



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

February 26, 2026

To: The Honorable Chris Todd, Chair,
The Honorable Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair, and
Members of the House Committee on Finance

Date: Thursday, February 26, 2026
Time: 10:00 a.m.
Place: Conference Room 308, State Capitol

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

Re: H.B. 2387 H.D.1 RELATING TO WORKERS' COMPENSATION
MEDICAL BENEFITS

I. OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION

The **DLIR supports** this measure to ensure first responders receive timely and appropriate medical treatment associated with firefighting duties.

HB2387 HD1 proposes to amend HRS §386-21.9 by:

- Expanding workers' compensation medical benefits for firefighters as defined in §386-21 to include coverage for adenocarcinoma or mesothelioma of the respiratory system; cancer of the buccal cavity, cervix, colon, esophagus, ovary, pharynx, skin, female reproductive organs, including the uterus, endometrium, and fallopian tubes, and thyroid; and malignant melanoma.
- Specifying that an employer may prove that the cancer or disease was not associated with the firefighting duties to deny medical benefits under workers' compensation law.

II. CURRENT LAW

§386-21.9 defines medical care, services, and supplies for firefighters suffering from cancer. If a claim for leukemia, multiple myeloma, non-Hodgkin lymphoma, or cancer of the lung, brain, stomach, esophagus, intestines, rectum, kidney, bladder, prostate, or testes filed by an employee with five or more years of service as a firefighter is accepted or determined to be compensable, §386-21 shall remain applicable; provided that the employer shall be liable for medical care, services and supplies for a minimum of one hundred ten per cent, and not to exceed one hundred fifty per

cent of fees prescribed in the Medicare Resource Based Relative Value Scale applicable to Hawaii as prepared by the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

§386-21 defines medical care, services, and supplies and provides that immediately after a work injury sustained by an employee and so long as reasonably needed the employer shall furnish to the employee all medical care, services, and supplies as the nature of the injury requires.

§386-73.5 states the DLIR Director has original jurisdiction over all controversies and disputes arising out of workers' compensation.

§386-85 states the presumption of employment and compensation for a work-covered work injury in the absence of substantial evidence to the contrary.

III. COMMENTS ON THE HOUSE BILL

The Department fully supports this measure to ensure that first responders receive timely and appropriate medical treatment to include coverage for adenocarcinoma or mesothelioma of the respiratory system; cancer of the buccal cavity, cervix, colon, esophagus, ovary, pharynx, skin, female reproductive organs, including the uterus, endometrium, and fallopian tubes, and thyroid; and malignant melanoma when it is determined that said cancer or disease was associated with firefighting duties.

Equal Opportunity Employer/Program
Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.
TDD/TTY Dial 711 then ask for (808) 586-8842.



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

Ka 'Oihana Ho'oka'a'ike no ka Po'e Kīnānā

1010 Richards Street, Rm. 118 • Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813
Ph. (808) 586-8121 (V) • Fax (808) 586-8129 • (808) 204-2466 (VP)

February 26, 2026

TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

House Bill 2387 House Draft 1 – Relating to Worker's Compensation Medical Benefits

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports House Bill 2387 House Draft 1 – Relating to Worker's Compensation Medical Benefits. This bill expands workers' compensation medical benefits for firefighters to include coverage for adenocarcinoma or mesothelioma of the respiratory system; cancer of the buccal cavity, cervix, colon, esophagus, ovary, pharynx, skin, female reproductive organs, including the uterus, endometrium, and fallopian tubes, and thyroid; and malignant melanoma. It specifies that an employer may deny medical benefits under workers' compensation law only if they prove that the cancer or disease was not associated with firefighting duties. Effective 7/1/3000.

The physical and environmental exposures from firefighting duties may be the cause of firefighters' cancer diagnosis. The cancers listed in this bill may have long latency periods before diagnosis. Given these risks, it is essential to ensure that those who develop cancer due to their occupational exposure receive appropriate workers' compensation medical benefits.

The Americans with Disabilities Act protects individuals with cancer and by expanding cancer or disease coverage for firefighters' workers' compensation medical benefits ensures access to the medical care, services, and supplies that they need.

This bill supports our firefighters who risk their lives every day to protect our communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

KRISTINE PAGANO
Acting Executive Director



HAWAII FIRE FIGHTERS ASSOCIATION

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS LOCAL 1463, AFL-CIO

1018 PALM DRIVE, HONOLULU, HAWAII 96814-1929

TELEPHONE (808) 949-1566 FAX: (808) 952-6003

WEBSITE: www.hawaiifirefighters.org

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THE THIRTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2026

February 26, 2026

Committee on Finance

Testimony by
Hawaii Fire Fighters Association

H.B. 2387 H.D. 1 – RELATING TO WORKERS’ COMPENSATION MEDICAL BENEFITS LAB,
FIN

Dear Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi and Members of the committee,

The Hawaii Fire Fighters Association (HFFA), Local 1463, IAFF, AFL-CIO represents more than 2,000 active-duty and 1,000 retired professional fire fighters throughout the State of Hawaii. The HFFA, on behalf of all our members, strongly supports H.B. 2387, which expands medical benefits for firefighters under workers' compensation to include additional types of cancers.

“The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) study identified that fire fighters have a 9% greater chance of being diagnosed with cancer and a 14% greater chance of dying from cancer than the general U.S. population.” Fire fighters are exposed to carcinogenic agents from fire combustion products that can be inhaled, ingested, or absorbed through dermal exposure, fire fighting foam, diesel exhaust from fire apparatus, and even the turnouts, which provide thermal stability, contain PFAS. The Grace LeMasters’ study found a direct correlation occupational exposure and the increased risk for cancer.

H.B. 2387 H.D. 1 provides the workers’ compensation coverage for our fire fighters diagnosed and require cancer treatment.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and we ask the Committee to pass H.B. 2387 H.D.1.

HB-2387-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2026 8:06:15 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kanoa Shannon	Maui Fire Department, Hawaii Firefighters Association Political Action Committee	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Kanoa Shannon, I am a 24 year Captain of the Department of Fire and Public Safety for the County of Maui and for Maui Division Political Action Committee for Hawaii Firefighters Association

I am testifying in support of House Bill 2387. The intention of the bill, is to expand health and medical benefits for FF's under worker's compensation (WC) language and laws to include additional types of cancers.

Many different cancers are now becoming more prevalent in the fire service and is also a higher contributing factor to FF deaths during active duty as well as after retirement. Carcinogen exposures in many different incident situations hugely contribute through absorption, ingestion, and inhalation. We have many different levels of PPE that protect us in the different environments, but none of them are exposure 'proof' or protect us 100%, in fact most structural firefighting gear (aka bunker gear / turnouts) contain Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (aka PFAS). These 'forever chemicals' can lead toward serious health problems that include liver damage, thyroid disease, obesity and cancer.

The fire service commitment and dedication in public safety to our communities is hard to quantify and in this situation we ask for proactive support in progressing and including language and laws that protect FF health and medical benefits to all members in the fire service.

The usual generic mission statement for the fire service states, 'we are committed and dedicated to protect and preserve life, environment and property' with LIFE starting as the top priority. We are asking in return nothing different, simply to support everything that it will take to commit and dedicate to protect and preserve our lives as FF's.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of HB2387 as we ask the committee to pass this bill to truly show support for all fire service members and their ohana

A hui hou

HB-2387-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 11:57:28 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jay Fujita	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Jay Fujita, I am a 26 year veteran of the Maui Fire and Public Safety Department and I am in support of HB2387. I subscribe to the IAFF LODD email and get notified whenever a Line of Duty Death occurs. 9 out of 10 LODD has been the result of Occupational Cancer. Occupational Cancer followed by suicide are the top two leading caused of LODD. These cancers have been proven to be from exposures that occurred while responding to fires. Fire fighters should not have to fight for medical coverage while they fight for the very lives.

Another topic that will need to be looked at is, these exposures do not go away once a Fire Fighter retires. A diagnosis of a cancer in retirement is even more of a fight. Set income, older in age, and no support from the employer with which the exposures occurred just make the fight that much more challenging, if not impossible. Please pass this Bill and any further Bill. Please encourage all who are in power to move this forward and help us Fire Fighters who have helped thousands others.

Mahalo