

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

FAX NO: (808) 587-1560

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, Relating to Paid Family Leave

**BEFORE THE:**

House Committee on Labor

**DATE:** Thursday, February 5, 2026

**TIME:** 9:30 a.m.

**LOCATION:** State Capitol, Room 309

Chair Sayama, Vice-Chair Lee, and Members of the Committee:

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

H.B. 2360 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.

Section 1 of the bill amends the Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) by adding a new chapter establishing the paid family and medical leave insurance program. New section -15(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."

The bill takes effect on July 1, 2026, 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 recommends that this bill be amended to include a provision amending section 235-7 to also include the state income tax exclusion for insurance benefits paid, as follows:

§235-7 Other provisions as to gross income, adjusted gross income, and taxable income. (a) There shall be excluded from gross income, adjusted gross income, and taxable income:

. . .  
(13) Family leave insurance benefits and medical leave insurance benefits paid under chapter .

This would allow taxpayers to more easily find the income tax law relevant to their circumstances.

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

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 05, 2026

To: The Honorable Jackson D. Sayama, Chair,  
The Honorable Mike Lee, Vice Chair, and  
Members of the House Committee on Labor

Date: Thursday, February 5, 2026  
Time: 09:30 a.m.  
Place: Conference Room 309, State Capitol

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

**Re: H.B. 2360 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 legal consultant 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 existing 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.



**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**  
**RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE**

Representative Jackson Sayama, Chair  
Representative Mike Lee, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Labor

February 5, 2026, at 9:30 a.m.; Room Number: 309

The Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR) **Supports** H.B. 2360, 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 health and wellbeing 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.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> 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 is an opportunity for our state to further strengthen our vital workforce and brings us 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

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<sup>2</sup> 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/>

<sup>3</sup> 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>.

<sup>4</sup> 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.**  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LT. GOVERNOR  
KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA

**BRENN A H. HASHIMOTO**  
DIRECTOR  
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

**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  
**BRENN A H. HASHIMOTO**  
Director, Department of Human Resources Development

Before the  
**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR**  
Thursday, February 5, 2026  
9:30AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 309

In consideration of  
**HB2360, RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE**

Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee, and the members of the committee:

The Department of Human Resources Development (HRD) is in **support** of the intent of HB2360.

The purpose of HB2360 is to:

1. Repeal Chapter 392 – Temporary Disability Insurance of the Hawaii Revised Statutes.
2. 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.
3. Require the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to start receiving claims and paying benefits under the program.
4. 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. We do have 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.

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.



**HAWAII STATE  
COMMISSION**  
ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

February 4, 2026

Position: **Support of HB2360**, Relating to Paid Family Leave

To: Representative Jackson D. Sayama, Chair  
Representative Mike Lee, Vice Chair  
Members of the House Committee on Labor

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

Re: Testimony in Support of HB2360

Hearing: Thursday, February 5, 2026, 9:30 a.m.  
Conference Room 309, State Capitol

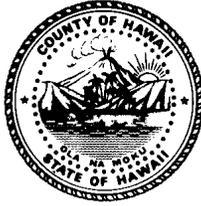
The Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women **supports HB2360**, which establishes a family leave insurance program. This bill is of significant interest to the Commission because access to **paid family and medical leave is a critical factor in advancing gender equality, economic security, and the health and well-being of women and girls in Hawaii**. Many women serve as primary caregivers for children, elders, and family members with health needs, and lack of paid leave often forces them to choose between their jobs and their families' well-being.

HB2360 aligns with the Commission's mission to promote equity and inclusion by providing a structured, statewide program that supports workers during times of family or medical need. **Research and best practices from other jurisdictions indicate that paid family and medical leave programs reduce economic hardship, improve maternal and child health outcomes, and help close gender gaps in the workplace.** By specifying eligibility requirements and employee protections, the bill helps ensure that women, especially those in low-wage or caregiving roles, are not left behind when family or health emergencies arise.

The Commission appreciates the inclusion of employee protections, which can help prevent discrimination or retaliation against those utilizing leave. These protections are particularly important for women, who are disproportionately impacted by workplace inequities and are more likely to need leave for caregiving or health reasons.

The Commission respectfully recommends that the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations **engage women's advocacy organizations and affected community members in the rulemaking process** to ensure the program is accessible and responsive to the diverse needs of women across the state. Additionally, **clear outreach and education efforts will be critical to maximize awareness and equitable access to benefits.** The Commission looks forward to supporting implementation efforts. I respectfully **urge this Committee to pass HB2360** and support this cohesive statewide strategy for paid family and medical leave. Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony.

**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 4, 2026  
TO: House Committee on Labor  
FROM: Jennifer Kagiwada, Council Member  
Council District 2  
SUBJECT: HB2360

Aloha Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee, 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



February 3, 2026

House's Committee on Labor  
Hawai'i State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Hearing: Thursday, February 5, 2026 at 9:30 AM

RE: **STRONG SUPPRT for House Bill 2360**

Aloha Chair Sayama, Vice-Chair Lee and fellow committee members,

Pride at Work – Hawai'i is an official chapter of [Pride at Work](#) which is a national nonprofit organization that represents LGBTQIA+ union members and their allies. We are an officially recognized constituency group of the AFL-CIO that organizes mutual support between the organized Labor Movement and the LGBTQIA+ Community to further social and economic justice. We write in **strong support of House Bill 2360**.

Pride at Work – Hawai'i strongly supports House Bill 2360, which would establish a statewide Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program to ensure that working people can care for themselves and their loved ones without risking their livelihoods.

For too many workers in Hawai'i, taking time off to welcome a child, recover from illness, care for a family member, or respond to a medical crisis means choosing between their health and a paycheck. This burden falls disproportionately on low-wage workers, women, workers of color, māhū, and LGBTQIA+ workers—many of whom are less likely to have access to employer-provided paid leave and more likely to work in sectors without adequate job protections.

HB 2360 takes a thoughtful, phased-in approach by directing the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to establish a sustainable insurance program, collect payroll contributions beginning in 2029, and begin paying benefits in 2030. This measured timeline allows for responsible implementation while ensuring long-term stability for workers and employers alike.

Importantly, this bill recognizes the diversity of Hawai'i's families. Māhū and LGBTQIA+ workers often rely on chosen family, caregiving networks, and non-traditional family structures that are not always reflected in workplace leave policies. A statewide family and medical leave insurance program provides inclusive, portable protections that move beyond employer discretion and ensure all workers—regardless of gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, marital status, or family composition—can access the care they need.

Paid family and medical leave is not only a matter of equity; it is an investment in Hawai'i's workforce and economy. Workers who can take paid leave are more likely to return to their jobs, remain attached to the workforce, and experience improved physical and mental health

Pride at Work – Hawai'i's Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of Re: HB 2360

outcomes. Employers benefit from reduced turnover, increased productivity, and a more stable workforce.

Pride at Work – Hawai'i urges the Legislature to pass HB 2360 and take a significant step toward a more just, compassionate, and worker-centered Hawai'i—one where no one has to sacrifice their health, family, or dignity to stay employed.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of this measure.

In Solidarity,

Michael Golojuch, Jr. (he/him)

President

[Pride at Work – Hawai'i](#)



## UNITED PUBLIC WORKERS

AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO

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

**COMMITTEE ON LABOR**  
Rep. Jackson D. Sayama, Chair  
Rep. Mike Lee, Vice Chair

Thursday, February 3, 2026, 9:30 AM  
Conference Room 309 & Videoconference

**Re: Testimony on HB2360 – RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE**

Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee, 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.

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 central concerns have been addressed.

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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**HEADQUARTERS**

1426 North School Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817-1914  
Phone 808.847.2631

**HAWAII**

362 East Lanikaula Street  
Hilo, Hawaii 96720-4336  
Phone 808.961.3424

**KAUAI**

2970 Kele Street, Suite 213  
Lihue, Hawaii 96766-1803  
Phone 808.245.2412

**MAUI**

841 Kolu Street  
Wailuku, Hawaii 96793-1436  
Phone 808.244.0815

1.866.454.4166

Toll Free - *Molokai/Lanai only*



## HIPHI Board

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Hawaiian Research Office

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

## HIPHI Initiatives

Coalition for a  
Tobacco-Free Hawai'i

Community-Based Research &  
Evaluation

Community Health  
Worker Initiatives

Environmental Health

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 3, 2026

To: Rep. Jackson D. Sayama, Chair  
Rep. Mike Lee, Vice Chair  
Members of the House Committee on Labor

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

Hrg: February 5, 2026 at 9:30 AM in Conference Room 309

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Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI)<sup>1</sup> and the Healthy Eating, Active Living<sup>2</sup> (HEAL) coalition **supports HB 2360**, 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.<sup>3</sup>

### 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

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> "[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.<sup>4</sup>

### **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.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup> 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'.

Kris Coffield  
Policy and Advocacy Associate

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

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

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



1200 Ala Kapuna Street • Honolulu, Hawai'i 96819  
Tel: (808) 833-2711 • Fax: (808) 839-7106 • Web: www.hsta.org

**Osa Tui, Jr.**  
President

**Logan Okita**  
Vice President

**Cheney Kaku**  
Secretary-Treasurer

**Andrea Eshelman**  
Executive Director

## TESTIMONY TO THE HAWAI'I HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR

**Item: HB 2360 – Relating to Paid Family Leave**

**Position: Support**

**Hearing: Thursday, February 5, 2026, 9:30 am, Room 309**

**Submitter: Osa Tui, Jr., President - Hawai'i State Teachers Association**

Dear Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee, and members of the committee,

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association (HSTA) **supports** H.B. 2360 which establishes a family and medical leave insurance program to ensure all workers can care for themselves and their families during critical times without facing financial difficulty. By providing a structured wage replacement system, this bill offers a vital safety net for our educators and the broader community.

We specifically appreciate the elective coverage option for public employees. Under this measure, public sector workers may choose to opt into the program for an initial period of at least three years. Furthermore, the bill ensures that employees and employers who do not elect coverage are not required to pay into the fund, maintaining individual choice and flexibility.

We also appreciate that the bill provides up to 12 weeks of family leave and 26 weeks of medical leave insurance benefits per benefit year. This program covers essential needs, including caring for a new child, supporting family members with serious health conditions, and assisting victims of domestic abuse or sexual assault. Such comprehensive coverage is fundamental to the well-being of our workforce.

H.B. 2360 also guarantees critical job protections, ensuring workers are restored to their original or an equivalent position upon returning from leave. Additionally, the act strictly prohibits retaliatory personnel actions against anyone exercising their right to these benefits. We respectfully urge the committee to pass this measure.

Mahalo.



February 3, 2026

To: House Committee on Labor  
Re: Testimony in SUPPORT of HB2360

Dear Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee 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.

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.*



The House Committee on Labor  
February 5, 2026  
Room 309  
9:30 AM

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

Attention: Chair Jackson D. Sayama, Vice Chair Mike Lee 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** to establish a Paid Family and Medical Leave program. However, we strongly believe 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 current 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.

While we appreciate that this measure creates a mechanism to protect accrued leave, UHPA strongly objects to the provision 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 **amend HB 2360 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](http://www.uhpa.org)

**HB-2360**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 8:16:19 PM

Testimony for LAB on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b>                | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>         |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| GARY SIMON          | Hawai'i Family Caregiver Coalition | Support                   | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Dear Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee, and Honorable Members of the House Committee on Labor:

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, which 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 January 1, 2029; requires the DLIR to begin receiving claims and paying benefits under the program by January 1, 2030; and specifies eligibility requirements and employee protections under the program.

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, 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](mailto:garysimon@hawaii.rr.com)





**House Committee on Labor HB2360  
February 5, 2026 at 9:30 AM  
Room 309**

**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB2360**

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Aloha Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee, 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**, 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,<sup>1</sup> 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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).

**HB-2360**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 6:34:54 AM

Testimony for LAB on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b>    | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>    |
|---------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Joell Edwards       | Wainiha Country Market | 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.



Committee: Labor  
Hearing Date/Time: Thursday, February 5, 2026 at 9:30am  
Place: Conference Room 309 & Via Videoconference  
Re: **Testimony of the ACLU of Hawai'i in SUPPORT of HB2360 Relating to Paid Family Leave**

Dear Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee and Members of the Committee:

The ACLU of Hawai'i **supports HB2360 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)<sup>1</sup> with a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor**. The second was conducted by the **Legislative Reference Bureau<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 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](https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/CommitteeFiles/senate/LBR/LBRfiles/DOL_Hawaii-State-Paid-Family-Leave-Analysis-Grant-Report.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Paid Family Leave Program Impact Study, in Accordance with ACT 109, SLH 2018. [https://lrb.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019\\_PaidFamilyLeaveProgramImpactStudy.pdf](https://lrb.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019_PaidFamilyLeaveProgramImpactStudy.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup> **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/WHD\\_FMLA2018SurveyResults\\_Appendices\\_Aug2020.pdf](https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OASP/evaluation/pdf/WHD_FMLA2018SurveyResults_Appendices_Aug2020.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> 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>

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.* 1

American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai‘i  
P.O. Box 3410  
Honolulu, Hawai‘i 96801  
T: 808.522.5900  
F: 808.522.5909  
E: [office@acluhawaii.org](mailto:office@acluhawaii.org)  
[www.acluhawaii.org](http://www.acluhawaii.org)

| <i>A worker earning:</i>                   | <i>Would pay:</i>     | <i>And receive:</i>   |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Minimum wage</b><br>(\$29,000 per year) | <b>\$102</b> per year | <b>\$504</b> per week |
| <b>Average wage</b><br>(\$62,000 per year) | <b>\$217</b> per year | <b>\$930</b> 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](mailto: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.*

American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai'i  
 P.O. Box 3410  
 Honolulu, Hawai'i 96801  
 T: 808.522.5900  
 F: 808.522.5909  
 E: [office@acluhawaii.org](mailto:office@acluhawaii.org)  
[www.acluhawaii.org](http://www.acluhawaii.org)



**House Labor Committee  
Representative Sayama, Chair  
Representative Lee, Vice Chair  
Members of the Committee**

**9:30 AM, February 5, 2026**

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

Aloha Chair Sayama Chair Lee, and members of the Committee:

**Society of Human Resource Management – Hawaii (“SHRM Hawaii”) respectfully opposes HB 2360, 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





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

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

House Committee on Labor  
The Honorable Jackson D. Sayama, Chair  
The Honorable Mike Lee, Vice Chair

Thursday, February 5, 2026 – 9:30 a.m.  
Conference Room 309 & Videoconference

**Board of Directors**

**Roger Dang**  
*President*  
Petro Pacific

**John Peyton**  
*First Vice President*  
Par Hawaii

**Bob Hood**  
*Immediate Past President*  
Aloha Petroleum LLC

**Sayble Bissen**  
Maui Oil Company, Inc.

**Kimo Haynes**  
Hawaii Petroleum, LLC

**Annie Marszal**  
Lahaina Petroleum

**Rebecca Namohala**  
Island Energy Services,  
LLC

**Alec McBarnet**  
Maui Oil Company, Inc.

**Jon Mauer**  
Island Energy Services,  
LLC

**Steve Wetter**  
Hawaii Petroleum, LLC

**Eric Wright**  
Par Hawaii

Aloha Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee, 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 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. Hawaii 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.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in opposition.



1001 Bishop Street #625 | Honolulu, HI 96813  
866-295-7282 | [aarp.org/hi](http://aarp.org/hi) | [hiaarp@aarp.org](mailto:hiaarp@aarp.org) |  
[Twitter.com/aarpHawaii](https://twitter.com/aarpHawaii) | [facebook.com/aarpHawaii](https://facebook.com/aarpHawaii)

**The Hawaii State Legislature  
House Committee on Labor  
February 5, 2026  
Conference Room 309, 9:30 a.m.**

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

Aloha Chair Sayama 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, 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.<sup>1</sup> 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)



H.B. 2360 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.

#### References

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



**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 5, 2026

H.B. 2360 — RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO supports H.B. 2360, 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.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira  
Executive Director



**Rep. Jackson D. Sayama Chair**  
**Rep. Mike Lee, Vice Chair**  
Committee on Labor

Thursday, February 5, 2026  
9:30AM Conference Room 309

RE: HB2360 - Paid Family and Medical Leave - Support

Dear Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee, and Members of the Committees,

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 570 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  
Sustainable Commerce  
808.445.7606  
P.O. Box 22394  
Honolulu, HI 96823

Feb. 5, 2026, 9:30 a.m.  
Hawaii State Capitol  
Conference Room 309 and Videoconference

**To: House Committee on Labor**  
**Rep. Jackson D. Sayama, Chair**  
**Rep. Mike Lee, Vice Chair**

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

RE: TESTIMONY OPPOSING HB2360 — RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE

Aloha chair, vice chair and other committee members,

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii **opposes** [HB2360](#), 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 promise 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.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

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.<sup>3</sup>

Family leave policies in San Francisco<sup>4</sup> and New Jersey<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup>

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.

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<sup>2</sup> 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.

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

<sup>4</sup> 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.

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

<sup>6</sup> [“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 the effect that enacting this bill would have on 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

*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 Labor  
Re: **HB2360 – Relating to Paid Family Leave**  
Hawai'i State Capitol & Via Videoconference  
February 5, 2026, 9:30 AM

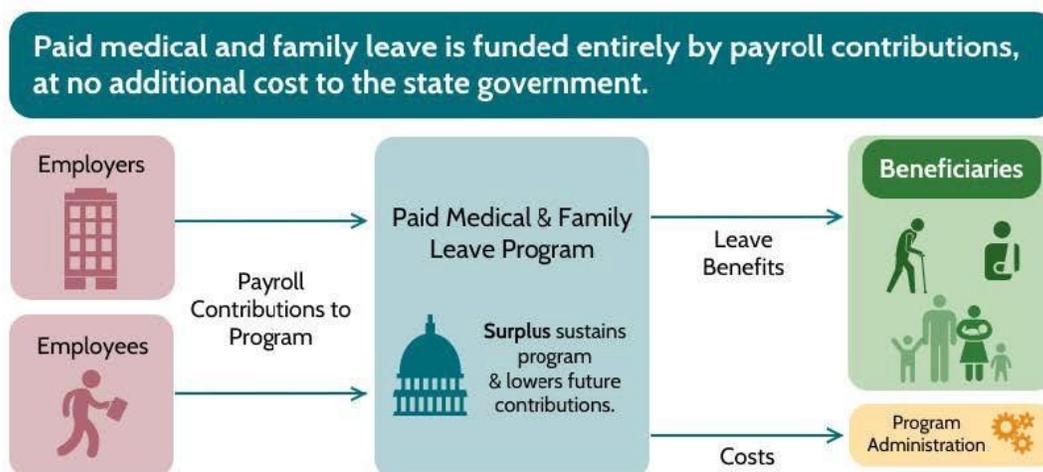
Dear Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in **SUPPORT of HB2360**. 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.**<sup>1</sup> 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.**<sup>2</sup> 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:<sup>3</sup>



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.**

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

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

<sup>3</sup> "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 leave<sup>4</sup> – 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.<sup>5</sup> 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**.<sup>6</sup> Families who have access to paid leave – especially

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

<sup>5</sup> Prenatal to 3 Policy Impact Center, op.cit.

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.abetterbalance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/PFML\\_Health-Case\\_Fact-Sheet\\_11.30.21.pdf](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.<sup>7</sup>

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.<sup>8</sup>

| <i>A worker earning:</i>                   | <i>Would pay:</i>     | <i>And receive:</i>   |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Minimum wage</b><br>(\$29,000 per year) | <b>\$102</b> per year | <b>\$504</b> per week |
| <b>Average wage</b><br>(\$62,000 per year) | <b>\$217</b> per year | <b>\$930</b> 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,<sup>9</sup> 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.<sup>10</sup>

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.**<sup>11</sup> 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.

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<sup>7</sup> [https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/hrscurrent/Vol07\\_Ch0346-0398/HRS0392/HRS\\_0392-0023.htm](https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/hrscurrent/Vol07_Ch0346-0398/HRS0392/HRS_0392-0023.htm)

<sup>8</sup> Prenatal to 3 Policy Impact Center, op.cit.

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.abetterbalance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/PFML\\_Business-Case\\_Fact-Sheet\\_5.10.22.pdf](https://www.abetterbalance.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/PFML_Business-Case_Fact-Sheet_5.10.22.pdf)

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

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



745 Fort St. Mall  
17<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Honolulu, HI 96815

808-521-9500  
NFIB.com

February 5, 2026

TO: Rep. Jackson D. Sayama, Chair  
Rep. Mike Lee, Vice Chair  
Members of the House Committee on Labor

FR: Michael Iosua, State Director  
NFIB, Hawaii Chapter

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

Hearing date: February 5, 2026, at 9:30 AM

Aloha Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee 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 up 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. Hawai'i'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 Hawai'i's economic diversity and community stability.



**TESTIMONY OF TINA YAMAKI, MANAGING DIRECTOR  
HAWAII TRANSPORTATION ASSOCIATION  
FEBRUARY 5, 2026  
HB 2360 RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE**

Aloha Chair Sayama and members of the House Committee on Labor. 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. 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.

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





**MAUI**  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
VOICE OF BUSINESS

**HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR  
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, HOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM 309  
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2026 AT 9:30 A.M.**

To The Honorable Representative Jackson D. Sayama, Chair  
The Honorable Representative Mike Lee, Vice Chair  
Members of the Committee on Labor

**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

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  
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.

**HB-2360**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 9:40:07 PM

Testimony for LAB on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b>                    | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>         |
|---------------------|--|---------------------------|------------------------|
| HSDWC               | Hawaii State Democratic Women's Caucus | Support                   | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Committee on Labor

Chair, Sayama, Vice Chair Lee and members,

The Hawaii Democratic Women's Caucus is in strong support of this measure as we have been for the last 15 or 20 years.

The United States is the only developed nation without paid family leave and we rank at the bottom.

Given the greed-driven so-called leadership in Washington, it is all the more important that Hawaii protect her State Ohana with this critical safety net for working women who are those most often affected by the need of family caregiving and are the backbone of our families.

The cost to the state for this measure would be minimal as it is an insurance program funded by the employer and employee.

We fervently hope that this measure passes at this critical time in the lives of our citizens. The very survival of our working women and their families is at stake.

Mahalo,

Ann S. Freed

Co-Chair Hawaii Democratic Party Women's Caucus



February 6, 2026

Members of the House Committee on Labor:

Chair Jackson D. Sayama  
Vice Chair Mike Lee  
Rep. Andrew Takuya Garrett  
Rep. Jeanne Kapela  
Rep. Sam Satoru Kong  
Rep. Julie Reyes Oda

Re: HB2360 Relating Paid Family Leave

Dear Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee, and Members of the House Committee on Labor:

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 statewide, I respectfully submit testimony in support of HB2360.

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.<sup>1</sup>
- Survivors and their loved ones miss over 6.7 million workdays each year.<sup>2</sup>
- 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.<sup>3</sup>
- 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.<sup>4</sup>

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

---

<sup>1</sup> Alliance for Safety and Justice, "Crime Survivors Speak: National Survey Of Victims' Views On Safety and Justice" (September 2022), <https://allianceforsafetyandjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Alliance-for-Safety-and-Justice-Crime-Survivors-Speak-September-2022.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> 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://allianceforsafetyandjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/LostWorkLostPayLostSafety.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Alliance for Safety and Justice, "Crime Survivors Speak: National Survey Of Victims' Views On Safety and Justice" (September 2022), <https://allianceforsafetyandjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Alliance-for-Safety-and-Justice-Crime-Survivors-Speak-September-2022.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> 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](https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/C475_IWPR-Report-Dreams-Deferred.pdf).

**HB-2360**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 8:00:01 PM

Testimony for LAB on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>            |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Mike Golojuch, Sr.  | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

Yes, I support HB2360. Please pass this bill.

**HB-2360**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 9:04:06 PM

Testimony for LAB on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>            |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Leah Yamamoto       | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members,

I am writing in support of HB2360. Paid family and medical leave would allow workers in Hawai'i to care for their 'ohana while maintaining job security.

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

Mahalo.

**HB-2360**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 9:22:48 PM

Testimony for LAB on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>            |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Ryan Samonte        | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

SUPPORT

**HB-2360**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 10:06:44 PM

Testimony for LAB on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>            |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Jasmine Balangitao  | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chair and members I'm writing to you in support of this much needed bill. We need this so much to help take care of our families when the time comes. It's so hard to take time off of your job to take care of a family member and afford to live. Family is so important. Please help us hard working local families. We already have 3 jobs and gotta balance taking care of our families.

Do right by us Mahalo , Jasmine Balangitao

**HB-2360**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 10:46:15 PM

Testimony for LAB on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>         |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Erin Hagan          | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members,

I am writing in support of HB2360. Paid family and medical leave would allow workers in Hawai'i to care for their 'ohana while maintaining job security.

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

Mahalo,

Erin Hagan

Waialua

**HB-2360**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 3:52:55 AM

Testimony for LAB on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>         |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Younghee Overly     | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Thank you for this opportunity to support HB2360. 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 and thank you for your consideration.

Younghee Overly, a member of AAUW of Hawaii

**HB-2360**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 7:00:54 AM

Testimony for LAB on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>            |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Caitlin Kryss       | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members,

I am writing in support of HB2360. Paid family and medical leave would allow workers in Hawai'i to care for their 'ohana while maintaining job security.

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

Mahalo,

Caitlin Kryss, Puna District, Hawaii Island

**HB-2360**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 7:32:06 AM

Testimony for LAB on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members,

I am writing in support of HB2360. Paid family and medical leave would allow workers in Hawai'i to care for their 'ohana while maintaining job security.

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,  
Anamalia

Volcano, 96785

**HB-2360**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 8:06:57 AM

Testimony for LAB on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Grace Akau   | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members,

I am writing in support of HB2360. Paid family and medical leave would allow workers in Hawai'i to care for their 'ohana while trying to make ends meet for the ohana.

*My father in law was sick with stage 4 pancreatic and liver cancer. My mother in law became his caretaker and it came to a point where she had to choose taking care of him instead of going to work. He ended up passing away, but the point is that during this time, my mother in law was not able to receive paid medical leave. She was not able to go back to work either because she was grieving. She got behind on her payments and racked up her debt fast.*

No one should have to choose or carry the weight between caring for their family and making ends meet. Please pass HB2360 and put 'ohana first.

Mahalo,

Grace Akau

**HB-2360**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 8:23:25 AM

Testimony for LAB on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members,

I am writing in support of HB2360. Paid family and medical leave would allow workers in Hawai'i to care for their 'ohana while maintaining job security.

*I have personally worked to pass paid family leave in Hawaii for years -- and yet year after year, our Democratic legislators fail to pass even the most minimal support for working parents. This record of inaction was particularly embarrassing and hypocritical when in 2024, at the Democratic National Convention, I witnessed these same legislators cheering for Democrats in other states who passed paid family leave.*

*It is time for our legislators to stand up for the values that they profess when they are around their Democratic colleagues in other states.*

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

Mahalo, Shay Chan Hodges, former delegate to the Democratic National Convection from Maui

**HB-2360**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 9:36:52 AM

Testimony for LAB on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>            |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Daniel Plunkett     | Individual          | Oppose                    | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

I believe requiring employers to pay employees to take care of "family needs" would be far too ambiguous and would create a major burden on employers that they should not have to bear. It would be all too easy for unscrupulous employees to create family "needs" that they must attend to while being paid, leaving employers to have to find substitute workers indefinitely and pay two (or more) people to do the same job. It's already extremely difficult to do business in Hawaii, please don't make it harder.

**HB-2360**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 12:16:43 PM

Testimony for LAB on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>            |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Rachel Ebert        | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members,

I am writing in support of HB2360. Paid family and medical leave would allow workers in Hawai'i to care for their 'ohana while maintaining job security. As a maternal mental health therapist, I've seen firsthand the positive impact for families if they are able to spend more time supporting their loved ones.

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

Mahalo,

Rachel

**HB-2360**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 1:35:58 PM

Testimony for LAB on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>         |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Renee Hall          | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Support

Committee Hearing: February 5, 2026

I am writing in strong support of HB2360, establishing Paid Family and Medical Leave in Hawai‘i.

No one should have to choose between their health, caring for a loved one, or keeping their job. Paid family and medical leave is essential for workers facing serious health conditions, childbirth, caregiving responsibilities, or family emergencies.

This bill would provide dignity, stability, and protection for working families while promoting healthier outcomes for employees and employers alike. Access to paid leave reduces financial hardship, supports workforce retention, and reflects Hawai‘i’s values of family and community care.

I respectfully urge you to pass HB2360 and take a meaningful step toward supporting Hawai‘i’s working families and keiki.

Mahalo for your consideration.

**HB-2360**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 1:36:04 PM

Testimony for LAB on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>         |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Sandy Ma            | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Dear Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee, and Members of the House Labor Committee,

I am testifying in support of HB 2360, which requires (1) the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (Department), by 1/1/2029, to establish a family and medical leave insurance program and begin collecting payroll contributions to finance payment of benefits, (2) the Department, by 1/1/2030, to begin receiving claims and paying benefits under the program, and (3) specifies eligibility requirements and employee protections under the program.

Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) is critical to stimulating economic growth (<https://peri.umass.edu/wp-content/uploads/joomla/images/publication/Economic-Effects-of-Investing-in-Quality-Care-Jobs-and-Paid-Family-and-Medical-Leave2.pdf>) and supporting small businesses (<https://www.newamerica.org/the-thread/benefits-of-paid-leave-2024-election/>). Furthermore, PFML "boosts labor force participation and earns for women" in the workplace. See <https://www.newamerica.org/the-thread/benefits-of-paid-leave-2024-election/>.

Hawaii needs PFML now!

COMMITTEE ON LABOR  
Rep. Jackson D. Sayama, Chair  
Rep. Mike Lee, Vice Chair

HEARING:  
Thursday, February 5, 2026 at 9:30 AM  
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE  
Conference Room 309  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street

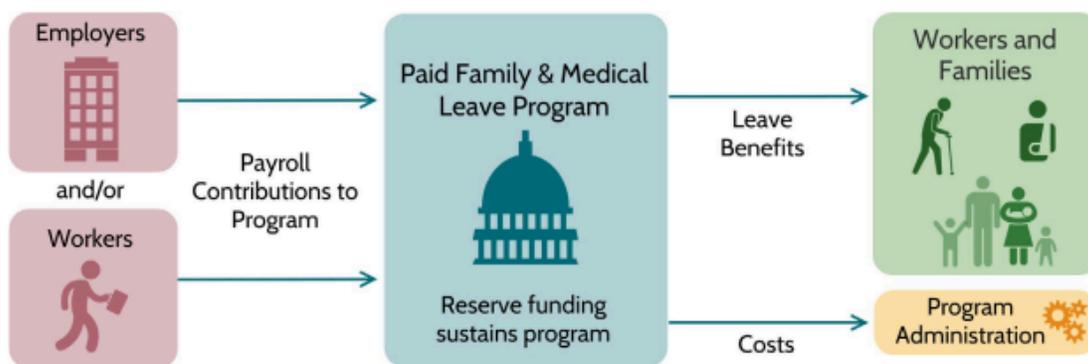
**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT: HB 2360 - RELATING TO PAID FAMILY LEAVE.**

Aloha Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee, 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**, relating to paid family leave. HB 2360 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 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”<sup>1</sup> 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”<sup>2</sup> 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”<sup>3</sup> 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”<sup>4</sup> reaffirmed that the majority of Hawai‘i residents want PFML. It found that 89% of

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

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

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> 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 to support HB2360**.

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

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

**HB-2360**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 4:41:25 PM

Testimony for LAB on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>         |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Kealakai Hammond    | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members,

I am writing in support of HB2360. Paid family and medical leave would allow workers in Hawai'i to care for their 'ohana while maintaining job security.

As an island community with a large aging population, many families struggle to ensure their keiki and elderly members are cared for, especially while sick or in after an acute medical crisis.

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

Mahalo,

Kealakai Hammond, LMHC, PMH-C

**HB-2360**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 6:20:01 PM

Testimony for LAB on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>            |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| K.M                 | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members,

I am writing in support of HB2360. Paid family and medical leave would allow workers in Hawai'i to care for their 'ohana while maintaining job security.

I think allowing paid family leave would help many families in Hawaii especially for those who are expanding their families or taking care of sick or elderly family members.

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

Mahalo,

*K. M.*

**HB-2360**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 6:38:23 PM

Testimony for LAB on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>         |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Natalie Portugal    | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members,

I am writing in support of HB2360.

As you know we are the last industrialized nation without federally mandated paid family leave. I have three kids and this would have made a huge difference in my life had I had this support. Organizations don't seem to want to support families unless they are legally required to. Please make it the law to do the ethical thing. If other countries are doing it successfully, we can too.

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

Mahalo,

Natalie Portugal

**HB-2360**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 9:04:15 PM

Testimony for LAB on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b>         | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>         |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Ka'ale'a Kyrstin Hanawahine | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members,

I am writing in support of HB2360. Paid family and medical leave would allow workers in Hawai'i to care for their 'ohana while maintaining job security.

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

Mahalo,

*Ka'ale'a Hanawahine*

House Committee on Labor  
Conference Room 309  
Re: HB2360 Relating to Paid Family Leave  
Position: Comments  
February 5, 2026  
9:30 a.m.

Aloha Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee 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 needs to be one that serves all of Hawai'i's working families who need it.

As you consider moving this bill forward, **I urge that 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 creates added burdens for already overtaxed families while possibly requiring families do more paperwork to continue to opt-in throughout their tenure as civil servants.

Additionally, I would urge committee members as you move forward with this bill to please include those with lived expertise in what it means to make impossible decisions about leave to take care of our families. We will build the best program when the policies and implementation are informed by lived expertise. So, whether it's in the working group or in committee hearings, **I encourage you to give parents a seat at the decision-making table.** Currently, there is no organization or individual that has the kuleana of bringing parents' voices and experiences to the table in the working group. It is not too late to include us.

My requests are rooted in my own journey as a mother, one that mirrors many others'.

I gave birth to all three of my keiki while I was a state employee. With my first, I was back in the office part-time before he was 4 weeks old and back in the office full-time when he was 9 weeks old. I only had about 6 weeks of paid leave available when I gave birth. Taking any more leave would've meant that it would be unpaid. My understanding

at the time is that taking unpaid leave would mean I paid both my and my employer's contribution to health insurance while I had no income. It would've also impacted my retirement benefits. Our family felt like we didn't have a choice but to grin and bear it.

With our second child, I had more leave accrued. However, we were again faced with the difficult decision of whether or not to take unpaid leave when he was admitted to the pediatric intensive care unit and then spent a month in and out of the hospital. He was only 6 months old, and I still had not accrued much time after exhausting my paid leave postpartum. I had to make the impossible decision to leave my baby's hospital crib to report to the office because I had no more paid leave. Again, we had to weigh the very real and detrimental impacts that taking unpaid leave would have on our economic well-being and my retirement rather than focusing on being there for my baby.

I know I am not alone in my stories because I've talked to so many parents who have similar ones. **It's with my own stories and those of the parents I've connected with that I urge you to give parents a seat at the table as you discuss how to build a paid family and medical leave program here in Hawai'i.** I personally volunteer to help bring our voices to the decision-making tables. We are rooted, and we are ready.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

**HB-2360**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 10:50:16 PM

Testimony for LAB on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair and 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, 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.

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

Me ka ha'aha'a,

C. Pua'ena Vierra-Villanueva

'Ohana Leadership Council



**HB-2360**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 2:36:02 AM

Testimony for LAB on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>            |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Michelle R Stefanik | Individual          | Oppose                    | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

I oppose this bill. Employers are already paying high enough taxes and wages, including insurance. They should not also be required to pay for Family and Medical Leave. This should not be funded through payroll taxes. Support your small businesses and vote no. It's hard enough to stay in business as it is. Help them stay in business so that they can have employees. Vote No.

**HB-2360**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 5:13:01 AM

Testimony for LAB on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>            |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Krystal Baba        | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

SUPPORT

**HB-2360**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 5:23:04 AM

Testimony for LAB on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>    |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Leilani Kailiawa    | Individual          | Support                   | Remotely Via Zoom |

Comments:

Aloha Chait and members,

My name is Leilani Kailiawa. and I am here in strong support of HB 2360 because I have lived this reality. Nearly ten years ago next month, 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. To be at his bedside—to give him the nurturing care only a parent can provide—I had to live on another island, away from my husband and my two older sons.

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 optional—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 risking everything.

I urge you to pass HB 2360, so 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**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:03:44 AM

Testimony for LAB on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>         |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Patricia Bilyk      | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

TO: Rep Jackson Sayama, Chair, Rep Mike Lee, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee on Labor

FROM: Patricia L. Bilyk, RN, MSN, MPH, IBCLC (Retired)

RE: HB2360 Relating to Paid Family Leave

DATE: Thursday, February 5, 2026 9:30am

I SUPPORT HB 2360.

Over my 53 years as a RN and 50 years as an Advanced Practice RN in the State of Hawaii, I've worked with thousands of families in my career who needed to take time off from work to have and care for a newborn or care for their premature infant after hospital discharge. It has been heartbreaking to witness these families being torn between the needs of their infant and putting food on the table or a roof over their head.

Hence the GREAT NEED for PAID FAMILY LEAVE for the families of our state! The Program needs to include the following components:

1. Include all workers private and public;
2. be funded by payroll deductions;
3. workers paid a portion of their salary while off;
4. 12 weeks leave;
5. job security following leave;
6. State or Private Company running the program.

I strongly urge this committee to pass this bill out of this Committee to continue the conversation on Paid Family Leave for the Working Families of Hawaii!!!

Dr. Casandra Simonson, MD

Regarding: Paid Family and Medical Leave

2/4/2026

HB2360 in Support

My name is Dr. Casandra Simonson. I am here today to represent myself, my family, and the families of all of my patients. The view I express are my own. I have been a pediatrician for over eleven years in Maui and I am urging the legislature to support HB2360 for Paid Family and Medical Leave. We are facing the threat of decreased federal funding for programs that help those most in need. One thing we can do right now to offset these funding cuts is to pass paid family and medical leave in our state. PFML is a very well-studied way to improve lives, as well as a way to decrease the gender pay gap. It would also help Hawaii attract and retain talented individuals, including healthcare workers and educators, who might otherwise head to states with paid leave programs already in place. I am not here to speak on the extensive economic benefits, I am here to speak as a pediatrician. In my job I see newborns, infants, and children all-day every day. I see mothers just days after delivery, right after discharge from the hospital. Which means I see mothers who arrive sometimes alone, carrying a heavy awkward car seat and diaper bag. I see moms who are bleeding, in pain, with stitches, struggling to walk, and they are often alone. They are not usually alone because they don't have family or a partner that cares but because their loved ones absolutely have to work. These new mothers aren't supposed to be lifting anything let alone everything. These moms haven't slept since they went into labor and in case you haven't heard, babies are hard. They cry a lot, they make a lot of doo-doo, they grumble and make scary noises, they breathe funny, they fuss, and then they oversleep when they need to eat. Sometimes they are sick, and sometimes there are complications for mom or baby. Studies of parenting styles of villagers in the Amazon rainforest have shown that in one day, a child has 8-12 different adults assisting with their caregiving. Raising a child in most of the world is a team effort. In the US, we expect a bleeding, in pain, exhausted mom to do it all, often alone. What are the effects of modern US caregiving for mom and baby? It might mean trouble bonding or trouble breastfeeding, or worse, falling asleep holding the baby and accidentally smothering it. It could mean the baby doesn't get enough nutrition or affection during crucial brain development periods. It could lead to the mom becoming depressed. It could lead to short tempers and fights with partners, breakups, evictions, it could lead to relying on substances to cope, it could lead to child abuse. I won't speak to the economic benefits of paid family and medical leave as that's not my expertise but I can tell you there are severe consequences to inadequate support of families and I see it every day.

Parents are facing agonizing choices in order to make ends meet. Imagine your child gets very

sick. Imagine having to choose- stay by their side and risk losing your housing? Or in order to keep making enough money you leave your child alone, scared and hurting in a hospital wondering where you are? It's cruel and it's shameful to not have a better system when one is available. I urge each legislator to continue to support a proven program is before you now. How can Hawaii set an example and be a success story through these dark times? Paid Family and Medical Leave isn't even a small step in the right direction, it's a huge leap, one you can take right now. Please vote yes to continue support for paid family and medical leave. I look forward to taking pride in our state thanks to your actions.

Thank you to the chair and the committee and all of you for your time.

Dr. Simonson

**HB-2360**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 3:58:33 PM

Testimony for LAB on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>         |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Cheryl Tanger       | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members,

I am a Hawai'i resident and student parent writing in strong support of HB2360. Paid family and medical leave is critical for working families who are balancing employment, caregiving responsibilities, and/or education in a high-cost state.

Like many families in Hawai'i, my ability to remain employed and continue my education depends on stability at home. When a child becomes ill, a family member needs care, or a medical issue arises, taking unpaid leave can quickly create financial hardship. For many workers, even a short interruption in income can mean falling behind on rent, utilities, or other essential expenses.

Paid family and medical leave would provide workers with the security to care for their 'ohana without risking their jobs or financial stability. It supports healthier families, a more reliable workforce, and a stronger local economy by allowing people to recover, care, and return to work with dignity.

No one in Hawai'i should have to choose between caring for their family and keeping their job. I respectfully urge you to pass HB2360 and put 'ohana first.

Mahalo for your time,

Cheryl Tanger

Mother

Student Assistant

**HB-2360**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 6:14:58 PM

Testimony for LAB on 2/5/2026 9:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>         |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Elle Hauschild      | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

New parents need this as well

as ppl caring for the dying. My mother is taking care of my dying father and she cannot work because of this so needs some sort of income/stipened.