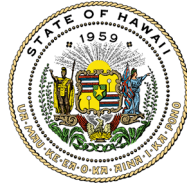


**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



**STEPHEN F. LOGAN**  
MAJOR GENERAL  
ADJUTANT GENERAL  
KA 'AKUKANA KENELALA

**JAMES DS. BARROS**  
ADMINISTRATOR OF  
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT  
KAHU HO'OMALU PŪLIA

STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I  
**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**  
**KA 'OIHANA PILI KAUA**  
**HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY**  
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STATE OF HAWAI'I  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 2498 HD2 SD1,  
RELATING TO CARE HOMES

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON  
WAYS AND MEANS

BY

**JAMES DS. BARROS**  
ADMINISTRATOR  
HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

April 1, 2026

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency (HIEMA) supports HB2498 HD2 SD1, which creates the Central O'ahu Care Home Community Resilience Pilot Program. Many licensed care homes in the 96797 area operate in aging facilities and serve kūpuna, individuals with disabilities, and medically fragile residents who face heightened risk during disasters and utility disruptions.

The bill authorizes targeted resilience improvements—such as structural hardening, impact-resistant windows, backup power systems, cooling and air-quality upgrades, and defensible space—to reduce hazard vulnerability and protect life safety. It also supports vulnerability assessments, technical assistance, and prioritizes facilities serving low-income or medically dependent residents.

HIEMA supports this measure as a proactive approach to safeguarding vulnerable populations and strengthening community resilience.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

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

## **TESTIMONY OF LESLIE DOOR**

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COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS  
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Wednesday, April 1, 2026  
10:03 a.m.

### **HB 2498, HD2, SD1**

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Committee on Ways and Means, my name is Leslie Door, Director of Product, Risk & Regulatory Compliance for Zephyr Insurance Company and Property Chair for Hawaii Insurers Council. The Hawaii Insurers Council is a non-profit trade association of property and casualty insurance companies licensed to do business in Hawaii. Member companies underwrite approximately forty percent of all property and casualty insurance premiums in the state.

Hawaii Insurers Council (HIC) **supports** this bill, which establishes the Central Oahu Care Home Community Resilience Pilot Program.

This measure addresses a critical and increasingly urgent gap in Hawai'i's disaster preparedness framework: the resilience of licensed care homes serving kupuna, individuals with disabilities, and medically fragile residents. Many of these facilities operate in aging structures, have limited financial capacity, and serve residents who cannot safely evacuate or endure prolonged power outages without significant risk to life and health.

This bill takes a practical, targeted, and fiscally responsible approach by establishing a pilot program in a defined geographic area, allowing the State to evaluate effectiveness before considering broader expansion. Importantly, it emphasizes mitigation and preparedness rather than post-disaster response alone, which is both more humane and more cost-effective.

Coordination between the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency and the Office of Health Care Assurance will be key to aligning emergency preparedness with licensing and resident safety

oversight. The inclusion of evacuation planning requirements and a clear reporting obligation to the Legislature reinforces accountability while allowing flexibility in implementation.

Finally, the bill's rulemaking authority allows the administering agency to adapt technical standards as hazards, building practices, and mitigation technologies evolve, without the need for repeated statutory changes.

HIC believes that investing in care home resilience is not only a moral obligation to protect our most vulnerable residents, but also a sound public policy decision that can reduce emergency response costs, minimize displacement, and support faster community recovery.

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

**HB-2498-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/31/2026 12:10:09 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2026 10:03:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rosemarie S. Sebastian	Testifying for SEBASTIAN'S ARCH LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Honorable Sen. Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair and all Committee Members:

I strongly support passing of HB2498, HD2, SD1--as it is beneficial to the Care Home community--who cares for the elderly (kupunas) and the mentally challenged individuals in our community.

Your committees kind support of this bill would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Rose Sebastian

SEBASTIAN'S ARCH LLC

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