support eligibility based solely on parental disability and would need to be a 100% state funded effort.

For the committee's information, 45 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) section 98.20(a)(3) requires that a child eligible for services:

- (i) Reside with a parent or parents who are working or attending a job training or educational program; or
- (ii) Receive, or need to receive, protective services, which include specific populations of vulnerable children as identified by the Lead Agency, and reside with a parent or parents other than the parent(s) described in paragraph (a)(3)(i) of this section.

In Hawaii's 2025 – 2027 CCDF State Plan, DHS defined "children who receive or need to receive protective services" to include:

- Children in foster care;
- Children in families under court supervision;
- Children in families receiving supports or otherwise engaged with a child welfare agency;
- Children whose family members are deemed essential workers under a governor-declared state of emergency;
- Children experiencing homelessness; and
- Children whose families have been affected by a natural disaster.

Should this bill progress, in addition to state funding for the proposed subsidy costs, the Department would require system modifications to eligibility and payment systems, updates to administrative rules and program policies, staff training on new verification and documentation processes, and the creation of family-friendly informational and outreach materials. DHS would need time and resources to implement this measure. Respectfully, DHS requests an extended effective date.

On Sections 3 and 4, DHS already considers caregiver's capacity and caregiving responsibilities of the Medicaid recipient when developing a person-centered plan for HCBS. The Health and Functional Assessment includes questions about the potential primary caregiver's capacity and willingness to serve as a caregiver; and expects that these factors be considered in the development of the care plan. MQD respectfully submits that additional legislation is not required to achieve the goals of this bill with respect to assessing caregiver capacity.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.