

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



JADE T. BUTAY
DIRECTOR

WILLIAM G. KUNSTMAN
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
KA 'OIHANA PONO LIMAHANA

February 18, 2026

To: The Honorable Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair,
The Honorable Tina Nakada Grandinetti, Vice Chair, and
Members of the House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Date: Wednesday, February 18, 2026
Time: 2:00 p.m.
Place: Conference Room 329, State Capitol

From: Jade T. Butay, Director
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR)

Re: H.B. 2360 HD1 RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE

The DLIR recognizes the importance of supporting Hawai'i's workforce through family and medical leave benefits. While we appreciate the intent of HB2360 to expand protections and provide paid leave, it is critical that any program be carefully designed, financially sustainable, and aligned with Hawai'i's unique needs.

Before moving forward, we must consider the groundwork established by Senate Concurrent Resolution 145 (SLH, 2025), along with the \$750,000 appropriation in the current budget, which directed the Department to convene a working group and conduct an actuarial study and legal analysis. These efforts are essential to determine program costs and address Hawai'i's Prepaid Health Care Act exemption to the strong preemption clause in the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA), which "supersede[s] any and all State laws insofar as they may now or hereafter relate to any employee benefit plan."

Currently, the Department has secured a consultant with a legal background to prepare a Request for Proposal (RFP) to hire an actuary and obtain a legal analysis. The actuary will examine Hawai'i's workforce demographics, wage data, and potential beneficiaries to determine the program's financial viability. The legal analysis will address Hawai'i's unique ERISA exemption for the Prepaid Health Care Law to ensure compliance with federal law and avoid jeopardizing Hawai'i's Prepaid Health Care Law.

For these reasons, the Department respectfully recommends that consideration of this measure be deferred until these foundational studies are complete.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important matter.

JOSH GREEN M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF TAXATION

Ka 'Oihana 'Auhau
P.O. BOX 259

HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809
PHONE NO: (808) 587-1540
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GARY S. SUGANUMA
DIRECTOR

KRISTEN M.R. SAKAMOTO
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

**TESTIMONY OF
GARY S. SUGANUMA, DIRECTOR OF TAXATION**

TESTIMONY ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

H.B. No. 2360, H.D.1, Relating to Paid Family Leave

BEFORE THE:

House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

DATE: Wednesday, February 18, 2026
TIME: 2:00 p.m.
LOCATION: State Capitol, Conference Room 329

Chair Matayoshi, Vice-Chair Grandinetti, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Taxation (DOTAX) offers the following comments regarding H.B. 2360, H.D.1, for your consideration.

H.B. 2360, H.D.1, requires, by January 1, 2029, the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) to establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance the payment of benefits. By January 1, 2030, it requires DLIR to begin receiving claims and paying benefits under the program. It also specifies eligibility requirements and employee protections under the program.

Part I, section 1 of the bill amends the Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) by adding a new chapter establishing the paid family and medical leave insurance program. New section __-15(a)-(b) provides that DLIR will advise covered individuals of the federal income tax implications of filing a new claim for such benefits and states that "Family leave insurance benefits and medical leave insurance benefits under this chapter shall not be subject to state income tax."

Part II, section 3 of the bill amends chapter 235-7, HRS, by excluding paid family and medical leave insurance benefits paid under the new chapter from gross income,

adjusted gross income, and taxable income for purposes of the state income tax.

The bill has a defective effective date of July 1, 3000, except parts II, III, and IV, which take effect on the earlier of January 1, 2030, or the start of DLIR receiving claims and paying insurance benefits under the new chapter.

DOTAX notes that it can administer the income tax exclusion by the effective dates proposed.

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



February 15, 2026

Position: **SUPPORT** of **HB2360 HD1**, Relating to Paid Family Leave

To: Representative Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair
Representative Tina Nakada Grandinetti, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

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

Re: Testimony in **SUPPORT** of **HB2360 HD1**, Relating to Paid Family Leave

Hearing: Wednesday, February 18, 2026, 2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

The Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women is dedicated to advancing gender equity and the economic security of women in Hawaii. The Commission **supports HB2360 HD1, as access to paid family and medical leave is a critical factor in supporting women’s participation in the workforce, reducing gender-based economic disparities, and strengthening family well-being.**

Establishing a statewide family and medical leave insurance program would provide essential support for workers who need time away from their jobs to care for a new child, a seriously ill family member, or their own health needs. Research and best practices from other jurisdictions demonstrate that **paid leave programs improve health outcomes, increase workforce retention, and help close the wage gap** that disproportionately affects women, particularly those in low-wage sectors. By specifying eligibility requirements and employee protections, this bill takes meaningful steps toward ensuring that all workers, regardless of their employer size or income level, can access these vital benefits.

HB2360 HD1’s provisions are especially important for women, who are more likely to be primary caregivers and may otherwise face financial hardship during periods of leave. The Commission urges the Legislature to **pass HB2360 HD1** as a critical investment in Hawaii’s families and gender equity.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony.



STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF WELLNESS AND RESILIENCE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
415 S. BERETANIA ST. #415
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

Testimony on H.B. 2360 HD1
RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE

Representative Scot Matayoshi, Chair
Representative Mike Lee, Vice Chair
House Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce

February 18, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.; Room Number: 329

The Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR) **SUPPORTS** H.B. 2360 HD1, Relating to Paid Family Leave and defers to the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR).

The mission of the OWR is to strengthen state systems and services by advancing hope-centered principles and supporting Hawai'i's transition toward becoming a trauma-informed state. In this work, our office explores avenues to increase access and availability to mental, behavioral, social, and emotional health services and support.

Paid Family Leave is a Top Priority for Hawai'i's Workforce

In 2024, OWR partnered with the University of Hawai'i College of Social Sciences to conduct the Hawai'i Quality of Life and Well-Being Survey—the largest statewide survey of quality of life and well-being in Hawai'i's history, with over 8,300 residents participating. When asked to identify their most important workplace benefits, four out of five state employees rated paid family leave as very important, making it one of the top five most valued benefits.¹

¹ Barile, J.P., Orimoto, T., Kook, J., Chae, S.W., Dgheim, D., Rivera, C., Helfner, S., Turner, H., Thompson, K., Yamauchi, E., Leipold, N., & Hartsock, T. (2024). *Hawai'i quality of life and well-being dashboard*. Partnership for Wellness & Resilience, Health Policy Initiative, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

Our State of Well-Being Landscape Assessment reinforced this finding: paid family leave ranked among the top five most important benefits for first responders, healthcare providers, and school staff—three workforce sectors facing significant recruitment and retention challenges.² Considering comprehensive employee benefits, including paid family leave, is one of the report recommendations for enhancing workforce wellness.

Paid Family Leave Supports Trauma Prevention

As part of our mandate to make Hawai'i a trauma-informed state, OWR is committed to preventing adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) across the lifespan. Research consistently demonstrates that paid family leave supports early bonding between caregivers and infants during a critical developmental window, reduces family financial stress during vulnerable transitions, and enables caregivers to be present during serious illness—all factors that mitigate ACE risk and build family resilience.³ Paid family leave is an important policy strategy for primary prevention of ACEs and toxic stress in that it both strengthens economic supports and facilitates parent-child bonding.⁴ Paid family leave is not only a workforce benefit; it is a public health intervention that strengthens families at their most critical moments.

H.B. 2360 HD1 is an opportunity for our state to further strengthen our vital workforce and get closer to becoming a trauma-informed state. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.

Tia L.R. Hartsock, MSW, MSCJA
Director, Office of Wellness & Resilience

² Hawai'i Office of Wellness and Resilience. (2025). State of well-being project: A landscape assessment of mental health and well-being supports and services, barriers, facilitators, and needs for state, county, and select community-based first responders, healthcare, and school staff. State of Hawai'i. Retrieved from <https://owr.hawaii.gov/state-of-well-being-project/>

³ Lindsey Rose Bullinger, The Effect of Paid Family Leave on Infant and Parental Health in the United States, *Journal of Health Economics*, Volume 66, 2019, Pages 101-116, ISSN 0167-6296, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhealeco.2019.05.006>.

⁴ Bhushan D, Kotz K, McCall J, Wirtz S, Gilgoff R, Dube SR, Powers C, Olson-Morgan J, Galeste M, Patterson K, Harris L, Mills A, Bethell C, Burke Harris N, Office of the California Surgeon General. Roadmap for Resilience: The California Surgeon General's Report on Adverse Childhood Experiences, Toxic Stress, and Health. Office of the California Surgeon General, 2020. DOI: 10.48019/PEAM8812

JOSH GREEN, M. D.
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BRENNA H. HASHIMOTO
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR
KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA

BRIAN K. FURUTO
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMŌHALA LIMAHANA
235 S. BERETANIA STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-2437

Statement of
BRENNA H. HASHIMOTO
Director, Department of Human Resources Development

Before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE
Wednesday, February 18, 2026
2:00PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 329

In consideration of
HB2360 HD1, RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE

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

The Department of Human Resources Development (HRD) offers comments on HB2360 HD1.

The purpose of HB2360 HD1 is to:

1. Require the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance payment of benefits.
2. Require the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to start receiving claims and paying benefits under the program.
3. Repeals Subpart B of part VI of Chapter 378, Hawaii Revised Statutes, relating to Victims Leave.

HRD is concerned about the potential cost to the state, but defers to the Department of Budget and Finance on the actual costs and impacts that this measure will have on public services. Accordingly, we respectfully request an amendment to remove public employees as applicable.

As part of the working group that was created last session, HRD understands the need for the private sector to have a family and medical leave insurance program. HRD has concerns, however, regarding the inclusion of public sector employees. Hawaii's public sector employers already offer a generous benefits package for its employees and

adding costs to augment this package may have an adverse impact on government operations.

The benefits package for most public sector employees includes the following:

- Employees accrue up to fourteen (14) hours per month of sick and vacation leave; sick leave is uncapped, and vacation leave may accrue up to 720 hours.
- Chapter 398, HRS provides four (4) weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave, during which accrued sick leave may be used, subject to a fifteen (15)-day minimum balance requirement.
- Eligible employees are entitled to up to twelve (12) weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), during which accrued vacation leave may be used to care for others, or for their own serious health condition, sick leave may be exhausted, and vacation leave may be used with approval.
- In addition, employees covered by Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) may receive partial wage replacement during periods of non-work-related disability, helping to reduce income disruption alongside FMLA protections

The bill would provide up to twelve (12) weeks of paid family leave and (26) weeks of paid medical leave, with HFLL and FMLA leave running concurrently, potentially granting employees up to fourteen (14) additional weeks of leave.

We are available to answer any questions or provide further information as needed.



**House Consumer Protection and Committee
Representative Matayoshi, Chair
Representative Grandinetti, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee**

2 pm, February 18, 2026

RE: HB 2360, HD1, Relating to Paid Family Leave

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

Society of Human Resource Management – Hawaii (“SHRM Hawaii”) respectfully opposes HB 2360, HD1 relating to paid family leave.

Last year, the legislature adopted a resolution to convene a working group to develop recommendations for establishing a paid family and medical leave program for the State. The working group includes over a dozen members and has submitted a timeline report to the legislature before the start of this session.

Paid family and medical leave is a complex and far-reaching issue, as evidenced by the range of perspectives shared during hearings this legislative session. Testimony has included both support and opposition, reflecting the diverse impacts on employers and employees alike. To ensure the issue is addressed in a balanced and effective manner, a variety of perspectives must be included. Accordingly, SHRM Hawaii respectfully requests that this measure be deferred pending successful completion to the work of the committee.

SHRM Hawaii represents nearly 600 human resource management professionals who are its members and employers’ statewide. Human resource professionals are responsible for evaluating and balancing the needs of both the employers and employees, a key perspective in the discussion regarding paid family and medical leave in Hawaii.

We look forward to contributing positively to the development of sound public policy and continuing to serve as a resource to the legislature on matters related to labor and employment laws.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony,

Erin Kogen and Maggie Batangan
Co-chairs, SHRM Legislative Affairs Committee



HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 1:04:50 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
GARY SIMON	Hawai'i Family Caregiver Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Grandinetti, and Honorable Members of the House Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce:

I am Gary Simon, a member of the board of the Hawai'i Family Caregiver Coalition, whose mission is to improve the quality of life of those who give and receive care by increasing community awareness of caregiver issues through continuing advocacy, education, and training. I am offering testimony on behalf of the Hawai'i Family Caregiver Coalition.

The Hawai'i Family Caregiver Coalition strongly supports HB 2360 HD 1, which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance payment of benefits by January 1, 2029; requires the Department to begin receiving claims and paying benefits under the program by January 1, 2030; specifies eligibility requirements and employee protections under the program; and excludes paid family and medical leave benefits from income tax.

Up to 40 percent of people in the workforce are not eligible for leave under the Family Medical Leave Act — and many cannot afford to take unpaid leave. Lack of paid family leave can lead to financial strain and negative workplace impacts for caregivers. Paid leave programs result in better health outcomes and lower overall health care system costs.

We urge you to support paid family leave and HB 2360 HD 1, and we urge you to recommend its passage.

Mahalo for seriously considering the bill.

Very sincerely,

Gary Simon

Hawai'i Family Caregiver Coalition

Email garysimon@hawaii.rr.com



Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi Chair
Rep. Tina Nakada Grandinetti, Vice Chair
Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Wednesday, February 18, 2026
2:00PM Conference Room 329

RE: HB2360 - Paid Family and Medical Leave - Support

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

On behalf of the Chamber of Sustainable Commerce (CSC), we write in strong support of HB2360, which establishes a Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) program for Hawai'i. The Chamber of Sustainable Commerce represents more than 580 small businesses, sole proprietors and entrepreneurs across Hawai'i committed to a triple bottom line: people, planet and prosperity.

Paid family and medical leave is essential infrastructure for a healthy, resilient economy. HB2360 allows workers to care for a new child, an aging parent, a seriously ill family member, or their own health without risking financial instability or job loss. This stability strengthens families, workplaces, and the broader economy.

PFML improves workforce retention, reduces turnover costs, and supports productivity—particularly for small businesses that struggle when employees are forced to leave the workforce entirely due to caregiving or medical needs. A shared insurance model, as proposed in this bill, creates a predictable and equitable system that benefits both employers and employees.

Hawai'i's cost of living is already one of the highest in the nation. Without paid leave, many workers—especially women, low-wage earners, and caregivers—are forced into impossible choices between income and family. HB2360 helps keep people attached to the workforce while honoring caregiving, health, and dignity.

A thriving, sustainable economy depends on people being able to meet their basic human needs. Paid family and medical leave is not just a worker benefit—it is a smart, long-term investment in Hawai'i's economic resilience.

Respectfully submitted in support. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Hawaii Legislative Council Members

Joell Edwards
Wainiha Country Market
Hanalei

Russell Ruderman
Island Naturals
Hilo/Kona

Dr. Andrew Johnson
Niko Niko Family Dentistry
Honolulu

Robert H. Pahia
Hawaii Taro Farm
Wailuku

Maile Meyer
Honolulu

Tina Wildberger
Kihei Ice
Kihei

L. Malu Shizue Miki
Abundant Life Natural Foods
Hilo

Chamber of
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Honolulu, HI 96823

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February 18, 2026

Members of the House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce:

Chair Scot Z. Matayoshi
Vice Chair Tina Nakada Grandinetti
Rep. Cory M. Chun
Rep. Linda Ichiyama
Rep. Greggor Ilagan
Rep. Kim Coco Iwamoto
Rep. Sam Satoru Kong
Rep. Nicol E. Lowen
Rep. Lisa Marten
Rep. Adrian K. Tam
Rep. Elijah Pierick

Re: HB2360, HD1 Relating to Paid Family Leave

Dear Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Grandinetti, and Members of the House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce:

The Hawai'i State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (HSCADV) mission is to unite Hawai'i to end all forms of domestic violence. We are a statewide partnership of domestic violence programs and shelters.

On behalf of HSCADV and our 20 member programs, I respectfully submit testimony in **strong support of HB2360, HD1.**

This critical policy is not only beneficial for Hawai'i's caregivers and families but also to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking (all forms of gender-based violence) who need to take time off to receive victim services, make court appearances, seek medical services, or relocate themselves and family. Rhode Island, Connecticut, Oregon, Colorado, Minnesota, and Maine currently include safe leave in their paid family leave laws.

Paid safe leave provides survivors of violence with options:

- ways to navigate safety;
- time to maintain their economic security; and
- the chance to find healing without fear of job loss, leading to increased abuse and homelessness

Maintaining economic independence is critical to survivors' immediate, intermediate, and long-term safety and ability to recover from trauma. However, many survivors struggle to remain connected to the workforce as they face numerous challenges in obtaining and maintaining employment as a consequence of the abuse or violence.

A safe leave policy, as proposed in HB2360, allows survivors to take paid time away from work to heal, recover, and make themselves and their families safe promises to strengthen survivors' ties to the workforce and allow them to meet critical needs in the wake of violence. Gender-based violence presents a concern for public health and safety, as well as for the economy, and victimization has serious repercussions for workers:

- More than half of survivors of all types of violence report difficulty with work or school as a result of victimization.¹
- Survivors and their loved ones miss over 6.7 million workdays each year.²
- A 2022 national survey of victims of all types of violence found that one in six violence survivors reported losing a job or being demoted when they needed time off from work due to victimization.³
- An overwhelming 83% of survivors of domestic violence report that an abusive partner has disrupted their ability to work; of those, more than half have lost their jobs because of abuse.⁴

By establishing pathways to stay in the workforce and effectively support survivors of violence, Hawaii's economy benefits from reduced lost productivity and retains talented, innovative workers.

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

Sincerely,
Angelina Mercado, Executive Director

¹ Alliance for Safety and Justice, "Crime Survivors Speak: National Survey Of Victims' Views On Safety and Justice" (September 2022), <https://justsafe.org/resources/crime-survivors-speak-national-survey-victims-views-safety-and-justice-1/>

² Alliance for Safety and Justice and Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice, "Lost Work, Pay, and Safety: Victims of Violence Urgently Need Safe Leave" (April 2024), <https://justsafe.org/resources/lost-work-pay-and-safety-victims-violence-urgently-need-safe-leave-0/>

³ Alliance for Safety and Justice, "Crime Survivors Speak: National Survey Of Victims' Views On Safety and Justice" (September 2022), <https://justsafe.org/resources/crime-survivors-speak-national-survey-victims-views-safety-and-justice-1/>

⁴ Cynthia Hess & Alona Del Rosario, "Dreams Deferred: A Survey on the Impact of Intimate Partner Violence on Survivors' Education, Careers, and Economic Security" 9, Institute for Women's Policy Research (2018), https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/C475_IWPR-Report-Dreams-Deferred.pdf.



HIPHI Board

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Danette Wong Tomiyasu, MBA
Retired, Hawai'i State Department of
Health

HIPHI Initiatives

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Community-Based Research &
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Hawai'i Climate Change and Health
Working Group

Hawai'i Drug & Alcohol-Free Coalitions

Hawai'i Immunization Coalition

Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition

Hawai'i Public Health Training Hui

Healthy Eating + Active Living

Kūpuna Collective/Healthy Aging &
Community Living

Public Health Workforce Development

Date: February 15, 2026

To: Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair
Rep. Tina Nakada Grandinetti, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Re: Support for HB 2360 HD1, Relating to Paid Family Leave

Hrg: February 18, 2026 at 2:00 PM in Conference Room 329

Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI)¹ and the Healthy Eating, Active Living² (HEAL) coalition **supports HB 2360 HD1**, relating to paid family leave, which establishes a paid family and medical insurance system that provides up to 12 weeks of family leave for public and private sector workers.

It is time for Hawai'i to pass a strong family leave insurance program. Employees need paid time off to care for a newborn, newly adopted or foster child, ill family member, or other unexpected health emergency. Paid family leave guarantees that employees can cover their basic living costs, while also providing care to family members when they need it most. Thirteen states and Washington, D.C., have passed similar legislation providing partial wage replacement for family and medical leave purposes.³

Improved Health for Mothers and Babies

Studies have shown that paid family leave is associated with a reduced risk for medical conditions that put children at risk. For example, a 2015 study in the Journal of Health Economics found that paid family leave was correlated with a 3.2 percent reduced risk of being low birthweight and a 6.6 percent lower risk of an "early term" or premature birth.

Paid family leave is essential in uplifting the health of parents and infants. It has been linked with improved blood pressure, healthier BMI, and less pain in mothers. Researchers found that infants of women with paid leave are 47 percent less likely, and mothers themselves are 51 percent less likely, to end up back in the

¹ Hawai'i Public Health Institute's mission is to advance health and wellness for the people and islands of Hawai'i. We do this through expanding our understanding of what creates health of people and place, fostering partnerships, and cultivating programs to improve policies, systems, and the environments where people live, learn, work, age, and play.

² The Healthy Eating + Active Living (HEAL) Coalition, formerly known as the Obesity Prevention Task Force, was created by the legislature in 2012 and is comprised of over 60 statewide organizations. The HEAL Coalition works to make recommendations to reshape Hawai'i's school, work, community, and health care environments, making healthier lifestyles obtainable for all Hawai'i residents.

³ "[The effects of paid maternity leave: Evidence from Temporary Disability Insurance](#)", Journal of Health Economics, 2015.



hospital after birth compared to women without access to paid family leave or other paid leave programs.⁴

Financial Stability

Studies have found that paid family leave significantly affects families' economic security after a child is born. A 2019 report published in *Social Science Review* concluded that for families of 1-year-old children, paid family leave decreased the risk of poverty by an estimated 10.2 percent and increased household income by an estimated 4.1 percent.⁵ The analysis found that these gains were especially concentrated for low-income mothers, who have fewer social supports for caregiving than more affluent families.

Kūpuna Care

As our kūpuna population continues to grow, paid family leave will be a vital tool in empowering families to care for their loved ones without jeopardizing their financial well-being. Our state has a rapidly aging population. According to the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism, almost one in five residents is now at age 65 or older and more than one-third of all households include at least one person age 65 or older.⁶ The elderly population is expected to continue increasing at a much faster rate than the overall population until 2030, when all baby boomers will be over the age of 65.

We urge your committee to support this measure, so that no one has to choose between caring for their loved ones and protecting their financial security. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kris Coffield". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kris Coffield
Policy and Advocacy Associate

⁴ ["Paid Maternity Leave in the United States: Associations with Maternal and Infant Health"](#), *Maternal and Child Health Journal*, 2017.

⁵ ["Does Paid Family Leave Improve Household Economic Security Following a Birth? Evidence from California"](#), *Social Sciences Review*, 2019.

⁶ ["The Elderly Population in Hawai'i: Current Living Circumstances and Housing Options"](#), DBEDT, 2021.

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 3:33:54 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan B Roberts Emery	Green Party of Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Grandinetti, and Honorable Members of committee,

My name is Susan RobertsEmery, as Co Chair of the Green Party of Hawai'i, I write on behalf of our members to ask you to PASS HB2360 HD1. Paid family leave is a win win for all the workers and families with children. The Green Party of Hawai'i stands in Very Strong Support of HB2360 HD1.

Mahalo!

Susan RobertsEmery

Green Party of Hawai'i

Paauilo

Date: February 18, 2026

To: Representative Scot Matayoshi, Chair
Representative Tina Nakada Grandinetti, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

From: Early Childhood Action Strategy

Re: House Bill 2360 HD1, Relating to Paid Family Leave

Early Childhood Action Strategy (ECAS) is a statewide cross-sector collaborative designed to improve the system of care for Hawai'i's youngest children and their families. ECAS partners work to align priorities for children prenatal to age eight, streamline services, maximize resources, and improve programs to support our youngest keiki.

ECAS supports House Bill 2360 HD1, which would establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance the payment of benefits.

Paid family and medical leave provides working 'ohana with paid time off from work to care for and bond with a new keiki or to address caregiving needs for loved ones. Paid family and medical leave also supports workers in balancing work and family responsibilities by allowing workers to take time off without sacrificing their income.

Working families don't get to choose when or how medical needs happen—but they need to preserve their incomes and work stability when issues arise. The average income household of \$62,000/year would contribute only about \$4/week in payroll deductions to PFML and would be able to receive over \$900/week in benefits when eligible. Our economy can be stronger if we support workers through programs that help them obtain and stay at their jobs while being able to care for themselves and their families.

Here in Hawai'i, where many 'ohana are living paycheck to paycheck, it is critical that our state provide such support for our communities so that 'ohana are able to thrive and not just survive.

For this reason, ECAS supports HB2360 HD1.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide this testimony.



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NFIB.com

February 5, 2026

TO: Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair
Rep. Tina Nakada Grandinetti, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on
Consumer Protection & Commerce

FR: Michael Iosua, State Director
NFIB, Hawaii Chapter

RE: **OPPOSITION** TO HB 2360 – RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE

Hearing date: February 18, 2026, at 2:00 PM

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

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of NFIB's Hawaii Chapter in **OPPOSITION** to HB 2360 – RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE. NFIB is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, and member-driven organization exclusively dedicated to small and independent businesses. With members in all four counties, NFIB's Hawaii chapter advocates on issues that affect Hawaii's small and independent business owners.

HB 2360 proposes the creation of a state-mandated paid family and medical leave insurance program funded through required payroll contributions. While we recognize the intent to provide economic security during periods of medical or family need, we are deeply concerned that the structure contemplated by this measure would impose substantial and disproportionate burdens on Hawaii's businesses, especially small independent businesses, that are already operating on extremely narrow margins.

Small businesses across Hawai'i continue to face rising operational costs, including increased minimum wages, higher healthcare premiums, escalating commercial rents, supply chain pressures, and some of the highest overall tax and regulatory costs in the nation. HB 2360 would layer an additional payroll tax and compliance obligation onto employers at a time when many are still recovering from a tough economy and additional national burdens. We believe this additional cost and administrative burden will be a huge detriment to all businesses, but

even more so for Hawaii's small businesses. NFIB Hawaii members and other small business owners rely on a limited number of employees to manage payroll, compliance, and daily operations. They don't have the resources to handle additional compliance costs. The uncertainty surrounding annual contribution rates further compounds this challenge, making long-term budgeting and workforce planning increasingly difficult. That's why you see so many small businesses closing shop.

The cumulative effect of new mandated costs and compliance responsibilities could lead to reduced hiring, decreased employee hours, delayed expansion, or, in the most severe cases, business closures. Hawaii's small businesses form the backbone of local communities, providing essential goods, services, and employment opportunities.

We strongly urge the committee to DEFER HB 2360. However, if the Legislature determines that some form of paid family and medical leave program should move forward, we respectfully request a meaningful exemption for businesses with fewer than fifty employees. Aligning with existing federal thresholds would recognize the limited capacity of smaller employers to absorb new payroll-based mandates while still allowing larger employers, who are better equipped financially and administratively, to participate in the program. Such an exemption would help preserve the viability of small and micro-businesses that are integral to Hawaii's economic diversity and community stability.



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**The Hawaii State Legislature
House Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce
February 18, 2026
Conference Room 329, 2:00 p.m.**

TO: The Honorable Scot Matayoshi, Chair
FROM: Keali'i S. López, State Director
RE: Support for H.B. 2360, HD1 Relating to Paid Family Leave

Aloha Chair Matayoshi and Members of the Committee:

I am Keali'i Lopez, State Director for AARP Hawai'i. AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan, social impact organization dedicated to empowering people fifty and older to choose how they live as they age. We advocate for the issues that matter most to older adults and their families: health and financial security, and personal fulfillment. On behalf of our 135,000 members in Hawai'i, thank you for the opportunity to testify.

AARP Hawai'i is in support of H.B. 2360 HD1, which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) to establish a statewide paid family and medical leave insurance program, begin collecting payroll contributions by January 1, 2029, and begin paying benefits by January 1, 2030.

Hawai'i's long-term care system depends on unpaid family caregivers to keep kūpuna at home—where they want to be and out of expensive nursing homes. About one in four people (23% of adults in Hawai'i or approximately 260,000 people) are family caregivers.¹ They contribute more than \$2.6 billion in unpaid care each year, helping older adults with meals, bathing, transportation and other tasks that allow their loved ones to remain in their home. More than half perform medical tasks typically handled by trained professionals.

Many of these caregivers must balance caregiving with employment—60% of family caregivers worked full- or part-time in 2023, and 40% report emotional stress from juggling work and caregiving responsibilities. One-third of all caregivers support two generations at once. These pressures lead many to cut work hours or leave the workforce entirely, creating serious long-term financial risk. (AARP Valuing the Invaluable: 2023)



HB 2360- Relating to Paid Family Leave

AARP Hawaii

Page 2

H.B. 2360, HD1 creates a paid family and medical leave insurance program that allows workers to take leave while receiving partial wage replacement—helping them care for a new child, a family member with a serious health condition, or address their own medical needs.

A paid family leave system is not just good for workers—it is good for business. When caregivers cannot balance work and caregiving, employers lose experienced workers and incur significant replacement and training costs. Paid leave reduces turnover, improves productivity, and supports a stable workforce.

This bill offers Hawai'i a social-insurance approach that strengthens economic security for workers while supporting employers of all sizes. H.B. 2360 represents Hawai'i's efforts to provide paid family and medical leave for working caregivers. Family caregivers are the foundation of our long-term care system, and they deserve the ability to care for their loved ones without facing job loss or financial hardship.

AARP Hawai'i urges the Legislature to support our working families. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on H.B. 2360, HD1.

References

1. [Caregiving in the U.S. 2025 \(AARP & NAC\)](#)



House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce
February 18, 2026 at 2:00 PM
Room 329

Testimony in SUPPORT of HB2360 HD1

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

On behalf of the Hawai'i Alliance of Nonprofit Organizations, I would like to offer our comments in **support of HB2360 HD1**, which would establish a statewide paid family and medical leave program, providing essential support to workers while ensuring that businesses, including nonprofits, have the stability needed to thrive.

The Hawai'i Alliance of Nonprofit Organizations (HANO) is a statewide, sector-wide professional association of nonprofits that works to strengthen and unite the nonprofit sector as a collective force to improve the quality of life in Hawai'i. Since 2006, HANO has been a leading voice for the nonprofit sector, leveraging resources, educating and advocating for policies and practices that promote the professionalism, sustainability, and effectiveness of nonprofits and the communities they serve.

Nonprofit organizations in Hawai'i employ approximately 12% of the state's total workforce,¹ supporting workers who are deeply committed to public service and community care. HB2360 would strengthen the sector's workforce pipeline by ensuring that employees can take time off to care for a new child, a sick loved one, or their own health without facing financial hardship. HANO believes that paid family and medical leave would assist nonprofits in attracting and retaining talented staff and prevent looming workforce shortages that could impact essential community services.

HB2360 includes provisions intended to account for differences in employer size and capacity, which is particularly important for smaller nonprofit organizations operating with limited budgets and administrative infrastructure. As the program design continues to be refined, it will be important to ensure that implementation minimizes administrative burden, remains financially feasible for smaller employers, and supports the needs of nonprofit workers.

We urge the committee to advance HB2360 and support the continued development of a statewide paid family and medical leave program that strengthens Hawai'i's workforce while recognizing the diversity of employers that make up our economy.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *The Economics Daily*, Nonprofits accounted for 12.8 million jobs, 9.9 percent of private-sector employment, in 2022 at <https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2024/nonprofits-accounted-for-12-8-million-jobs-9-9-percent-of-private-sector-employment-in-2022.htm> (visited February 3, 2026).



House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Supports: HB2757 HD1

Wednesday, February 18, 2026 2:00 p.m Conference Room 329

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

HAPA supports HB2360 HD1 which by 1/1/2029, requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begins collecting payroll contributions to finance payment of benefits. By 1/1/2030, requires the Department to begin receiving claims and paying benefits under the program. Specifies eligibility requirements and employee protections under the program.

Many in Hawaii cannot take time off from work to take care of a new child or a family member with a serious illness and injury without giving up their pay. They also cannot take time off to care for themselves. PMFL can be the catalyst for we need to make Hawaii a better place to live and work

Women, who are often the primary caregivers of infants, children, and elderly parents, are disproportionately affected by the absence of paid family medical leave. No one should have to sacrifice their financial well-being to care for their keiki or kupuna. Hawai'i law only provides a four-week extension of unpaid leave to employees of large employers with more than one hundred employees.

Twenty years ago, California made PHML a benefit for all of its residents. Since then, 12 other states and the District of Columbia have done the same. Hawaii can be the next state to demonstrate support for 'ohana.

Please support HB2360 HD1.

Mahalo for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Frederick', is written in a cursive style.

Anne Frederick
Executive Director

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 1:16:10 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kami Yamamoto	Hawai'i Workers Center	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair & Vice Chair. I strongly support HB2360. Paid family and medical leave allows workers to care for their families without sacrificing financial stability. At HWC, we organize low-wage earners in restaurants, care homes, and other industries are already living paycheck to paycheck – adding days or weeks without pay due to a family member's medical situation only exacerbates this problem, and the outcome is a brutal effect for the working class. We urge the passage of this bill to put Hawai'i's families first.



February 18, 2026

Representative Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair
Representative Tina Nakada Grandinetti, Vice Chair
Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Re: H.B. 2360, Relating to Paid Family Leave

Hearing: Wednesday, February 18, 2026, 2:00 PM, Conference Room 329 & Videoconference

Dear Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Grandinetti, and the Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce:

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. 2360.

H.B. 2360 would create a comprehensive family and medical leave insurance program administered by the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, providing wage-replacement benefits beginning in 2030. Eligible workers could receive up to twelve weeks of paid family leave for the birth or adoption of a child, to care for a family member with a serious health condition, to address certain military-related needs, or for circumstances related to domestic violence and up to twenty-six weeks of paid medical leave for their own serious health condition. The bill also provides strong employment protections, including job restoration, continuation of health benefits, anti-retaliation provisions, and confidentiality safeguards.

Women disproportionately shoulder caregiving responsibilities and are more likely to experience interruptions in employment due to pregnancy, childbirth recovery, family care, or safety-related needs. Without paid leave, many women are forced to exhaust savings, leave the workforce, or return to work before medically ready. A statewide insurance model ensures that access to paid leave does not depend solely on employer size or income level, helping to reduce inequities and promote long-term workforce attachment.

By strengthening economic security for families, supporting caregivers, and protecting workers during critical health and family events, H.B. 2360 advances gender equity and equal opportunity across Hawaii.

For the above reasons, we support H.B. 2360 and respectfully request that the Committee pass this measure.

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



UNITED PUBLIC WORKERS

AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THE THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2026**

COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE

Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair
Rep. Tina Nakada Grandinetti, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 18, 2026, 2:00 PM
Conference Room 329 & Videoconference

Re: Testimony on HB2360, HD1 – RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE

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

The United Public Workers, AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO (“UPW”) is the exclusive bargaining representative for approximately 14,000 public employees, which includes blue collar, non-supervisory employees in Bargaining Unit 1 and institutional, health, and correctional employees in Bargaining Unit 10, in the State of Hawaii and various counties.

UPW supports HB2360, which by 1/1/2029, requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (“DLIR”) to establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance payment of benefits. Additionally, this measure specifies that by 1/1/2030, DLIR is required to begin receiving claims and paying benefits under the program. This bill further specifies eligibility requirements and employee protections under the program and excludes paid family and medical leave benefits from income tax.

Given that Hawaii’s public employees are currently saddled with substantial payroll deductions for health plans offered by the Employer-Union Health Trust Fund as well as mandatory contributions to the Employees’ Retirement System, we have opposed similar measures in recent years. However, given that this bill excludes public employees but allows them to opt-in, we feel that our greatest concerns have been addressed. As a result, UPW lends our support to this bill.

While UPW is known primarily as one of Hawaii’s largest public sector unions, we also represent approximately 1,500 healthcare workers in the private sector. We strongly believe that paid family and medical leave is a benefit that employers should provide to their workforce to remain in step with evolving trends in the labor market. As a result, we still remain concerned about the yet-to-be-determined percentage of employee wages that will be required to sustain the benefit.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify on this measure.

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Toll Free - Molokai/Lanai only

Feb. 18, 2026, 2 p.m.
Hawaii State Capitol
Conference Room 329 and Videoconference

To: House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce
Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair
Rep. Tina Nakada Grandinetti, Vice Chair

From: Ted Kefalas, Director of Strategic Campaigns
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

RE: TESTIMONY OPPOSING HB2360 HD1 — RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE

Aloha chair, vice chair and other committee members,

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii **opposes** [HB2360 HD1](#), which would establish a family leave insurance program funded by employer and employee contributions.

The idea of being able to take paid leave from work to care for a family member is certainly appealing, but decades of data demonstrate that such programs rarely live up to their promises and could even harm those they intend to help.

It is often assumed that family leave policies will be especially helpful to female workers, as women are expected to benefit more from paid leave. However, research demonstrates that family-leave programs show no benefit to female workforce participation, and could even have a negative effect.

A study of the long-term effects of California's Paid Family Leave Act found that it did not help narrow the pay gap, and was instead associated with reduced employment and earnings for first-time mothers.¹

¹ Martha J. Bailey, Tanya S. Byker, Elena Patel, et al., "[The Long-Run Effects of California's Paid Family Leave Act on Women's Careers and Childbearing: New Evidence from a Regression Discontinuity Design and U.S. Tax Data](#)," National Bureau of Economic Research, October 2019.

A different study of maternity leave reform in the United Kingdom found that among highly educated workers, paid-leave programs tend to increase gender inequality, with fewer women holding management and promotion-track jobs, while lower-educated female workers were 10 percentage points less likely to receive a promotion than they were before the reforms were enacted.²

Furthermore, the benefits of paid-leave programs are not evenly distributed. Low-income workers are significantly less likely to take advantage of paid leave, making it little more than a government-subsidized leave program for well-paid workers.

In 2020, 18 million California workers paid into the state's family leave program and were eligible to take advantage of its benefits. However, only 14% of workers earning less than \$20,000 took paid leave, while workers earning \$80,000 to \$99,999 had a utilization rate four times higher than the lowest earners. Those making \$100,000 or more a year utilized paid leave three times as much as low-income workers.³

Family leave policies in San Francisco⁴ and New Jersey⁵ have seen similar results, with low-income families far less likely to utilize leave policies than higher-income earners.

Paid-leave programs also struggle with problems of cost. It is nearly impossible to properly evaluate the financial viability of the program proposed in this bill, as the full details regarding contributions are left to a later determination. However, there is a real risk of underestimating the full cost of the program, which could create a burden for the state budget and taxpayers.

The AEI-Brookings Working Group on Paid Family Leave analyzed the proposed federal FAMILY Act — which also relies on payroll contributions — and argued that the authors of the bill had severely underestimated the costs of the paid-leave program. Depending on take-up rates, the funding mechanism might have only covered half of the program's costs.⁶

Before embarking on an ambitious paid-leave program such as the one proposed by HB2360, lawmakers should demand a strict analysis of its financial impact on the state budget and the economy as a whole to ensure that the program would not become a fiscal nightmare.

² Jenna Stearns, [“The Long-Run Effects of Wage Replacement and Job Protection: Evidence from Two Maternity Leave Reforms in Great Britain.”](#) SSRN, May 7, 2018.

³ Kristin Schumacher, [“Paid Family Leave Payments Don't Add Up for California Workers.”](#) California Budget and Policy Center, February 2022.

⁴ Julia M. Goodman, William H. Dow and Holly Elser, [“Evaluating the San Francisco Paid Parental Leave Ordinance: Employer Perspectives.”](#) University of California at Berkeley, February 2019.

⁵ Amy Dunford, [“Boosting Families, Boosting the Economy: How to Improve New Jersey's Paid Family Leave Program.”](#) New Jersey Policy Perspective, April 2017.

⁶ [“Paid Family and Medical Leave: An Issue Whose Time Has Come.”](#) AEI-Brookings Working Group on Paid Family Leave, May 2017.

Finally, we must consider how this bill would affect Hawaii's business climate.

Because the proposed program is very broad, it would add to the cost of doing business in our state. Employers would have to compensate for the increased costs associated with the program, which could mean fewer jobs or stagnant wages.

If Hawaii workers knew that state-mandated family leave would equate to higher taxes or cause them to forgo raises or promotions, support for family leave probably would go down.

As attractive as the idea of paid leave might be, the negative tradeoffs that accompany family leave programs cannot be ignored.

Given the many questions raised by this bill, it seems clear that more analysis is needed of the potential effects and fiscal impact of mandatory paid family leave in Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our comments.

Sincerely,

Ted Kefalas
Director of Strategic Campaigns
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii



Testimony of Roger Dang
President of the Hawaii Energy Marketers Association (HEMA)

**OPPOSITION TO HB 2360 HD1
RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE**

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Alec McBarnet
Maui Oil Company, Inc.

Jon Mauer
Island Energy Services,
LLC

Steve Wetter
Hawaii Petroleum, LLC

Eric Wright
Par Hawaii

House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce
Representative Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair
Representative Tina Nakada Grandinetti, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 18, 2026 – 2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 329 & Videoconference

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

I am Roger Dang, President of the Hawaii Energy Marketers Association (HEMA). HEMA is a nonprofit trade association comprised of members who market motor fuel products and operate convenience stores across the state.

While we appreciate the intent behind HB 2360 HD1 and recognize that employees may occasionally need time off for reasons beyond existing policies, HEMA respectfully *opposes* this measure.

Paid family and medical leave are already a component of many employers' benefit packages used to attract and retain employees. Hawai'i employers voluntarily offer these benefits based on their operational capacity and workforce needs.

Businesses across the state are facing significant financial pressures — rising operating costs, minimum wage increases, inflation, escalating health insurance premiums, and growing compliance obligations. Mandating extended paid family and medical leave would add substantial new costs for private employers, potentially jeopardizing business viability and employment opportunities for Hawai'i residents.

We also note that the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR), in its interim report submitted pursuant to SCR 145, has not yet completed the foundational work needed to design such a program. DLIR is still “defining the scope of work for legal and actuarial consultants” and has not completed “an actuarial analysis of program costs, benefit structures, labor market feasibility, and implementation models.” Without this information, employers cannot assess the financial or administrative impact of a statewide mandate.

Retailers already navigate Hawai'i's Prepaid Health Care Act, Temporary Disability Insurance, and federal FMLA. Adding a new PFML mandate before the State has resolved legal, tax, and administrative questions introduces significant uncertainty into an already challenging business climate.

We recognize that HD1 excludes PFML benefits from state income tax and reinstates the Temporary Disability Insurance law. However, these changes do not address the core concern that PFML creates a new statewide mandate layered on top of existing employer obligations, increasing costs and administrative complexity for Hawai'i businesses.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in opposition.



The House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce
February 18, 2026
Room 329
2:00 PM

RE: **HB 2360 HD1, Relating to Paid Family Leave**

Attention: Chair Scot Z. Matayoshi, Vice Chair Tina Nakada Grandinetti, and Members of the Committee

The University of Hawaii Professional Assembly (UHPA), the exclusive bargaining representative for all University of Hawai'i faculty members across Hawai'i's statewide 10-campus system, **supports the intent of HB 2360 HD1** to establish a Paid Family and Medical Leave program. However, we maintain our strong position that **funding for this program should be the sole responsibility of the employer.**

Our faculty members have consistently expressed a strong desire for paid family leave benefits that exist outside of their accrued sick and vacation time. Currently, under our collective bargaining agreement, faculty are entitled to unpaid family leave and must deplete their accumulated sick leave or vacation to maintain their income during these periods. This requirement imposes a significant long-term financial penalty on our members because any unused sick leave is converted into service credit within the Employees' Retirement System upon retirement. Consequently, faculty members are currently forced to sacrifice their future retirement security to provide necessary care for their families today.

While we acknowledge that HB 2360 HD1 includes a positive amendment to exempt these benefits from state income tax, the measure still retains the provision in Section -6 authorizing employers to deduct up to fifty percent of the premium cost directly from employee wages. Requiring public employees to pay payroll premiums to access this benefit simply exchanges one financial penalty—the loss of retirement service credit—for another in the form of an immediate reduction in take-home pay.

We believe that paid family leave should be treated as a standard condition of employment necessary to recruit and retain high-quality talent, and the cost should be borne entirely by the employer. We urge the committee to **further amend HB 2360 HD1 to require that the employer be responsible for 100% of the required contribution.**

Respectfully submitted,

Christian L. Fern
Executive Director
University of Hawaii Professional Assembly

University of Hawaii
Professional Assembly

1017 Palm Drive ♦ Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-1928
Telephone: (808) 593-2157 ♦ Facsimile: (808) 593-2160
Website: www.uhpa.org



207 E Buffalo Street, Suite 211
Milwaukee, WI 53202

 FamilyValuesAtWork
 @FmlyValuesWork

February 17, 2026

Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce
HI House of Representatives
Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair
Rep. Tina Nakada Grandinetti, Vice Chair

On behalf of Family Values @ Work, I am writing today in support of HB 2360, A Bill for an Act Relating to Paid Family Leave, and to request that you vote favorably on the bill. We are especially supportive of including safe leave in the bill.

Paid leave is key to Hawai'i's long-term health, stability, and prosperity. Lessons learned in fourteen other states with paid family and medical leave laws show that paid leave will save jobs, save lives, and boost economic prosperity. In states with existing statewide paid leave programs, access to paid family and medical leave has proven to be good for families, good for business and good for the economic competitiveness of those states.

HB 2360 creates a program that allows workers to keep their jobs and much of their paycheck while giving employers the flexibility to use the employees' usual wages to cover their work as needed. This adaptability allows employers to retain the workers they've trained and in whom they've invested while putting money back into the pockets of working families. Workers will have the time they need to:

- Provide support for their loved ones in their times of need, such as recovering from a stroke or receiving treatment for substance abuse
- Bond with their children after birth, fostering, or adoption
- Recover or help a family member recover from violence

One of the greatest benefits of paid family leave in Hawai'i will be the ability to provide caregiving, especially for families with young children. While many working mothers in Hawai'i use state TDI to recover from childbirth, non-birth parents do not have access to the program. Paid family leave allows parents to bond with and provide care for children in their early years.

Family Values @ Work (FV@W) and our network has played a role in shaping the debates around Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) in each of the states that passed paid leave policy by engaging a wide range of partners and guiding development of the most inclusive policies to date. As an organization and a movement, we recognize that time to care is a jobs issue, as well as a key to economic self-sufficiency and to well-being for children and families.

Without access to leave, workers are giving up more than their time. In many cases, employees who take care of themselves or others must also sacrifice their income, their savings, and even their homes. In 2009, half of working caregivers reported spending all or most of their savings



207 E Buffalo Street, Suite 211
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 FamilyValuesAtWork
 @FmlyValuesWork

on caregiving expenses. That same year, 1 in 5 family caregivers had to move in with a loved one due to the financial crisis – the same number, incidentally, that have needed to take a leave of absence from their work to provide care.¹

In Hawai'i, 73% of workers do not have access to paid family and medical leave. With access to paid leave, Hawai'i could see as many as 11,000 additional workers among women alone, adding \$484 million more in wages earned. Without paid leave, however, workers are losing \$193 million each year - usually time that they must take in order to recover from unavoidable illness or care for someone in the same position.²

What's more, a statewide paid leave program would help small businesses. Small businesses want to do right by their employees, but often can't afford to offer the benefits that larger employers provide. Business owners in paid leave states report that these programs have had a positive effect on their businesses.

As a final note, we ask that you consider rolling the existing state TDI and paid family leave together into one program. This connection will reduce confusion, ensure the programs provide the same or similar benefits, and create a smoother system for the state, for businesses, and for workers.

Please support working families by helping them have access to the leave they need. Thank you for your consideration and please let us know if we can provide additional information.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marianne Bellesorte".

Marianne Bellesorte
Network Director
Family Values @ Work

¹ <http://caregiveraction.org/statistics/#Economics of Caregiving>

² <https://nationalpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/paid-leave-means-a-stronger-hawaii.pdf>



HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION
AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

RANDY PERREIRA, Executive Director • Tel: 808.543.0011 • Fax: 808.528.0922

The Thirty-Third Legislature, State of Hawaii
House of Representatives
Committee on Labor

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association

February 18, 2026

H.B. 2360, H.D. 1 — RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO supports H.B. 2360, H.D. 1, which requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish and administer a family and medical leave insurance program.

While the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act allows employees up to 12 weeks of unpaid family leave each year, many employees cannot afford to survive without compensation for that long and are forced with a hard choice: take much needed time to care for yourself, your child or family member, or return to work. Paid Family and Medical Leave is a twenty-first century workforce benefit that can allow employees personal and professional flexibility, based on their personal circumstance.

As Hawaii's largest union with 35,000 active and retiree members, we recognize more than anyone that each member has different needs based on their financial circumstances, personal health, and level of family care. We appreciate the language in this measure which allows public employees to decide for themselves on whether this program would match their circumstances. We trust that some public employees will choose to pay and enjoy the benefits of this program, while others may elect to not opt-in due to the financial burden it may impose and/or the lack of need of this program. **If this bill continues to move forward, we respectfully request that the language which would allow a public employee to opt-in to this program remains.**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of H.B 2360, H.D. 1.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira
Executive Director



**TESTIMONY OF TINA YAMAKI, MANAGING DIRECTOR
HAWAII TRANSPORTATION ASSOCIATION
FEBRUARY 18, 2026
HB 2360 HD1 RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE**

Aloha Chair Matayoshi and members of the House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce. I am Tina Yamaki, Managing Director of the Hawaii Transportation Association and I appreciate this opportunity to testify.

The Hawaii Transportation Association (HTA Hawaii) was founded in 1938 and incorporated in 1963, and is a private, non-profit trade organization dedicated to the service and assistance to the commercial ground transportation industry in the State of Hawaii. Our members include family owned small and medium sized businesses, independent owner operators, and national motor carriers range from delivery services to passenger carriers - as well as allied industry partners.

HTA Hawaii respectfully opposes HB 2360 HD1. This measure by 1/1/2029, requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance payment of benefits; by 1/1/2030, requires the Department to begin receiving claims and paying benefits under the program; specifies eligibility requirements and employee protections under the program; excludes paid family and medical leave benefits from income tax; and is effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

The commercial transportation industry, including trucking companies, bus operators, tour transportation providers, and other regulated carriers, is built on a workforce that is essential to Hawai'i's economy. Our drivers move food, medical supplies, construction materials, retail goods, fuel, and visitors every day. Employers in this sector value their employees and strive to provide competitive wages, benefits, and workplace protections. However, there must be a practical balance between supporting workers and what businesses can realistically sustain.

Many transportation employers already provide paid time off, flexible scheduling where feasible, and comply fully with existing state and federal family leave laws that protect employees' jobs when they must care for themselves or family members. These benefits are often part of collectively bargained agreements or established company policies designed to attract and retain qualified drivers in a highly competitive labor market.

Hawai'i's transportation companies already face some of the highest operating costs in the nation. Hawai'i is the only state that mandates employer-provided health insurance coverage, which is a significant and growing expense. For small and mid-sized carriers, individual employee health coverage can cost \$1000 per month or more per employee. Annual healthcare rate increases continue to strain employer budgets, especially in an industry where margins are thin and costs are largely fixed.

In addition to healthcare, commercial carriers face escalating costs for fuel; vehicle acquisition and maintenance; insurance premiums, compliance with safety, environmental; and regulatory requirements, shipping and parts; and workforce recruitment and retention amid ongoing driver shortages.

Unlike many other sectors, transportation companies cannot easily absorb new payroll taxes or insurance contribution mandates. When operating costs rise, those costs are passed through the supply chain. Increased transportation costs directly translate into higher prices for groceries, building materials, appliances, clothing, and nearly every product sold in Hawai'i. HB 2360 would therefore contribute to the already high cost of living for residents.

While we understand the intent behind a Family Leave Insurance Program, **now is not the time** to impose another major cost mandate on employers. Many transportation businesses are still recovering from pandemic-related losses and debt. Loan repayments are coming due, and cash flow remains tight.

The industry is also still feeling the impact of the Maui fires. Carriers lost equipment, contracts, and business activity tied to Maui's economy. Recovery has required significant operational adjustments, and some companies have reduced routes, streamlined operations, or frozen hiring just to remain viable.

Transportation employers are also recovering from the scheduled minimum wage increase in January, which further increased payroll costs. Adding a new statewide family leave insurance contribution on top of wage hikes, healthcare mandates, and other rising expenses will push some small carriers beyond their financial limits. Business closures in this sector would disrupt supply chains, reduce service to communities, and eliminate local jobs.

HB 2360, while well-intentioned, places a substantial new financial burden on an industry that is already operating under extraordinary cost pressures. **This measure risks accelerating business closures, reducing transportation capacity, and increasing costs for all Hawai'i residents.**

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to defer HB 2360.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.



February 17, 2026

To: House Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce

Re: Testimony in SUPPORT of HB2360

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

Members of AAUW of Hawaii thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB2360 which would establish a paid family and medical leave program for Hawaii.

The United States is the only developed country without national paid family and medical leave. Paid family and medical leave allows workers to take time off and still receive part of their income when they need to care for their own serious health needs or those of a loved one, or to bond with a new child.

The federal Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and Hawai'i Family Leave Law (HFLL) protect an employee from losing their job while they are caring for a sick relative or their self or bonding with a new child, but that leave is unpaid. And since the FMLA and HFLL apply only to very large employers, most Hawaii workers are not even eligible for that unpaid leave.

Meanwhile, Hawai'i has 154,000 unpaid family caregivers, providing 144 million hours of care worth \$2.6 billion per year, and those numbers will continue to increase as our population ages.

Paid family and medical leave helps our families: Research found that states with PFML programs have seen significant health, social and economic benefits. Families who have access to paid leave – especially working women – are healthier, more economically secure, more likely to stay in the workforce, and less likely to need public benefits.

Paid family and medical leave helps our businesses: Researchers found that PFML is good for business, because employees with PFML are more productive, which increases profits, and loyal, which lowers turnover costs.

No one in Hawaii should have to choose between their loved ones and their paycheck. It's time for paid family and medical leave in Hawaii.

Please support HB2360.

Sincerely,
Nancy Rustad
Public Policy Committee, AAUW of Hawaii
publicpolicy-hi@aauw.net

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) of Hawaii is an all volunteer, statewide chapter of a national organization and is made up of six branches: Hilo, Honolulu, Kaua'i, Kona, Maui, and Windward Oahu. AAUW's mission is to advance gender equity through research, education, and advocacy. Our goal is economic security for women.

Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks! is a nonpartisan 501c4 nonprofit committed to advocating for children and their families. Our core issues are safety, health, and education.

To: House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce
Re: **HB2360 HD1 – Relating to Paid Family**
Hawai'i State Capitol & Via Videoconference
February 18, 2026, 2:00 PM

LATE

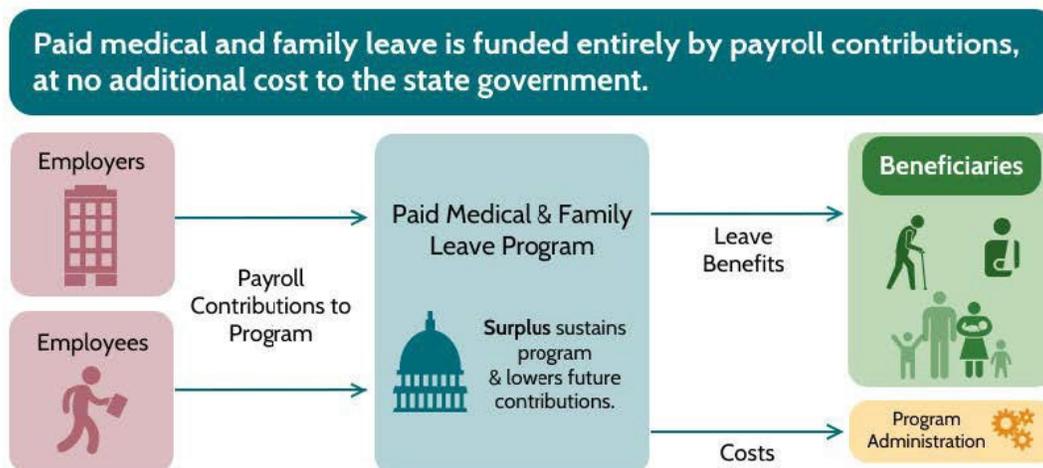
Dear Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Grandinetti, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in **SUPPORT of HB2360 HD1**. This bill requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) to establish a family and medical leave insurance program, begin collecting payroll contributions to finance payment of benefits, and begin receiving claims and paying benefits under the program by certain dates. It also specifies eligibility requirements and employee protections under the program.

Paid family leave allows **workers to take time off and still receive part of their income** when they need to care for their own serious health needs or those of a loved one, or to bond with a new child.

The United States is the only developed country without national paid family leave.¹ The average amount of paid family leave in OECD nations is about one year. **To fill that gap, thirteen states plus the District of Columbia have passed paid family leave laws.**² California was the first state to pass paid family leave, about 20 years ago. Hawai'i should join them.

This chart shows how a statewide paid family and medical leave program works:³



A statewide paid family leave program would be financed by small payroll deductions that go into a state fund, which workers would apply to when they need leave. **Since employees would be paid from the state fund while taking leave, employers would not need to pay them while they are on leave.**

¹ <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/explainer/paid-family-leave-across-oecd-countries/>

² <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/explainer/state-paid-family-leave-laws-across-the-u-s/>

³ "Analysis Model of Paid Family & Medical Leave Programs in Hawaii," December 18, 2024, Prenatal to 3 Policy Impact Center, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN



A paid family and medical leave program would include:

- Parental leave – for parents, including fathers and adoptive parents, to bond with a new child
- Medical leave – for a worker to recover from their own serious illness or injury
- Caregiving leave – for a worker to care for a family member with a serious health condition.
- Deployment leave – to handle arrangements for military service
- Safe leave⁴ – to deal with domestic violence, such as seeking a restraining order or relocating.

Employers could choose to cover all of the payroll deductions, just as some employers choose to cover all of their employees' health insurance premiums. The bill places a cap on the portion of the premiums that employees would pay, at 50%. It is likely that most employers and employees would split the payroll deductions 50/50, which is how Social Security and Medicare are financed.

Employers with fewer than 30 employees would pay only half of the standard percent of payroll, and they could ask their employees to cover the entire contribution. Self-employed workers could opt into the program, and they would pay only half of the standard level as well.

Employers also would no longer need to purchase and administer private Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) for their employees (since employees' own illness or injury would be covered by the medical leave in the program), saving them time, administrative burdens, and money.

Vanderbilt University researchers recently analyzed the language of this bill and determined that it would require **0.7% of payroll to provide worker benefits as well as cover DLIR's costs of administration** of the program.⁵ Anecdotally, we have found that employers are currently paying about 0.5% for TDI, which they would no longer need to pay if this bill became law.

In other words, employers would pay between 0.35% and 0.7% of payroll for the much more robust benefits of a paid family and medical leave program, while no longer needing to pay about 0.5% for TDI.

How would paid family leave work in Hawai'i?

- Employers currently pay **0.5%** of payroll for **TDI alone**
- A state-run **PFL program** would cost **0.7%** of payroll
- Employers could cover the cost of PFL premiums or have their employees to pay up to half
- The state's administration costs are included in the 0.7%

Paid leave helps children by helping their parents. Research has found that states with paid family leave have seen significant **health, social and economic benefits**.⁶ Families who have access to paid leave – especially

⁴ <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/the-state-of-paid-family-and-medical-leave-in-the-u-s-in-2023/>

⁵ Prenatal to 3 Policy Impact Center, op.cit.

⁶ https://www.abetterbalance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/PFML_Health-Case_Fact-Sheet_11.30.21.pdf

working women – are healthier, more economically secure, more likely to stay in the workforce, and **less likely to need public benefits.**

This bill would provide up to **12 weeks** of parental, caregiving, deployment or safe leave per year. It would also provide up to **26 weeks** of medical leave, which is the same amount of leave that Hawaii workers currently are eligible for under Hawaii's Temporary Disability Insurance law.⁷

The wage replacement rates in this bill are as 90 percent of pay for workers earning less than 50 percent of the state average weekly wage (SAWW), 75 percent of pay for those earning between 50 and 100 percent of the SAWW, and 50 percent of pay for those earning at least 100 percent of the SAWW.

That means that a minimum wage worker would pay less than \$2 per week into the program (assuming that their employer matches that amount) and receive \$504 per week in benefits. And average wage worker, earning about \$62,000 per year, would pay a little over \$4 per week and receive \$930 per week in benefits.⁸

<i>A worker earning:</i>	<i>Would pay:</i>	<i>And receive:</i>
Minimum wage (\$29,000 per year)	\$102 per year	\$504 per week
Average wage (\$62,000 per year)	\$217 per year	\$930 per week
	<i>in premiums</i>	<i>in benefits</i>

Paid family leave is good for business. According to research that looks at how paid family leave works in other states,⁹ employees with paid family leave are more productive, which can help increase profits, and loyal, which lowers turnover costs.

This bill would help even the playing field for small businesses by requiring those with fewer than 30 employees to cover only half of the premium cost. Enabling small businesses to provide paid family leave through a state program helps them compete for the best workers. Not surprisingly, recent surveys show that two-thirds of small business owners support paid family leave.¹⁰

Similarly, as Hawaii struggles to keep our working-age families from moving away, we are competing with states that have paid family leave – including the entire West Coast – for the best workers. **In 2023, more than 25,000 residents of Hawai'i moved to states that have passed paid leave laws.**¹¹ Surveys find that paid family leave is an important deciding factor for young couples when deciding where to start a family.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide this testimony. Please pass this bill.

⁷ https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/hrscurrent/Vol07_Ch0346-0398/HRS0392/HRS_0392-0023.htm

⁸ Prenatal to 3 Policy Impact Center, op.cit.

⁹ https://www.abetterbalance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/PFML_Business-Case_Fact-Sheet_5.10.22.pdf

¹⁰ <https://smallbusinessmajority.org/our-research/small-businesses-support-bold-investments-child-care>

¹¹ <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/geographic-mobility/state-to-state-migration.html>



MAUI
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
VOICE OF BUSINESS

LATE

**HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, HOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM 329
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2026 AT 2:00 P.M.**

To The Honorable Representative Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair
The Honorable Representative Tina Nakada Grandinetti, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

OPPOSE HB2360 RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE

The Maui Chamber of Commerce recognizes the importance of supporting employees during times of family or medical need, but has significant concerns regarding HB2360's proposal to establish a state-administered family and medical leave insurance program funded by mandatory payroll contributions. This bill is of particular importance to businesses of all sizes, but especially small businesses, as it would introduce new regulatory and financial obligations at a time when many are still recovering from recent economic pressures and disruptions.

Mandating a statewide paid family and medical leave insurance program would increase the administrative complexity and cost burden on employers. Many businesses already offer paid leave or flexible benefits tailored to their workforce as a recruitment and retention tool. Imposing a uniform state requirement may undermine these voluntary approaches and reduce employers' ability to design benefits that fit their unique operational needs. For small businesses, the additional payroll contributions and compliance requirements could be particularly challenging, potentially impacting their ability to maintain staffing levels or remain competitive.

The bill's approach of requiring all employers to participate, regardless of size (but with different contribution rates per size), risks disproportionately affecting the smallest firms, which often lack the administrative resources of larger organizations. These businesses are already navigating increased costs from minimum wage hikes, rising insurance premiums, and broader economic uncertainty. Adding a new payroll-based mandate at this time could discourage



MAUI
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
VOICE OF BUSINESS

LATE

House Committee on Labor
February 5, 2026
Page 2.

hiring, reduce available jobs, or even contribute to business closures; outcomes that would harm both employers and employees.

We respectfully recommend that the Legislature consider alternative strategies, such as incentivizing voluntary adoption of paid leave policies through tax credits or providing targeted support for small businesses that wish to expand their benefits.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. We ask that you do not move this bill forward at this time.

Sincerely,

Pamela Tumpap

Pamela Tumpap
President

To advance and promote a healthy economic environment for business, advocating for a responsive government and quality education, while preserving Maui's unique community characteristics.



**Testimony to the House Committee on Consumer Protection
Representative Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair
Representative Tina Nakada Grandinetti, Vice Chair**

**Wednesday, February 18, 2026, at 2:00PM
Conference Room 329 & Videoconference**

RE: HB2360 HD1 Relating to Paid Family Leave

LATE

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

My name is Sherry Menor, President and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber"). The Chamber offers comments with concerns on House Bill 2360 House Draft 1 (HB2360 HD1), which would establish a new Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program administered by the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR), begin collecting payroll contributions by January 1, 2029, and begin receiving claims and paying benefits by January 1, 2030. The measure establishes eligibility requirements, wage replacement benefit levels, job protection provisions, benefit coordination rules, and a new Family and Medical Leave Trust Fund, including a proposed general fund loan for start-up costs.

The Chamber appreciates the intent of strengthening Hawaii's workforce and supporting employees as they navigate major life events. However, we have serious concerns regarding the timing, cost exposure, and administrative complexity of implementing a statewide paid leave mandate before the actuarial study is completed.

In 2025, the Legislature established the Paid Family Leave Working Group through Senate Concurrent Resolution 145 (SCR 145) to develop recommendations for establishing and implementing a statewide paid family and medical leave program. The Chamber was a member of this Working Group and actively participated in its discussions. A central component of the Working Group's deliberations was the need for a formal actuarial study to evaluate projected program costs, anticipated utilization rates, contribution requirements, and long-term trust fund solvency before advancing statutory implementation.

HB2360 HD1 advances significant financial and operational mandates before those actuarial findings are available. The measure authorizes payroll contributions in amounts "to be determined by the department" and imposes differentiated obligations by employer size, including requiring employers with thirty or more employees to remit the full employer share of contributions. Without actuarial validation and a defined contribution rate, employers cannot reliably anticipate costs or plan for compliance. In addition, the measure's job protection and continued benefits requirements may

increase operational strain for businesses already navigating workforce shortages and backfilling challenges—particularly small employers with limited staffing flexibility.

The measure also includes significant benefit durations, up to twelve weeks for family leave and up to twenty-six weeks for medical leave, and wage replacement formulas tied to the state average weekly wage. These are substantial policy decisions that should be aligned with actuarial projections to ensure program sustainability and reasonable contribution rates for both employers and employees.

Hawaii already has a comprehensive mandated benefits environment, including Temporary Disability Insurance and paid sick leave requirements. The Chamber recommends that the Working Group’s actuarial findings and policy recommendations be used to clarify interactions with existing systems, avoid duplicative burdens, and ensure smooth, fiscally responsible implementation.

For these reasons, the Chamber respectfully asks that the Committee defer House Bill 2360 House Draft 1. Thank you for the opportunity testify.

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii is the state’s leading business advocacy organization, dedicated to improving Hawaii’s economy and securing Hawaii’s future for growth and opportunity. Our mission is to foster a vibrant economic climate. As such, we support initiatives and policies that align with the 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii that create opportunities to strengthen overall competitiveness, improve the quantity and skills of available workforce, diversify the economy, and build greater local wealth.

LATE

LATE

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 8:58:13 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hawai`i State Democratic Women`s Caucus	Hawai`i State Democratic Women`s Caucus	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Grandinetti, and members

We are in strong support of Paid Family Leave as we have been for the last 20plus years!

Although unpaid family leave has been federal law since 1993, it has been largely ineffective for those who need it most, those below the poverty line and ALICE families. Women, who are still making less than men at all levels of employment, are the group most often adversely affected by this as they usually cannot afford to take unpaid time off from work.

To be clear, this bill proposes an insurance plan - insurance! like employer health care plans or social security. This bill proposes joint funding by the employer and employee with minimal cost to those on the low end of the economic scale.

It has recently been determined that a minimum wage worker would pay less than \$2 per week in to the system (assuming that their employer matched that amount) and receive \$504 per week in benefits. An average worker would pay about \$4 per week and receive \$930 per week in benefits.

This is of minimal cost to the State and would give powerful support to women in need as well as all working families in Hawai`i.

In addition with the ongoing epidemic of violence against women, abetted by the noxious culture of hate orchestrated from the oval office or, more probably Mar-a-Lago, the provisions of this measure relating to those who are victims of “domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking who need(s) leave for medical attention; mental health care or other counseling; victim services, including legal services; court appearances; or relocation for themselves or a family member” are vitally important at this turning point in the history of our democracy.

Please pass this bill,

Me ke aloha pumehana,

Ann S. Freed, Co-Chair Hawai`i State Democratic Women`s Caucus

LATE



HAWAII APPLESEED
CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
HB2360 HD1 – Relating To Paid Family Leave
House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce
Wednesday, February 18, 2026, at 2:00 PM, Conference Room 329 & Videoconference

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of HB2360, which would establish a paid family and medical leave insurance program in Hawai'i. This bill represents the culmination of years of study, analysis, and advocacy—and the answer to a question no working family should ever have to face: should I have to choose between my paycheck and caring for my 'ohana?

The Need Is Urgent and Well-Documented

Over the past eight years, our state legislature has thoroughly examined the prospect of a paid family leave program through economic analyses, eligibility modeling, cost breakdowns, feasibility studies, and public opinion polling. Hawai'i has more than enough data to justify this program, and the need for relief on the part of working families is only growing.

The lack of paid family leave in the United States underscores the need for comprehensive action at the state level. Current offerings, such as the federal Family and Medical Leave Act and the Hawai'i Family Leave Law, fall short, leaving a significant portion of our workforce without adequate protection.¹ These laws provide job protection, but the leave is unpaid—and because they apply only to larger employers, most workers are not even eligible for that.

Low-wage workers, who often need paid leave the most, face the highest barriers to access. While some companies provide this benefit, it typically caters to higher-income employees.² Nationally, only 6 percent of low-wage workers have access to paid family leave through their employers.³ This means that those least able to afford unpaid time off are precisely the ones most likely to be forced to take it—or to forgo caregiving altogether.

¹ Romig, Kathleen and Kathleen Bryant, "A National Paid Leave Program Would Help Workers, Families," Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, April 27, 2021.

<https://www.cbpp.org/research/economy/a-national-paid-leave-program-would-help-workers-families>

² Ibid

³ U.S. Department of Labor, "US Department of Labor announces new research that underscores benefits of paid family and medical leave," November 21, 2024.

<https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/wb/wb20241121>

The consequences of this absence are profound, especially in Hawai'i, where a significant percentage of children live in households where both parents work. It's no wonder that public sentiment strongly supports the implementation of paid family leave. A statewide poll for Hawai'i showed a **90 percent favorable perception of paid family leave**.⁴ For the well-being of our communities and the sustainability of our workforce, it is crucial for the state to establish a robust safety net for families facing caregiving responsibilities.

A Proven Model

HB2360 proposes a family and medical leave insurance program that follows in the footsteps of successful models in 13 states and the District of Columbia. This approach involves small payroll contributions from both employees and employers into a dedicated insurance fund, spreading the burden fairly and sustainably.

Experts across the political spectrum agree that a social insurance model—similar to programs like Social Security and Medicare—is highly effective in reducing costs, minimizing administrative expenses, and preventing discrimination against leave-taking workers.⁵ This kind of system keeps workers, especially women, in the workforce while reducing their reliance on public benefits.⁶

Research shows that job-protected paid family leave ensures that more workers are able to return to the labor force.⁷ In California, where a similar program has been in place for over 20 years:

- Mothers with access to family leave showed increased work hours and higher average incomes than before the law's enactment.⁸

⁴ Anthology FINN Partners, "Paid Family Leave Hawaii Resident Survey," Hawai'i Children's Action Network, December 2024.

https://assets.nationbuilder.com/goodbeginnings/pages/2445/attachments/original/1739406372/REPORT_HCAN-PFL_12-2024_Web_Highlights.pdf?1739406372

⁵ Malde, Jack, "What's on the Table? A Review of Federal Paid Family Leave Proposals," Bipartisan Policy Center, April 28, 2025.

<https://bipartisanpolicy.org/explainer/whats-on-the-table-a-review-of-federal-paid-family-leave-proposals>

⁶ Boyens, Chantel et al., "Understanding Equity in Paid Leave through Microsimulation: National Report," Urban Institute, September 2024.

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/6536b8dab487e203ecaa28ae/t/67c7b6f44348db3e0913e177/1741141750435/Understanding+Equity+In+Paid+Leave+Microsimulation+National+Report.pdf>

⁷ Kling, Karen et al., "Economic and Health Impacts of Paid Parental, Caregiving, and Medical Leave: A review of existing literature and evidence," University of Michigan, November 7, 2024.

<https://poverty.umich.edu/files/2024/11/paid-leave-report-final-nov-7-2024.pdf>

⁸ Rossin-Slater, Maya et al., "The Effects of California's Paid Family Leave Program on Mothers' Leave-Taking and Subsequent Labor Market Outcomes," *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 32(2), 224-245, 2013.

https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC3701456/#:~:text=The%20study%20found%20that%20the%20pogram:%20*.mothers%20*%20Unmarried%20mothers%20*%20Nonwhite%20mothers

- Studies have highlighted the positive impact of paid leave on public assistance and SNAP reliance, with beneficiaries being significantly less likely to depend on these services.⁹
- Employers have reported reduced turnover, increased productivity, and lower labor costs during leave periods, since wages are paid from the state fund rather than employer payrolls.¹⁰

HB2360 would provide:

- Up to 12 weeks for parental leave (bonding with a new child), caregiving leave (caring for a seriously ill family member), deployment-related leave, and safe leave (such as situations involving domestic violence).
- Up to 26 weeks for medical leave (a worker's own serious health condition), consistent with our current Temporary Disability Insurance standard.
- Partial wage replacement, with a higher replacement rate for lower-income workers to ensure those who need the benefit most can afford to take it.
- Job protection, ensuring workers can return to their position after leave.
- An exemption of benefits from state income tax, so workers keep more of what they receive.

The program would begin collecting payroll contributions to build the trust fund, with benefits payable starting January 1, 2030, providing ample time for implementation.

HB2360 would mark a massive leap forward for the well-being of Hawai'i's working families. It would give parents time to bond with new children without financial ruin. It would allow adult children to care for aging parents without losing their jobs. It would let workers recover from serious illness without choosing between health and homelessness. It would provide safety and stability for those escaping domestic violence.

No one in Hawai'i should have to choose between their loved ones and their paycheck. HB2360 ensures they never have to.

We urge this committee to pass this bill and make paid family and medical leave a reality for all of Hawai'i's working families.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

⁹ Lenhart, Otto, "The effects of paid family leave on food insecurity—evidence from California," *Review of Economics of the Household*, 19(3), 615–639, 2021.

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11150-020-09537-4>

¹⁰ Cowan, Greer and Patrick Kallerman, "Paid Family Leave in California: Lessons From 20 Years of California's Paid Family Leave Program," Bay Area Council Economic Institute, September 2021.

https://www.bayareaeconomy.org/files/pdf/BACEI_PFL_Sept2021.pdf

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 9:43:57 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erin Hagan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha!

I support HB2360 and I'd like to ask Chair Matayoshi to schedule a hearing for this bill. Paid family and medical leave helps Hawai'i workers care for their families while maintaining financial stability.

Mahalo for your time - please schedule HB2360!

Erin Hagan

Waiialua

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 11:43:33 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jinjoo Han	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support. This needs to be passed for all working families in Hawaii.

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 12:20:21 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 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

2360 HB RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE.

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 3:25:03 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeffrey F Mizuno	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Text

COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE
Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair
Rep. Tina Nakada Grandinetti, Vice Chair

HEARING:
Wednesday, February 18, 2026 at 2:00 pm
Conference Room 329 and Via Videoconference
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

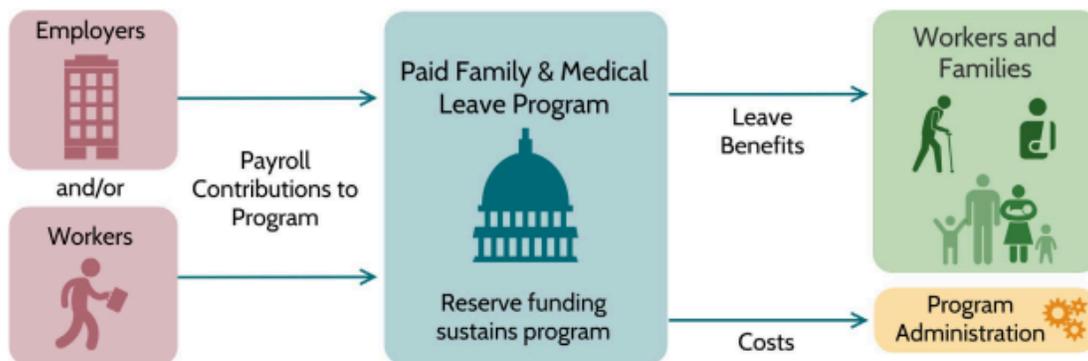
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT: HB 2360, HD1 - RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE.

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

My name is Christine Andrews and I am a long-term resident of Wailuku, Maui. I write to you today in **strong support of HB 2360, HD1**, relating to paid family leave. HB 2360, HD1 requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance payment of benefits by 1/1/2029, and requires the Department to begin receiving claims and paying benefits under the program by 1/1/2030. HB 2360, HD1 also specifies eligibility requirements and employee protections under the program.

Twenty years ago, California made Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) a benefit for all of its residents. Since then, thirteen other states and the District of Columbia have done the same. Hawai'i can be the next state to demonstrate its support for 'ohana. PFML allows workers to take time off and still receive part of their income when they need to care for others or themselves. This empowers individuals to be economically resilient instead of having to rely upon government services. Those who need PFML the most are the least likely to have this important benefit.

Paid family and medical leave is funded entirely by payroll contributions, at no additional cost to the state government.



Over the past several years, there has been extensive analysis of the costs and benefits of PFML. It is time for Hawai'i to implement this benefit.

The 2017 “Hawaii Family Leave Insurance Grant Analysis Report”¹ noted that national research has shown that mothers with access to PFL are more likely to return to work after the birth of a child, and also more likely to return to the same or higher wages than they were earning before giving birth. It found that women who take paid parental leave are 39% less likely to receive public assistance, and 40% less likely to receive food stamps than women who do not take paid leave and return to work. This trend is also present in men. The Report concluded that,

Hawaii’s adoption of a parental and family care leave program would build on their support for workers’ health needs provided by temporary disability insurance (TDI) and fill an important gap in the state’s social programs by helping families support themselves economically and providing care to their members. A range of programs were studied that provided up to 12 or 16 weeks of partially paid leave at two levels of wage replacement: one provides benefits structured similarly to TDI and the other targeting higher wage replacement to low income workers so they might be more able to afford taking leave and still meet their family’s expenses. The program costs, including both benefits paid and administrative costs, ranged from about \$18.3 million to \$33 million per year or 0.07 percent to 0.12 percent of total wages paid to covered workers. New parents were especially likely to access the program benefits to spend time bonding with their children. The program benefits also reduced inequality in access to paid parental and family care leave across income groups increasing access to paid leave especially among low income workers.

The 2019 “Paid Family Leave Program Impact Study”² reviewed impacts of a PFML program on industry, consumers, employees, employers and caregivers. That report included Hawai‘i-based cost breakdowns as well as options for compliance and enforcement of a proposed PFML program.

A 2024 analysis, “Analysis of Model Paid Family & Medical Leave Programs in Hawaii”³ determined that a minimum wage worker would pay less than \$2 per week into the system (assuming that their employer matched that amount) and receive \$504 per week in benefits. An average worker would pay about \$4 per week and receive \$930 per week in benefits. The analysis provided three key takeaways:

1. PFML is funded entirely by employer/worker contributed premiums at no additional cost to the state. (p. 5)
2. A 0.7% contribution from all wages – a premium comparable to those paid by workers and employers in other states – could likely fund any of the five programs modeled. (p. 7)
3. PFML provides crucial resources to families, increasing Hawaii’s rank in our Policy Impact Calculator from 13th to 3rd. (p. 8)

A 2025 survey commissioned by Hawai‘i Children's Action Network, “Paid Family Leave Hawaii Resident Survey”⁴ reaffirmed that the majority of Hawai‘i residents want PFML. It found that 89% of

¹ Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women, Hawaii Children’s Action Network and Hawaii Working Families Coalition, “[Hawaii Family Leave Insurance Grant Analysis Report](#).” 2017.

² Spring Consulting Group for the Legislative Reference Bureau, State of Hawaii, “[Paid Family Leave Program Impact Study](#).” 2019.

³ Vanderbilt University Prenatal-to-3 Policy Impact Center for the Hawaii Children’s Action Network, “[Analysis of Model Paid Family & Medical Leave Programs in Hawaii](#)” 2024.

⁴ Anthology FINN Partners for Hawaii Children’s Action Network (HCAN), “[Paid Family Leave Hawaii Resident Survey](#).” 2025.

Hawaii registered voters either strongly or somewhat support PFML. It found that 63% of Hawaii residents have taken time off of work because of an illness or injury or to care for someone else. The absence of PFML have strong impacts on Hawaii residents, about a third of whom have had to take unpaid leave or exit the workforce due to the lack of PFML in Hawaii. The survey found that those who take unpaid leave rely on savings, cutting expenses, using credit cards or borrow money from friend or family for support in the absence of PFML, 21% had sold items for needed cash, and 17% utilize government assistance (such as SNAP, WIC, or TANF). The survey documented the human as well as political and economic costs of failure on the part of the Legislature to take action on this issue.

It is time to move on from studying the need, costs, benefits, and proposed methodologies for implementing PFML in Hawaii. It is time for action to support Hawaii families, which is why I request that you **vote today in support of HB2360, HD1.**

Mahalo for standing up for and protecting your constituents and Hawaii families,

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

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 10:12:56 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
K.M	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in support of HB2360. Paid family leave is something that would greatly benefit all of Hawaii's families at all stages, and will help workers be able to provide for their families financially and care for them as well.

Please consider this important bill for the future of Hawaii's families.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

K.M.

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 10:54:18 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am testifying in strong support of HB2360, which would establish a statewide Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) program for Hawai‘i. This bill answers a fundamental question: should a worker have to choose between their paycheck and caring for their ‘ohana? The answer is no. And with HB2360, it no longer has to be that way.

The Problem We Cannot Ignore

Every day, workers across Hawai‘i face impossible choices. A new baby arrives, and a parent must return to work within days because they cannot afford unpaid leave. A loved one receives a serious diagnosis, and a family caregiver must keep working while their relative struggles alone. A worker's own health fails, and they must choose between recovery and a paycheck.

These are not rare or exceptional circumstances. They are universal human experiences. And in the United States—alone among developed nations—there is no national program to ensure that workers can meet them without financial catastrophe.

Currently, only about one in four private sector workers in Hawai‘i has access to paid family leave through their employer. Lower-income workers—who are disproportionately Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander—are the least likely to have this benefit and the most likely to need it. The federal Family and Medical Leave Act and Hawai‘i Family Leave Law provide job protection, but the leave is unpaid. And because they apply only to larger employers, most workers are not even eligible for that.

Hawai‘i does have a Temporary Disability Insurance program that provides partial pay for workers recovering from their own illness or injury, including childbirth. But TDI cannot be used by non-birth parents, cannot be used to care for a sick family member, and does not provide bonding time with a new child. Of the five states with TDI programs, Hawai‘i is the only one that does not also have a statewide PFML program. We are the outlier, and our families are paying the price.

What PFML Does

HB2360 creates a state-run benefit program, funded by small payroll deductions paid into a state trust fund. When a worker needs to take leave, they apply to the fund and receive partial income replacement. Employers do not pay wages during the leave period; the fund does.

The program provides:

- **Up to 12 weeks** for parental leave (bonding with a new child) and caregiving leave (caring for a seriously ill family member).
- **Up to 26 weeks** for medical leave (a worker's own serious health condition), consistent with our current TDI standard.
- A higher wage replacement rate for lower-income workers, ensuring that those who need the benefit most can afford to take it.
- Job protection, so workers can return to their position after leave.

The cost is modest. A recent analysis found that a minimum wage worker would pay less than **\$2 per week** into the system (assuming their employer matches that contribution) and receive **\$504 per week** in benefits when on leave. An average wage worker would pay about **\$4 per week** and receive **\$930 per week**. For less than the cost of a daily cup of coffee, a worker gains economic security during life's most vulnerable moments.

The Evidence Is Overwhelming

Twenty years ago, California became the first state to implement PFML. Since then, 12 other states and the District of Columbia have followed. The research is clear: PFML works.

- **For families:** New parents with paid leave spend more time bonding with their children, improving health and educational outcomes. The American Academy of Pediatrics has stated that "universally available PFML is a key component of improving the health of children and families." Workers who can care for ill family members without losing income experience less stress and better outcomes. States with PFML have seen reductions in nursing home utilization—in California, researchers found an 11% decrease—as family caregivers are able to provide care at home.
- **For workers:** PFML keeps people attached to the workforce, particularly women, who are most often the ones to leave jobs when caregiving needs arise. It reduces reliance on public benefits and prevents the spiral into poverty that can follow a major health event or caregiving crisis. A worker taking four weeks of unpaid leave loses an average of **\$3,700** in wages. PFML prevents that loss.
- **For businesses:** Studies have found that PFML is good for business. Employees with access to paid leave are more productive and loyal, reducing costly turnover. A cross-industry analysis found that after introducing PFML programs, firms experienced average increases of **4.6% in revenues and 6.8% in profits per employee**. In California, small businesses reported an average **14% decrease in labor costs** when employees took PFML, because wages were paid from the state fund rather than the employer's payroll.

Crucially, PFML levels the playing field for small businesses. Currently, most small employers cannot afford to offer robust paid leave, putting them at a disadvantage in competing for talent

against large corporations that can. A statewide program allows every business, regardless of size, to offer this essential benefit. Recent surveys show that nearly **8 in 10 small business owners** support PFML and believe it boosts employee morale and productivity.

We Are Losing Families to States That Have PFML

In 2023, more than **25,000 Hawai‘i residents moved to states with PFML programs**—California, Washington, Oregon, and others. When young couples decide where to start a family, paid leave is increasingly a deciding factor. Recent polling shows that paid leave is among the top three policies people prioritize, and for Gen Z, it is the **most important** factor when considering moving to another state.

We cannot afford to keep losing our working-age families to the mainland. HB2360 is not just a benefit; it is a retention strategy, a competitiveness strategy, and a statement that Hawai‘i values the people who live here.

A Matter of Values

No one in Hawai‘i should have to choose between their loved ones and their paycheck. No parent should miss their child's first months because they cannot afford to stay home. No adult child should watch a parent struggle alone because they cannot take time off work. No worker should face illness without the security of knowing they can recover without losing everything.

PFML is not a handout; it is insurance. It is what we pool together as a community so that when life happens—and it will happen to all of us—we are not left to face it alone. It is the recognition that caregiving is work, that family is fundamental, and that a society that abandons people at their most vulnerable moments is not a society worth defending.

Twenty years ago, California led the way. Twelve other states and D.C. have followed. Hawai‘i can be next. We can demonstrate that we value ‘ohana not just in words, but in policy. We can make it possible for workers to care for a new baby, support a sick loved one, or tend to their own health—without losing their income or their job.

I urge you to pass HB2360. It is time for paid family and medical leave in Hawai‘i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 11:20:11 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

My name is Jane Arnold and I live in Kaimuki. I am requesting that you support HB2360, which would create a statewide paid family & medical leave (PFML) program so workers can care for a new baby, support a sick loved one, or take care of their own health — without going without income or losing their job. No family should have to choose between a paycheck and caring for their ‘ohana!

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 11:24:41 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John Fitzpatrick	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Matayoshi and members of the Committee,

My name is John "Fitz" Fitzpatrick, and I am a teacher here in Hawai'i. I am testifying today in **strong support of HB 2360**, which would establish a much-needed Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) program for our islands.

The Invisible Struggle in Our Classrooms

Teachers are the backbone of Hawai'i's future, yet we are often forced to make impossible choices. While many think teachers have "summers off," the reality of a family crisis doesn't follow a school calendar.

- **The "Sick Day Hoard":** Teachers often "hoard" sick days for years, terrified to use a single one for a common cold because they know that if their child becomes seriously ill or if they need to care for a passing parent, those few days are all that stand between them and a \$0 paycheck.
- **Kūpuna Care:** As our population ages, more teachers find themselves in the "sandwich generation." I have seen colleagues try to lesson plan in hospital waiting rooms while their parents transition into end-of-life care.
- **The Weight of Loss:** When a teacher loses a child or a spouse, the current system often grants only a few days of bereavement. Without PFML, these educators return to a classroom of 30 students while still in the rawest stages of grief, simply because they cannot afford to lose their health insurance or home.

Why Hawai'i Cannot Wait

Hawai'i is currently an outlier. With **13 states and D.C.** already proving this model works—including California's 20-year-old program—we are falling behind.

- **Equity for our Ohana:** Only 1 in 4 private sector workers in Hawai'i has access to paid leave. This burden falls hardest on our **Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander** communities, who are least likely to have the benefit but most likely to be the primary caregivers for their extended ohana.
- **Stemming the "Brain Drain":** In 2023 alone, over 25,000 residents moved to states that offer PFML. For Gen Z and young families, this isn't a "perk"—it is their #1 priority. If

we want to keep our teachers and local talent home, we must provide the basic security that other states do.

- **The Business Case:** This is not a "job killer"; it is a productivity booster. Programs in other states have seen firms experience a **4.6% revenue increase** and a **6.8% profit increase** due to reduced turnover. For small businesses, it replaces the high cost of paying double (wages + temp help) with a steady, predictable insurance model.

A Modest Cost for Massive Impact

The structure of HB 2360 is common sense. By pooling small payroll deductions (roughly **0.7%**), we create a safety net that:

1. **Reduces Public Reliance:** PFML keeps people attached to the workforce and off public benefits.
2. **Supports Our Kūpuna:** California saw an **11% decrease in nursing home utilization** because families could afford to provide care at home.
3. **Is Affordable:** For a minimum wage worker, the cost is less than **\$2 a week**—the price of a small coffee—to ensure \$504 a week when tragedy strikes.

Conclusion

Paid Family Leave is not a handout; it is **social insurance**. It is the way we, as a community, decide that no one should have to choose between the people they love and the paycheck they need to survive.

I urge this committee to **pass HB 2360** to ensure that our teachers, our caregivers, and our families can face life's hardest moments with dignity.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Fitz

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 11:37:14 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Greg and Pat Farstrup	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Kū i ka pono!

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 11:40:21 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Ball	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this legislation

David Ball,

Waiialae-Kahala

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 12:26:26 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

This bill proposes to create a statewide paid family & medical leave program so workers can care for a new baby, support a sick loved one, or take care of their own health — without going without income or losing their job. I urge you to pass it!

I am a 70-year-old grandmother who had no sick or family leave when i had my child 37 years ago. It was really hard for my family. Now that i am older i see my daughter going through similar problems with her little one. And i also see how difficult it is for younger colleagues of mine to take care of aged and ailing parents.

We have the opportunity to create a state-run benefit program funded by small payroll deductions into a trust fund. How can we pass on it? Please, do the right thing.

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 1:04:34 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nhi Hoan Quach	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

I strongly support HB2360. Paid family and medical leave allows workers to care for their families without sacrificing financial stability. Hawai'i's families deserve policies that put 'ohana first.

Paid family and medical leave is funded entirely by payroll contributions, at no additional cost to the state government.

As a Community Health Worker, everyday I help family caregivers navigate resources. There are no existing financial support that is meaningfully helping broad population of family caregivers in keeping up with paying bills when they already made the difficult choice of leaving their job to provide care for a disabled or elderly loved one. Med-Quest LTC benefits addresses some of those needs but has strict income and asset eligibility criterias that most working / middle class family won't qualify. If we want our most productive working class to continue to be able to contribute to the economy and reduce falling to more economic hardship, this bill will be a starting point to give an option and recognize their unpaid care giving work as deserving earned work. Currently, the average private pay to hire a in home caregiver at most basic need of companionship level of care is \$35-\$40 per hour with higher skilled needs going up to +\$45 with provider requiring minimum 4-5 hrs and 2-3/week shift for hire. The only other option to help with cost of care is costly Long Term Care Insurance which often has benefits limit that either don't meet current cost needs, and or plan activation requirements that create barriers that makes it inaccessible until care needs are really high. Please consider these existing barriers and give families option to self sustain as our population rapidly age putting increasing pressure on healthcare and family systems to keep up with care demands.

Mahalo for putting families first!

B. Quach

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 1:52:53 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joell Edwards	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members,

My name is Joell Edwards, and I am the owner of Wainiha Country Market, a small rural business on Kaua‘i. I strongly support establishing a statewide Paid Family and Medical Leave program.

Right now, most Hawai‘i workers have no access to paid family or medical leave. Federal and state family leave laws protect some jobs, but the leave is unpaid and only applies to very large employers. Temporary Disability Insurance helps some birth parents, but it excludes non-birth parents and family caregivers. Hawai‘i is the only state with TDI that does not also offer PFML.

As a small business owner, I see how hard this is on families. When someone gets sick, needs to care for a loved one, or welcomes a new child, they are often forced to choose between their health and their paycheck. On average, workers lose about \$3,700 during just four weeks of unpaid leave. That kind of loss can push families into crisis.

PFML helps working families stay healthy, financially stable, and connected to the workforce. Research shows it improves outcomes for parents and children, reduces reliance on public assistance, and helps address caregiver and elder-care shortages.

PFML is also good for small businesses. A statewide program funded through small payroll contributions means employees are paid from a state fund while on leave—employers are not responsible for wages. Studies show PFML reduces turnover, increases productivity, and lowers labor costs for small businesses, helping us compete with larger companies.

Finally, PFML is critical to keeping working-age families in Hawai‘i. We are already losing residents to states that offer paid leave, and young families increasingly consider PFML when deciding where to live.

PFML is a smart investment in Hawai‘i’s families, workforce, and small businesses. I urge you to support it.

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 2:08:07 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Krystal Baba	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 2:09:45 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ryan Samonte	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support HB2360

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 2:28:03 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John Witeck	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My wife Lucy and I strongly support this bill which will provide insurance and security for thousands of families who could benefit from such a reasonably priced, government-sponsored insurance program when facing medical issues within the family and needing some paid leave and assistance during the periods of duress and/or disease, accidents and/or disability.

We urge you to support and pass this important piece of legislation which can benefit and sustain many individuals and families during hard times and medical/health challenges.

Mahalo

John and Lucy Witeck, Honolulu

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 2:29:33 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cinzia Olter	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

I strongly support HB2360. Paid family and medical leave allows workers to care for their families without sacrificing financial stability. Hawai'i's families deserve policies that put 'ohana first.

Mahalo for putting families first!

Cinzia O.

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 2:53:43 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

SUPPORT

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 3:39:40 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please support this bill. No one should have to choose between loved ones and a paycheck.

State-run benefit program funded by small payroll deductions into a trust fund.

Workers apply to fund for partial income replacement when on leave.

Employers do not pay wages during leave; fund does.

Provides:

Up to 12 weeks for parental leave (bonding with new child).

Up to 12 weeks for caregiving leave (caring for seriously ill family member).

Up to 26 weeks for medical leave (own serious health condition).

Higher wage replacement for lower-income workers.

Job protection ensures return to same position.

Cost Is Modest

Minimum wage worker: pays <\$2/week, receives \$504/week in benefits.

Average wage worker: pays ~\$4/week, receives \$930/week.

Total deduction ~0.7% of wages (similar to other states).

Employers no longer pay separate 0.5% TDI premium.

Employers save by not paying wages during leave.

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 4:12:27 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathy Shimata	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB2360 would create a statewide paid family & medical leave (PFML) program. It's a form of insurance. It would enable workers to care for a new baby, support a sick loved one, or take care of their own health — without going without income or losing their job. No family should have to choose between a paycheck and caring for their ‘ohana!

Please support HB2360.

Mahalo,

Kathy Shimata

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 5:22:27 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

- Only 1 in 4 private sector workers has access to paid family leave.
- Lower-income workers—disproportionately Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander—are least likely to have this benefit and most likely to need it.
- 13 states + D.C. have PFML; California's program is 20 years old.
- New parents bond longer, improving child health/education outcomes. The American Academy of Pediatrics supports PFML.
- PFML reduces nursing home utilization (11% decrease in California).
- Keeps people attached to workforce, especially women. Reduces reliance on public benefits.
- Increases productivity, reduces turnover. Firms saw 4.6% revenue increase, 6.8% profit increase. Small businesses saw 14% labor cost decrease.
- 154,000 unpaid family caregivers in Hawai'i, providing \$2.6 billion in care annually.
- Over 25,000 residents moved to states with PFML in 2023. Young families consider PFML when deciding where to live; Gen Z ranks it #1.

What PFML Does

- State-run benefit program funded by small payroll deductions into a trust fund.
- Workers apply to fund for partial income replacement when on leave.
- Employers do not pay wages during leave; fund does.
- Provides:
 - Up to 12 weeks for parental leave (bonding with new child).
 - Up to 12 weeks for caregiving leave (caring for seriously ill family member).
 - Up to 26 weeks for medical leave (own serious health condition).
 - Higher wage replacement for lower-income workers.
 - Job protection ensures return to same position.

Cost Is Modest

- Minimum wage worker: pays <\$2/week, receives \$504/week in benefits.
- Average wage worker: pays ~\$4/week, receives \$930/week.
- Total deduction ~0.7% of wages (similar to other states).
- Employers no longer pay separate 0.5% TDI premium.
- Employers save by not paying wages during leave.

Bottom Line

- No one should choose between loved ones and paycheck.
- PFML is insurance—what we pool together so no one faces life's challenges alone.
- Research is done. Models are built. Time for action is now.

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 5:23:10 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Megan Deets	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB2360! Americans and particularly disadvantaged minorities, including Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, need and deserve PFML. No family should have to choose between a paycheck and caring for their ‘ohana.

Megan Deets

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 5:32:26 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tasman Kekai Mattox	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of paid family leave. Working families do so much for our pae 'aina, and deserve to spend time connecting more deeply and supporting the next generation.

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 9:03:30 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tricia-Lee Lum Ho	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

I strongly support HB2360. Paid family and medical leave allows workers to care for their families without sacrificing financial stability. Hawai'i's families deserve policies that put 'ohana first.

Mahalo for putting families first!

Tricia-Lee Lum Ho

Wailuku, Maui

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 10:29:51 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Councilmember Tamara Paltin	Councilmember - West Maui	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair, Vice Chair, and committee members,

I am writing in strong support of HB2360, no family should have to choose between caring for their ohana when sick or earning a paycheck. Only 1 in 4 private sector workers have access to paid family leave. Lower income workers are disproportionately Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders and are least likely to have this benefit while being most likely needing it. 13 states and DC have paid family medical leave, this is a human dignity issue that will help future generations greatly. New parents will be able to bond longer, improving child health and education outcomes. Paid Family Medical Leave reduces the need for nursing home utilization and keeps people attached to workforce, especially women who often fulfill the caregiver role and reduces reliance on public benefits. Data has shown that measures such as these increase productivity, reduce turnover and firms saw a 4.6% revenue increase, 6.8% profit increase and small businesses saw a 14% labor cost decrease.

Over 25,000 of residents have moved to states with PFML, young families and Gen Z are looking to these types of benefits when making decisions. A state-run benefit program funded by small payroll deductions into a trust fund could allow for workers to apply to this fund for partial income replacement while on leave. Employers would not pay wages during leave, the fund would. This can provide up to 12 weeks of parental leave, care giving or up to 26 weeks for medical leave.

PMFL is insurance - what we pool together so no one faces life's challenges alone. Research has been done, models have been built, the time for action is now more than ever.

Mahalo for your service to our communities,

Tamara Paltin Councilmember - West Maui

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 11:52:12 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jackie Keefe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Jackie Keefe and I am **in support of HB2360 HD1**, which establishes a statewide paid family and medical leave insurance program. Paid family and medical leave is an important policy that strengthens families, supports caregiving, and helps workers remain attached to the workforce during times of serious need.

At the same time, I respectfully ask the Legislature to **consider amendments that protect small businesses** from unintended financial strain.

While I am not submitting this testimony on behalf of a specific business, I have previously operated a small business and understand firsthand how narrow margins can be. Even modest increases in payroll-related costs can have significant ripple effects, particularly for businesses with fewer than 30 employees that are already absorbing rising costs in rent, insurance, utilities, and wages.

I respectfully request consideration of the following:

1. A statutory cap on the employer contribution rate for businesses under 30 employees, to provide predictability and guard against future increases.
2. A phased-in implementation period for small businesses to allow time for financial planning.
3. A hardship or flexibility provision related to job restoration requirements for very small employers.
4. Clarification around intermittent leave scheduling to ensure reasonable coordination with employers where feasible.

I strongly support the goal of creating a paid family and medical leave system that works for Hawaii's workers. With thoughtful guardrails to ensure sustainability for small employers, this legislation can achieve its purpose without placing disproportionate strain on the small businesses that are the backbone of our local economy.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Jackie Keefe, Lahaina

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 12:07:39 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chloe Pua'ena Vierra-Villanueva	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

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

My name is Pua'ena and I am testifying in strong support of HB2360. Hawai'i families need paid family and medical leave. Many families are living paycheck to paycheck. It is critical that Hawai'i implement programs like this so that families are able to thrive in Hawai'i, not just survive.

No one should have to choose between caring for their family and keeping their job. Please pass HB2360 and put 'ohana first. Working families don't get to choose when or how medical needs happen, but they need to preserve their incomes and work stability when issues arise. Our economy can be stronger if we support workers through programs that help them obtain and stay at their jobs while being able to care for themselves and their families.

This program is for working families and ALICE families like mine who struggled to provide care for our medically complex child and sick, elderly parent without leave. My son was in the NICU for over 5 months after his early birth and I only had 2 weeks of parent leave (which my employer did not need to provide) before I had to go back to work full time. I only saw my baby 4 hours every week day between work and my commute home. As a Hawaiian immersion toddler teacher, I was spending 9 hours a day caring for other children and sacrificing bonding with my child for some sense of financial security. We lost our rental apartment and we were drowning in medical bills due to the high cost of living in Hawai'i. This program is not only for the economic stability of Hawai'i, but for better health outcomes for babies, growing keiki, parents, caregivers, and abuse survivors.

Without access to Paid Leave, my family could have been weeks away from being a part of the sad statistics that shows high rates for homelessness in Hawai'i for native Hawaiians and keiki birth to 3 years old. That is hewa. That is wrong. Hawai'i lawmakers can choose to make Paid Leave accessible for families when we need it the most. The ancestors of my keiki have suffered from being houseless in Hawai'i. This measure puts keiki first and tells all who suffered and survived a life crisis that their sacrifices mattered. If we want to prevent more Hawai'i families from suffering and becoming unsheltered and promote quality of life for our youngest keiki, then we need to ensure equitable pathways to care and financial stability.

As a parent, Early Childhood Education professional, and concerned community member, I hope that our lawmakers will pass this measure to help all of the people working hard in Hawai'i for Hawai'i. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. Please pass this measure.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

C. Pua'ena Vierra-Villanueva

'Ohana Leadership Council

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 7:53:31 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Younghee Overly	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for this opportunity to support HB2360 HD1.

Paid family and medical leave would allow workers in Hawai‘i to care for their ‘ohana while maintaining job security. When I had my son almost three decades ago, my employer provided 16 weeks of PFML, helping me care for and bond with my son. When my nephew and niece-in-law had their daughter three years ago, their employers were required by the state of Massachusetts to provide 12 weeks of PFML. My nephew took 4 months off, his vacation and PFML, helping him care for and bond with their daughter. I witnessed the deep bond and trusting interactions between my nephew and his daughter when I visited a year ago. This is ‘ohana.

No one should have to choose between caring for their family and keeping their job. Please pass HB2360 HD1 and thank you for your consideration. Younghee Overly, a member of AAUW of Hawaii

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 8:09:37 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Let's join other states who have also started these types of paid family leave. I encourage those involved to reach out to these states to learn more about how they implemented it, and what worked and didn't. This is long overdue.

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 8:55:08 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nicholas Chagnon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Paid family leave is a basic part of a sustainable economy. It's a no brainer.

Sincerely,

Nicholas J. Chagnon

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 9:20:38 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Regina Gregory	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

support

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 9:29:49 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John Bickel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

America is probably the only industrialized country that does not have a paid family insurance program. We cannot leave it do Washington, however, to remedy this. This bill has the courage to put us ahead of the country to do what makes sense for our families and therefor our society. In the long run t will save money on costs cut from unemployment costs and prison costs.

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 9:48:15 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members -

I am submitting testimony today in strong support of HB360. Paid family and medical leave allows workers to care for their families without the worry of damage to their financial stability. Families deserve policies that put ‘ohana first.

Mahalo for putting our families first and this opportunity to provide testimony.

Noelle Lindenmann, Kailua-Kona

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 11:37:11 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
pahnelopi mckenzie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB2360 should be supported by all. We talk of family first, keiki matter yet we give no time for parents to welcome the human into life. This should not be a debate and over the years so much advocating and still no paid family leave. I see the heart break of families having to decide to go to work after a baby. Please pass this, it is so simple and make such clear sense.

I support HB 2360

thank you, Pahnelopi McKenzie

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 2:33:38 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

As a grandmother living in Waimea on Hawaii Island, I strongly support this measure to help our hard-working families struggling to make ends meet in our expensive state.

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 2:41:11 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lee E. Takagi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Our families will benefit so much from HB2360. So many working parents must return to work so quickly after a child is born, making very difficult the bonding process between parents and their new baby. I was very fortunate to remain home with each of my children until they got to preschool, a decision i will never regret.

I marvel at the year of maternal and paternal leave Danish parents are entitled to, as well as monthly home visits from a nurse to see how the child is developing, nursing, and responding and lots of ideas on things parents can work on with their child. That first year of life is the most important year; this bonding time will enhance social bonds and success in school. The lack of strong bonding leads to poorer outcomes.

The high cost of living in Hawaii creates much stress and often despair. A decent-paying job is one of the best ways to alleviate that stress. Losing that job would be terrible. But if the job was preserved while a person took their 12-week family leave, and the employer was not financially burdened from this leave, it seems like an amazing win-win for employee and employer.

I pray the legislature sees the wisdom in creating this wonderful program. 12 weeks is not 52 weeks, but it's a great start!

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 3:21:23 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
J. Kehau Lucas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify **in strong support of HB 2360**, which would establish a statewide Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) program in Hawai‘i. This bill is grounded in decades of national research, aligns with proven models in other states, and addresses a critical gap in Hawai‘i’s workforce and family-care infrastructure.

I. Hawai‘i Is One of the Only States Without a Comprehensive Paid Family and Medical Leave Program

Across the country, states that have adopted PFML—including California, Washington, Oregon, Colorado, New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island—have demonstrated that:

- Paid leave **increases workforce participation**, especially among women.
- It reduces turnover costs for employers.
- It improves infant and maternal health outcomes.
- It provides stability for workers caring for aging parents or recovering from serious illness.

Hawai‘i currently lacks a statewide program that provides wage replacement during major life events such as childbirth, serious illness, or caring for a family member. HB 2360 fills this gap with a model that has already been tested and refined in multiple states.

II. Evidence Shows Paid Leave Strengthens the Workforce and the Economy

Independent evaluations of state PFML programs consistently show:

- **Higher employee retention:** Businesses save money because workers are more likely to return after leave.
- **Lower turnover costs:** Replacing an employee can cost 20–200% of their annual salary; PFML reduces this burden.

- **Increased labor force participation:** Especially for new parents and caregivers.
- **Minimal or neutral impact on business operations:** Studies from California and New Jersey found no widespread negative effects on employers, including small businesses.

These findings come from nonpartisan research institutions, including the National Partnership for Women & Families, the Urban Institute, and state-commissioned evaluations.

III. PFML Improves Health Outcomes and Reduces Long-Term Costs

Medical research has repeatedly shown that paid leave:

- Reduces infant mortality.
- Increases vaccination and breastfeeding rates.
- Improves maternal mental health.
- Allows workers to recover fully from illness or surgery, reducing long-term medical complications.

These outcomes translate into lower healthcare costs for families, employers, and the state.

IV. Hawai‘i Families Face High Costs and Limited Safety Nets

Hawai‘i’s cost of living is among the highest in the nation. Families often live paycheck to paycheck, and many cannot afford unpaid leave—even during medical emergencies or after the birth of a child.

Without PFML:

- Workers are forced to choose between income and caregiving.
- Parents return to work before they or their infants are medically ready.
- Caregivers of kūpuna struggle to balance employment with essential family responsibilities.
- Families face financial instability during already stressful life events.

HB 2360 provides a predictable, statewide solution that does not depend on employer size, industry, or individual company policies.

V. HB 2360 Is a Fiscally Responsible, Self-Sustaining Model

State PFML programs across the country are funded through small payroll contributions—typically shared between employers and employees or paid entirely by employees. These programs:

- Are self-funded and do not rely on the general fund.
- Have low administrative costs once established.
- Provide wage replacement only when qualifying events occur.
- Offer predictable, stable benefits that workers and employers can plan around.

HB 2360 follows this proven structure.

VI. PFML Supports Hawai‘i’s Aging Population and Multigenerational Households

Hawai‘i has one of the highest proportions of older adults in the United States. As kūpuna age, more families will need time to provide care. PFML ensures that workers can fulfill these responsibilities without risking job loss or financial crisis.

This is especially important in Hawai‘i, where multigenerational caregiving is a cultural norm and a source of strength.

Conclusion

HB 2360 is an evidence-based, fiscally responsible, and urgently needed policy that supports Hawai‘i’s workers, families, and employers. Paid Family and Medical Leave is not a theoretical idea—it is a proven program with decades of data showing positive outcomes for health, economic stability, and workforce participation.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to **pass HB 2360**.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Aloha ‘āina,

J. Kēhau Lucas



Committee: Consumer Protection & Commerce
Hearing Date/Time: Wednesday, February 18, 2026 at 2:00pm
Place: Conference Room 329 & Via Videoconference
Re: **Testimony of the ACLU of Hawai'i in SUPPORT of HB2360 HD1 Relating to Paid Family Leave**

Dear Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Grandinetti, and Members of the Committee:

The ACLU of Hawai'i **supports HB2360 HD1 Relating to Family Leave**, which by 1/1/2029 requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) to establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance payment of benefits. By 1/1/2030, the bill requires DLIR to start receiving claims and paying benefits under the program. The bill also specifies eligibility requirements and employee protections under the program.

ACLU National and ACLU of Hawai'i have a longstanding commitment to redressing the adverse effects of racism and sexism and other forms of invidious discrimination. That includes decades long commitments to affirmative action in employment and paid leave reflected in our organization's policies. It includes commitments to defend essential health care coverage to address "harsh economic and social disparities that threaten our country's democratic foundation and the cohesion of our society."

In the past eight years, the State has conducted **at least two** comprehensive studies on the efficacy and implementation of a paid family leave program for Hawai'i. The first was **completed in 2017 by the Commission on the Status of Women (HSCSW)¹ with a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor**. The second was conducted by the **Legislative Reference Bureau² in response to ACT 109 (2018)**.

The U.S. is the only developed country in the entire world that does not provide by law paid family leave to workers. The federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) only provides unpaid leave. And only for a little more than half of all U.S. employees.³

¹ Hawaii State Paid Family Leave Analysis Grant Report, November, 2017.

https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/CommitteeFiles/senate/LBR/LBRfiles/DOL_Hawaii-State-Paid-Family-Leave-Analysis-Grant-Report.pdf

² Paid Family Leave Program Impact Study, in Accordance with ACT 109, SLH 2018. https://lrb.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019_PaidFamilyLeaveProgramImpactStudy.pdf

³ Employee and Worksite Perspectives of the Family and Medical Leave Act: Supplemental Results from the 2018 Surveys. July 2020.

For workers living paycheck to paycheck, this is not an option. When a loved one is sick, their only options are to leave them unattended, or lose income and risk missing utility bill payments, not buying food, or worse, risk becoming houseless. This is unacceptable.

Providing robust family leave for every worker is a principle of equality.

“As of March 2023, only 27 percent of civilian workers had access to paid family leave through their employer,” according to the U.S. Department of Labor.⁴ What’s more, that number drops substantially when looking at “the lowest-wage earners, just 6 percent” of whom have access to paid leave through their employers. **Those most likely to have access to paid family leave are higher-wage earners, who also happen to be white.** During the COVID pandemic, those were the same workers able to work safely from the comfort of their own homes.

The COVID-19 pandemic showed us just how vulnerable our workers and families are to virulent disease. Not only would a public paid family leave program provide much needed assistance to Hawai‘i’s “essential workers” who live paycheck to paycheck and are predominantly women and people of color, it could also prove useful in protecting customers and coworkers from catching and spreading contagious illnesses.

A robust public paid family leave insurance program would provide workers up to 12 weeks of paid leave. And because a public insurance program would cover all workers in the state, it could cost as little as \$58 a year for each worker.⁵ **When split with the employer, that amounts to just \$0.56 a week.**

A more recent study conducted by researchers at Vanderbilt University determined a universal paid family leave program could be funded with just 0.7% of payroll (0.35% paid by the employer, 0.35% paid by the employee).

How would paid family leave work in Hawai‘i?

- Employers currently pay **0.5%** of payroll for **TDI alone**
- A state-run **PFL program** would cost **0.7%** of payroll
- Employers could cover the cost of PFL premiums or have their employees to pay up to half
- The state’s administration costs are included in the 0.7%

https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OASP/evaluation/pdf/WHI_FMLA2018SurveyResults_Appendices_Aug2020.pdf

⁴ News Release. US Department of Labor Announces New Research that Underscores Benefits of Paid Family Leave. November 2024. <https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/wb/wb20241121>

⁵ *ibid.* 1

American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai‘i
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<i>A worker earning:</i>	<i>Would pay:</i>	<i>And receive:</i>
Minimum wage (\$29,000 per year)	\$102 per year	\$504 per week
Average wage (\$62,000 per year)	\$217 per year	\$930 per week
	<i>in premiums</i>	<i>in benefits</i>

- Of note, the lack of public paid family leave insurance exacerbates sex and gender inequality:
 - A gender wage gap emerges after a child, known as the Motherhood Penalty.
 - Wage gaps mean significantly lower earning potential over the course of someone's career.

13 states and the District of Columbia have implemented paid family leave programs. It's time for Hawai'i to join them.

Sincerely,
Josh Frost
Josh Frost
Policy Assistant
ACLU of Hawai'i
jfrost@acluhawaii.org

The mission of the ACLU of Hawai'i is to protect the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the U.S. and State Constitutions. The ACLU of Hawai'i fulfills this through legislative, litigation, and public education programs statewide. The ACLU of Hawai'i is a non-partisan and private non-profit organization that provides its services at no cost to the public and does not accept government funds. The ACLU of Hawai'i has been serving Hawai'i for over 50 years.

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HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 3:46:34 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristy Arias	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support bill HB2630 paid family medical leave. Our community are struggling. To put our community more at risk when time needs to be taken off for the purpose of caring for a loved one, or personal health or injury. Please support this bill and support our community when times are tough financially and emotionally. Most of us have been there, or seen a friend or loved one go through this. Remember. Support. Mahalo

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 7:28:51 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

My name is Nanea Lo, and I am writing in strong support of HB2360, which would establish a statewide Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) program in Hawai‘i.

HB2360 is essential to ensuring that no worker is forced to choose between a paycheck and caring for their ‘ohana. A comprehensive PFML program would allow workers to care for a new baby, support a seriously ill loved one, or address their own health needs—without risking job loss or financial instability.

Currently, only one in four private-sector workers has access to paid family leave. Lower-income workers—who are disproportionately Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander—are the least likely to have this benefit and the most likely to need it. This bill is a critical step toward advancing equity and economic security for working families across our state.

PFML is a proven policy. Thirteen states and Washington, D.C. have already implemented programs, including California, whose program has been in place for over 20 years. Research shows that paid leave allows new parents to bond longer with their children, leading to improved health and educational outcomes. The American Academy of Pediatrics supports paid family and medical leave for these reasons.

Beyond family benefits, PFML strengthens our healthcare and workforce systems. In California, paid leave has been associated with an 11% reduction in nursing home utilization, allowing people to receive care at home. It also helps keep workers—especially women—attached to the workforce, reducing reliance on public assistance and improving long-term economic stability.

Employers benefit as well. Paid leave programs are linked to increased productivity and reduced turnover. Studies show firms experienced a 4.6% increase in revenue and a 6.8% increase in profits after implementation, while small businesses saw a 14% decrease in labor costs.

Hawai‘i is home to approximately 154,000 unpaid family caregivers who provide an estimated \$2.6 billion in care annually. HB2360 recognizes and supports this essential labor. It also strengthens Hawai‘i’s competitiveness: in 2023 alone, more than 25,000 residents moved to states with PFML, and young families increasingly consider paid leave policies when deciding where to live. For Gen Z, PFML ranks as the number one workplace benefit.

HB2360 is an investment in Hawai'i's families, workforce, and future. I respectfully urge you to support this measure.

me ke aloha 'āina,

Nanea Lo, 96826

Sierra Club of Hawai'i Member

Hawai'i Workers Center Board Member

Honolulu Tenants Union Member

350 Hawai'i Member

Carbon Cashback Hawai'i Member

Hawai'i Tax Fairness Coalition Member

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 9:13:08 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support HB2360, which would create a statewide paid family & medical leave (PFML) program so workers can care for a new baby, support a sick loved one, or take care of their own health — without going without income or losing their job. No family should have to choose between a paycheck and caring for their ‘ohana!

It is shameful that working families have been fighting for paid family leave in Hawaii for over a dozen years and our legislators have yet to join progressive states throughout the country in recognizing the importance of working parents to our economy and the well-being of children.

Talking Points

- Only 1 in 4 private sector workers has access to paid family leave.
- Lower-income workers—disproportionately Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander—are least likely to have this benefit and most likely to need it.
- 13 states + D.C. have PFML; California's program is 20 years old.
- New parents bond longer, improving child health/education outcomes. The American Academy of Pediatrics supports PFML.
- PFML reduces nursing home utilization (11% decrease in California).
- Keeps people attached to workforce, especially women. Reduces reliance on public benefits.
- Increases productivity, reduces turnover. Firms saw 4.6% revenue increase, 6.8% profit increase. Small businesses saw 14% labor cost decrease.
- 154,000 unpaid family caregivers in Hawai‘i, providing \$2.6 billion in care annually.
- Over 25,000 residents moved to states with PFML in 2023. Young families consider PFML when deciding where to live; Gen Z ranks it #

Do the right thing.

--Shay Chan Hodges

TO: House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce (CPC)

HEARING DATE: Wednesday, February 18, 2026, 2:00 PM

RE: Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of HB2360 HD1, Relating to Paid Family Leave

Aloha Chair Matayoshi and Members of the Committee:

My name is Laverne Moore. I am a retired teacher who taught for 54 years in Hawai'i. I am writing to express my strong support for HB2360 HD1, which would create a statewide paid family and medical leave (PFML) program.

As a teacher for over five decades, I have seen firsthand how the lack of paid leave impacts our keiki. I have had many students stay home to care for younger siblings or elderly adults because their parents could not afford to take unpaid leave. This directly impacts their learning and academic progress. No family member should have to choose between a paycheck or their school education to care for their 'ohana.

Paid family and medical leave is about dignity, health, and economic security. It allows workers to care for a new baby, support a sick loved one, or attend to their own health without the fear of losing their job or falling into poverty. Hawai'i's families deserve policies that put 'ohana first.

Mahalo for your time and for the opportunity to testify in support of this critical measure for Hawai'i's working families.

Sincerely,

Laverne Moore

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 9:39:42 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maya Maxym	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

I strongly support HB2360. The United States is one of only a few developed countries that do not already have paid family and medical leave. Hawai'i should lead the way in showing the human and economic benefits of policies that allow workers to care for a new child or an elderly parent without sacrificing financial stability.

Mahalo,

Maya Maxym

House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce
Conference Room 309
Re: HB2360 Relating to Paid Family Leave
Position: Comments
February 18, 2026
2:00 p.m.

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

My name is Ke'ōpū Reelitz. I submit this testimony in my personal capacity as a mom of three young children. As you consider HB2360 and the specifics of paid family leave here in Hawai'i, **I offer the following comments.**

First and foremost, **I wholeheartedly support the establishment of a paid family leave program.** I truly believe that paid family leave is critical to the health and well-being of Hawai'i's 'ohana—from keiki to kūpuna. However, I believe the program should serve all of Hawai'i's working families who need it.

I recognize that there is currently a working group discussing many of the details of a paid family leave program. As these discussions progress, I believe lived expertise must be included. In particular, **the voices of parents must be at the table.** I will work with Rep. Sayama to bring those voices to the table, as a group of us have been organizing.

When I gave birth to our first child, my husband and I had to make incredibly difficult decisions about the economic realities of work and the cost of child care. Again, when we had our second, and he ended up in the hospital at 6 months old, we had to make impossible decisions about whether to leave his hospital crib or return to work because I did not have enough paid leave. These kinds of practical experiences will help build a program that works for all of Hawai'i's families in real ways.

Finally, as you consider moving this bill forward, **I urge this committee provide for opt-out instead of opt-in for public employees.** Public employees should have the opportunity from the start of their employment, without additional paperwork, to access a paid family leave program. Opting in may create added burdens and lost opportunities for already overtaxed families.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 1:46:14 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Please support this measure! Thank you!

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 5:32:20 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leilani Kailiawa	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair and members,

My name is Leilani Kailiawa, and I am here in strong support of HB 2360 because I have lived this reality. Mahalo nui loa for having a 2nd hearing. My family really appreciates it.

Nearly ten years ago, on March 7, my infant son was hospitalized in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children for a long 7 months. I live on Hawaii Island, but my baby was on Oahu. I had to live on another island, away from my husband and two older sons, who were 11 and 13 at that time.

There was no paid family leave. I made an impossible choice. I quit my job.

Families should never have to choose between financial survival and being present for a medically fragile child. Being by my son's bedside was not optimal—it was essential to his healing, his development, and my role as a mother.

HB 2360 is about dignity. It's about recognizing that caregiving is not a luxury—it is critical care. Paid Family and Medical Leave would ensure that families can show up for one another in moments of crisis without taking everything.

I urge you to please pass HB 2360, as no family has to make the sacrifice mine did just to care for their child. Put Ohana first.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Leilani Kailiawa

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 8:50:01 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emma Waters	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Writing in strong support of this important bil to establish paid family and medical leave for the state. Mahalo.

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 8:55:38 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John A. H. Tomoso	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

02-17-26

RE: HB2360 HD1

Aloha,

I am in strong support of this Bill. I know i would create a statewide paid family & medical leave (PFML) program so workers can care for a new baby, support a sick loved one, or take care of their own health — without going without income or losing their job. No family should have to choose between a paycheck and caring for their ‘ohana. Family Caregiving is a fact of our everyday lives!

Mahalo

John A. H. Tomoso+, MSW,ACSW

51 Ku'ula St., Kahului, HI 96732-2906

john.a.h.tomoso@gmail.com

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 9:38:06 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rachel Ebert	Nurture Mental Health	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

I strongly support HB2360. Paid family and medical leave allows workers to care for their families without sacrificing financial stability. Hawai'i's families deserve policies that put 'ohana first.

As therapist specializing in maternal mental health, we see so clearly the value of having more time for families to spend together during challenging transitions. This can make a huge difference for the future of children and families in Hawaii.

Mahalo for putting families first!

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 10:15:27 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anamalia Su'esu'e	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members,

I strongly support HB2360. Paid family and medical leave allows workers to care for their families without sacrificing financial stability. Hawai'i's families deserve policies that put 'ohana first.

As a mother of 3 children, I know how limited the current policies surrounding paid leave can be. With our oldest, my husband could only have time off for two weeks without risking his job and our only source of income at the time. Though I know that is more than most get with their spouse, I also know that is drastically **LESS** time than other nations give their new parents. I desperately needed his support at the time and should have received it. If we care about the health and well-being of our mothers and children, we need to pay better attention to the needs of the postpartum period.

Paid leave is also critical for families who have to take care of our elders or our sick. When my father was diagnosed with cancer and could no longer work, the rest of our family made the necessary changes to support him. However, some of our schedules were more flexible than others. Even when my father was eventually put in home hospice care, some of my family members were still having a hard time getting time off to care for and be with him. This was such an incredibly difficult time I couldn't believe we still had to negotiate work arrangements through it all.

No one should have to choose between caring for their family and keeping their job. Please pass HB2360 and put 'ohana first.

Mahalo,
Ana

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 10:23:15 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sarah wooton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

as someone who went back to work two days after having her first child, I am in major support of this bill. Being a new parent comes with so many new challenges and expenses that having to choose what is best for you and your child versus being able to pay for living expenses can be near impossible choice. This bill would allow individuals to not have to stress during those critical first few months of infancy. I am in support of this bill.

Mahalo,

Sarah Wooton

To: Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee and the members of the House Committee on Labor

Members of the Senate Committee on Labor and Technology

From: S. Leimana Koehler

Re: HB 2360 HD1

Date: Wednesday February 18, 2026

2:00pm Conference Room 329

Aloha Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee and esteemed Committee Members,

I write in **Strong support of HB 2360** relating to Paid Family Leave. I have worked with Domestic Violence Survivors for over 6 years and one of the many barriers DV Survivors face is having income while experiencing crisis. When experiencing life-altering events, it's important to provide survivors with care and support to increase their outcomes of resiliency.

This bill has the potential to not only change, but saves lives effected by Domestic Violence. If DV Survivors had the support of Paid Family Leave to stand on, I believe many would be able to face leaving an abuser knowing they have the support of the government and our community to fall back on. I have seen a fair amount of DV survivors have to quit their jobs due to being unable to juggle work, court hearings, child care, safety and emotional and physical healing. Many of them are hardworking, reliable workers.

I strongly urge this committee to pass this bill and show that Hawaii stands and supports Survivors of DV. Mahalo nui kakou for your time.

Me ka Ha'aha'a,

S. Leimana Koehler

To: Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair, Rep. Tina Nakada Grandinetti, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee On Consumer Protection & Commerce

From: Leilani Novak

Mahalo to the Chair, Vice Chair, and honored members of the Committee On Consumer Protection & Commerce for hearing **HB2360 HD1**, which would establish a paid family and medical leave program to support working families across Hawai'i during some of life's most important moments.

I am writing as an expecting parent who is beginning to plan and prepare for my baby's arrival, **in strong support of this measure**. As we look ahead to welcoming a new child into our family, we are also confronting the very real questions so many parents face: How much time can we afford to take off? How do we recover, bond, and care for our newborn while still meeting basic financial needs?

While federal FMLA and Hawai'i's Family Leave Law provide unpaid job-protected leave for bonding with a new child or caring for a family member, most families cannot afford to take unpaid time off without risking financial stability. The early weeks of a child's life are **precious and foundational**, yet too many parents are forced to return to work sooner than planned simply because they cannot go without a paycheck.

Paid family leave would allow parents like me to focus on our children's early development, health, and well-being without the constant stress of lost income. Research shows that paid leave supports stronger maternal and infant health outcomes by giving families the time they need to recover, bond, and establish stability during this critical period.

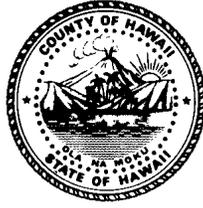
In our state, **too many families live paycheck to paycheck**, and the lack of wage replacement during critical life moments makes planning for a new baby especially stressful. Paid family leave ensures that families can stay economically resilient while prioritizing care.

Mahalo for your leadership and for considering this important investment in the health and well-being of Hawai'i's families. For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to **support HB2360** so that families like mine can access paid time to care for our newborns and our 'ohana without sacrificing financial security.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Leilani Novak, Expecting First Time Mom

Jennifer Kagiwada
Council Member District 2 South Hilo



Office: (808) 961-8272
jennifer.kagiwada@hawaiicounty.gov

HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL - DISTRICT 2

25 Aupuni Street • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

DATE: February 17, 2026
TO: House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce
FROM: Jennifer Kagiwada, Council Member
Council District 2
SUBJECT: HB2360

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Grandinetti, and esteemed Committee Members,

I write in strong support of HB2360. In Hawai'i, too many people are forced to choose between their paycheck and their health, safety, or family. With one of the highest costs of living in the country, most residents cannot afford to miss even one paycheck without risking rent, food, and other basic necessities.

This bill is important because emergencies do not wait for the "right time." No one should be financially punished for needing time to recover from illness, care for a loved one, or escape an unsafe situation. HB2360 protects working people in our community, strengthens families, and supports the overall safety and stability of Hawai'i. It ensures residents are not forced to choose between survival and doing what is necessary during a crisis.

Mahalo,

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

Jenn Kagiwada

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 11:58:35 AM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stacey Alapai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please SUPPORT HB 2360 for Paid Family Leave. So many people have to make the tough decision to leave the workforce to care for family members. It is past time for Hawaii to catch up to the rest of the world and provide Paid Family Leave for our workers.

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 12:23:23 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ashlie McGuire	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is a no brainer! Support local families!

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 12:49:05 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shannessy Ahu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Conference Room 309

Re: HB2360 Relating to Paid Family Leave

Position: Support

February 18, 2026

2:00 p.m.

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

I am writing in support of HB2360. Paid family leave is vital for families across our state, as it allows workers in Hawai‘i to prioritize their own well-being and that of their families while ensuring job security.

Approving HB2360 will demonstrate Hawai‘i’s commitment to the health and well-being of all its residents, emphasizing the value of family and upholding compassion and understanding as core community principles.

Thank you for considering this important legislation, which has the potential to uplift Hawaii families and strengthen our state. I respectfully urge the committee to pass HB2360.

Mahalo,

Shannessy M. Ahu

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 1:06:27 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sofia Suesue	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of HB2360. Establishing paid family and medical leave in Hawai'i would ensure that workers can care for their 'ohana without sacrificing their financial stability or job security.

Paid leave is especially critical for families caring for kūpuna or loved ones facing serious illness. When my father was diagnosed with cancer and could no longer work, our family did everything we could to support him. Still, not all of our jobs allowed for flexibility. Even after my father entered home hospice care, some of my family members struggled to secure time off to care or just be there with him.

That period was one of the most difficult times in our lives. In the midst of grief and uncertainty we were also negotiating work schedules and worrying about income. No family should have to carry that additional burden while caring for someone they love.

Paid family and medical leave strengthens families and reflects Hawai'i's commitment to putting 'ohana first.

No one should have to choose between caring for their family and keeping their job. I respectfully urge you to pass HB2360.

Mahalo,

Sofia Suesue

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 1:52:46 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patricia Bilyk	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TO: Rep Scot Matayoshi, Chair, Rep Tina Nakada Grandinetti, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce

FROM: Patricia L. Bilyk, RN, MPH, MSN

RE: HB 2360 HD1 Paid Family Leave

DATE: Wednesday, February 18, 2026 2pm

I strongly support HB 2360 HD1 Paid Family Leave!

Hawai'i's Families deserve policies that put our 'Ohana First, hence the importance of passing HB 2360!

As an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse in Maternal Child Nursing, I've worked with many families needing personal bonding time with their new, adopted or premature infant. They also needed job security and wage replacement. The last concerns would determine how long a mom or dad could be with their infant during this very personal and important developmental family time.

I strongly encourage this Committee to pass HB 2369 for the Families of Hawai'i. It is PONO and the time to put our families FIRST.

Mahalo for your attention on this issue.

LATE

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 3:49:38 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
cheryl hendrickson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In today's inequitable economy this bill would be a tremendous help to Hawaii's work force. Providing significant health, social and economic benefits as shown in other states with paid family and medical leave.

LATE

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Grandinetti, and Consumer Protection & Commerce House Committee Members,

My name is Maka Gibson and I live in Kāneʻohe. As a working mother of two young girls, I **strongly support HB 2360. Paid family and medical leave (PFML) allows workers to care for their families without sacrificing financial stability.** Hawaiʻi's families deserve policies that put ʻohana first. Currently, Hawaiʻi residents cannot take time off from work to take care of a new child or a family member with a serious illness or injury without giving up their pay. They also cannot take time off to care for themselves. PFML can be the catalyst we need to make Hawaiʻi a better place to live and work and drastically improve our affordability and livability for residents.

PFML allows workers to take time off and still receive part of their income when they need to care for others or themselves. This empowers individuals to be economically resilient instead of having to rely upon government services. Those who need PFML the most are the least likely to have this important benefit.

Some may mistakenly think Hawaiʻi employees already have this benefit. **The Family Medical Leave Act and Hawaiʻi Family Leave Law offer unpaid leave** and this benefit is limited to employees of larger companies.

Paid family and medical leave is funded entirely by payroll contributions, at no additional cost to the state government. Right now, Hawaiʻi employers typically pay about 0.5% of wages for the limited benefits of temporary disability insurance.

Implementing a PFML program in Hawaiʻi would require a payroll deduction of 0.7% of wages. Employers could cover all of the payroll deductions (0.7% of wages) or have their employees pay up to half (0.35%). Employers would no longer need to pay 0.5% in TDI premiums, and they would not need to pay their employees while they were on leave, because they would be paid from the state fund.

I've worked in the nonprofit sector for 15 years and over the course of that time, I have watched so many parents leave their full-time job to care for their children or for a sick family member. I've lived in both Oregon and Washington and was able to take advantage of Washington's PFML when I suffered intense burnout, anxiety, and depression in 2021. Being able to take medical leave allowed me to rest, recover, and reenter the workforce with a renewed sense of self worth and dedication to ensuring I can best serve our community. I know there are so many residents who could benefit from paid leave to either care for themselves, their keiki, or kūpuna.

I urge you to please pass HB 2360. Mahalo for putting families first!

Maka Gibson

LATE

LATE

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 5:25:03 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shelly Tokunaga May	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

I strongly support HB2360. Paid family and medical leave is vital for our workforce to be able to care for their families without sacrificing financial stability. We are a state that values ‘ohana foremost.

Many of our families struggle with being able to afford living in Hawai‘i with the high cost of living. We want to be able to care for our families when in need without financial pressures and job insecurity.

Please vote in favor of paid family and medical leave.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Shelly Tokunaga May, EdD, LSW

LATE

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 5:36:34 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Puanani Rogers	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this measure and ask that you please pass it through. It makes good sense to take care of our people, this bill will be a great benefit to our working parents and caretakers, any bill that will benefit our people and not a foreigner or developer or tourism is a good bill.

Mahalo for this opportunity to speak in strong support.

Puanani Rogers

4702 Mailihuna Rd. Kapa`a Hi 96746

LATE

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 6:25:14 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Isabella Zingray	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB2360, HD1. This critical policy is not only beneficial for Hawai‘i’s caregivers and families but also to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking (all forms of gender-based violence) who need to take time off to receive victim services, make court appearances, seek medical services, or relocate themselves and family. Rhode Island, Connecticut, Oregon, Colorado, Minnesota, and Maine currently include safe leave in their paid family leave laws.

Paid safe leave provides survivors of violence with options:

- ways to navigate safety;
- time to maintain their economic security; and
- the chance to find healing without fear of job loss, leading to increased abuse and homelessness

Maintaining economic independence is critical to survivors’ immediate, intermediate, and long-term safety and ability to recover from trauma. However, many survivors struggle to remain connected to the workforce as they face numerous challenges in obtaining and maintaining employment as a consequence of the abuse or violence.

A safe leave policy, as proposed in HB2360, HD1, allows survivors to take paid time away from work to heal, recover, and make themselves and their families safe, thereby strengthening survivors’ ties to the workforce and allowing them to meet critical needs in the wake of violence. Gender-based violence presents a concern for public health and safety, as well as for the economy, and victimization has serious repercussions for workers:

- More than half of survivors of all types of violence report difficulty with work or school as a result of victimization.[1]
- Survivors and their loved ones miss over 6.7 million workdays each year.[2]
- A 2022 national survey of victims of all types of violence found that one in six violence survivors reported losing a job or being demoted when they needed time off from work due to victimization.[3]
- An overwhelming 83% of survivors of domestic violence report that an abusive partner has disrupted their ability to work; of those, more than half have lost their jobs because of abuse.[4]

LATE

By establishing pathways to stay in the workforce and effectively support survivors of violence, Hawaii's economy benefits from reduced lost productivity and retains talented, innovative workers.

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

LATE

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 9:43:50 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kelsey Mapa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support HB2360 HD1 because WHO WOULDN'T?! As humans, we exist to be more than cogs in the capitalist machine. Our health and wellbeing are far more important than work. Workers keep our society running and they should have a liveable wage, access to affordable housing, healthcare, and education, as well as time to care for themselves and/or their families when needs arise. I strongly support this bill and hope you do too! Mahalo!

LATE

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 10:09:02 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
D. Dianne Bowen-Coleman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

I strongly support HB2360. Paid family and medical leave allows workers to care for their families without sacrificing financial stability. Hawai'i's families deserve policies that put 'ohana first.

Mahalo for putting families first!

D. Dianne Bowen-coleman

LATE

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2026 2:03:59 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shana Wailana Kukila	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Matayoshi and Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce Members,

I fully support paid family and medical leave. It is my hope that one day we could also have universal healthcare and childcare provided for all our hardworking families and individuals in need.

Mahalo for your continued work on this important issue.

Shana Kukila

Hilo, Hawai'i

LATE

HB-2360-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2026 2:44:53 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mara Hanson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha!

I am writing as a working parent raising a family on Oahu who has had to change my profession and take a huge step down in pay to allow for the flexibility needed to start and care for my growing family, I am writing in strong **support** for HB 2360. If I, or my spouse, had access to such a generous paid family leave as proposed in this bill, I might not have had to leave my former profession or give up over half of my previous annual income to have the flexibility to care for our children. Please pass this bill so that the next generation of parents do not have to make such heartbreaking compromises.

Mahalo!