



**STATE HEALTH PLANNING
AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH - KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO

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GOVERNOR OF HAWAII
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII

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April 7, 2026

TO: HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Representative Chris Todd, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
Honorable Members

FROM: John C. (Jack) Lewin, MD, Administrator, SHPDA, and Sr. Advisor to
Governor Josh Green, MD on Healthcare Innovation

RE: **SB 2657-SD1-HD1 -- RELATING TO ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND
RELATED DEMENTIAS RESEARCH**

HEARING: Wednesday, April 8, 2026 @ 2:00 pm; Conference Room 308

POSITION: SUPPORT with COMMENTS

Testimony:

SHPDA strongly supports SB2657-SD1-HD1, with comments. This bill establishes an Alzheimer's Disease and related Dementias Research Center (ADRD) at the University of Hawaii.

Alzheimer's disease and related dementias are among the most pressing health challenges of our time, disproportionately affecting Hawaii's aging population. Our state's unique demographic composition, particularly our large Asian American and Pacific Islander communities, presents an unparalleled opportunity to advance research that reflects genetic, cultural, and environmental factors not studied elsewhere. This will lead to more effective, culturally tailored interventions for our residents.

Pulling together the resources associated with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias in a coordinated and collaborative way to build the research capacity within our state makes good sense and would maximize our resources.

SHPDA believes that having an Alzheimer's disease and related dementias research center in our state would allow us to build research capacity and be able to design our own evidence-based models focused on our diverse populations.

We defer to the University regarding the specifics, details and cost of establishing such a center.

Thank you for hearing SB 2657-SD1-HD1. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

■ -- Jack Lewin, MD, Administrator, SHPDA



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance
Wednesday, April 8, 2026 at 2:00 p.m.

By

T. Samuel Shomaker, MD, Dean,
Lee Buenconsejo-Lum, MD, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs,
Kamal Masaki, MD, Chair, Department of Geriatric Medicine
John A. Burns School of Medicine

and

Vassilis Syrmos, PhD
Interim Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 2657 SD1 HD1 – RELATING TO ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND RELATED DEMENTIAS RESEARCH.

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on SB 2657 SD1 HD1 which establishes and appropriates funds for an Alzheimer's disease and related dementias research center at the University of as the first phase of a strategic plan to build capacity and position Hawai'i for future ADRC designation by the National Institute on Aging. This is a necessary first step to eventually be able to apply for a National Institute on Aging (NIA)-designated Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (ADRC). The appropriation amount requested is \$375,000 together with the allocation of positions to establish an Alzheimer's Disease Research Center.

Although Hawai'i has numerous ongoing and historical dementia-related research projects, education initiatives, and community programs, these activities lack a coordinated structure. The state does not currently have the centralized research infrastructure, shared cores, or integrated data and clinical systems required to be competitive for NIA-funded ADRC designation. Establishing an ADRC Research Center would allow the university to build on existing strengths, reduce fragmentation, and create the foundation necessary for Hawai'i to prepare for future ADRC application cycles.

Hawai'i has the longest life expectancy in the United States, and the aging population is increasing rapidly. Approximately 31,000 people are living with Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia in Hawai'i, reflecting over 11% of the population aged 65 years and older. They require 111 million hours of unpaid care by 62,000 caregivers, valued at 2,891 million dollars in 2025. Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (NHPs) face a

higher risk of dementia, and at younger ages. The odds of early-onset dementia among Native Americans (including Native Hawaiians) are over double that of Caucasians.

Establishing an ADRD Research Center at the University of Hawai'i will create a foundation to apply for future NIA ADRC designation and deliver significant benefits to the university, the state, and its residents. This center will advance interdisciplinary research, bringing together researchers from medicine, public health, nutrition, social sciences and others, thus enhancing UH's research capabilities and reputation, attracting major federal research dollars, and expanding opportunities for local talent in biomedical research and healthcare. The Alzheimer's disease and related dementias research center also creates the opportunity to advance scientific research focused on Asian American and NHPI populations which are historically underrepresented in dementia research, and will include unique genetic, behavioral, socio-cultural, and environmental factors affecting dementia risk. The research will improve patient care and access to clinical trials for our kūpuna. Importantly, this will strengthen collaboration between many academic and community partners, including the John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM), UH Cancer Center, UH Center on Aging, Kuakini Medical Center, Hawai'i Pacific Neuroscience, The Queen's Health Systems, Hawai'i Pacific Health, Native Hawaiian Health Systems, the Alzheimer's Association Hawai'i Chapter, and other community-based organizations. It will align with academic growth and workforce development, complementing JABSOM's upcoming Neurology residency program.

The UH Mānoa at Kaka'ako campus has the capacity to physically house the ADRD Research Center, including laboratory and office spaces. The appropriation and establishment of positions at JABSOM in this measure will support statewide community assets, and is in the best interests of our community.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

SB-2657-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 6:41:48 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/8/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Louis Erteschik	Hawaii Disability Rights Center	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support.

SB-2657-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/7/2026 1:47:16 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/8/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Llasmin Chaine	Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women recognizes the significant and disproportionate impact that Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias have on women, both as individuals living with these conditions and as primary caregivers, thus our **support of SB2657 SD1 HD1**. Establishing a dedicated research center at the University of Hawaii John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) aligns with our mission to advance gender equity and improve health outcomes for women across the state and **represents a proactive step toward addressing the complex medical, social, and economic challenges posed by these conditions.**

Women are statistically more likely to develop Alzheimer’s disease and to serve as caregivers for loved ones affected by dementia. The lack of localized research and culturally relevant interventions can exacerbate the unique challenges faced by women in Hawaii. By supporting the creation of a research center focused on these issues, the **bill addresses a critical gap in the state’s healthcare infrastructure and supports the development of resources tailored to the needs of local women and their families.**

A research center at JABSOM would also **foster collaboration** among medical professionals, community organizations, and policymakers, leading to improved public awareness, targeted interventions, early detection, and the development of support services that address the unique needs of Hawaii’s caregivers and those living with dementia. These efforts are consistent with best practices in public health, which emphasize the importance of research-driven approaches and community engagement to address complex health challenges.

Thank you for considering this important investment in the health and well-being of Hawaii’s women and families. We respectfully urge this Committee to **pass SB2657 SD1 HD1**.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony.



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)

April 8, 2026

TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Senate Bill 2657 Senate Draft 1 House Draft 1 – Relating to Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Research

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports Senate Bill 2657 Senate Draft 1 House Draft 1 – Relating to Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Research. This bill establishes the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Research Center of Hawai'i (Research Center) within the University of Hawai'i. Requires the Research Center to be administratively affiliated with the University of Hawai'i John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM). It requires JABSOM, the Research Center, University of Hawai'i Center on Aging, and University of Hawai'i at Manoa to identify opportunities to capitalize on collaboration between the parties and maximize operational efficiencies. It requires the Research Center to submit annual reports to the Legislature. It establishes positions and appropriates funds. It is effective 7/1/3000.

Alzheimer's disease and related dementias disproportionately affect Hawaii's aging population. Our state's demographic composition—particularly our large Asian American and Pacific Islander communities, are at elevated risk for developing these diseases but also present an opportunity to advance research that reflects genetic, cultural, and environmental factors that cannot be easily studied elsewhere. Having a centralized program housed within the University will ensure that limited resources are being effectively deployed.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

KRISTINE PAGANO
Acting Executive Director



**Testimony to the House Committee on Finance
Wednesday, April 8, 2026; 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 308
Via Videoconference**

RE: SENATE BILL NO. 2657, SENATE DRAFT 1, HOUSE DRAFT 1, RELATING TO ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND RELATED DEMENTIAS RESEARCH.

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii Primary Care Association (HPCA) is a 501(c)(3) organization established to advocate for, expand access to, and sustain high quality care through the statewide network of Community Health Centers throughout the State of Hawaii. The HPCA **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill No. 2657, Senate Draft 1, House Draft 1, RELATING TO ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND RELATED DEMENTIAS RESEARCH.

By way of background, the HPCA represents Hawaii's Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs). FQHCs provide desperately needed medical services at the frontlines to over 150,000 patients each year who live in rural and underserved communities. Long considered champions for creating a more sustainable, integrated, and wellness-oriented system of health, FQHCs provide a more efficient, more effective and more comprehensive system of healthcare.

This bill, as received by your Committee, would establish an Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Research Center at the University of Hawaii as the first phase of a strategic plan to build capacity and position Hawaii for future Aging-designated Alzheimer's Disease Research Center designation by the National Institute on Aging. To do this, the bill would appropriate an unspecified amount of general funds for fiscal year 2025-2027, to establish an unspecified number of full-time equivalent faculty senior clinician scientist positions, and an unspecified number of full-time equivalent administrative lead staff positions.

This bill would take effect on July 1, 3000.

According to the Center for Disease Control:

- Alzheimer's disease is one of the top 10 leading causes of death in the United States;
- The 6th leading of death among US adults; and
- The 5th leading cause of death among adults aged 65 years or older.

**Testimony on Senate Bill No. 2657, Senate Draft 1, House Draft 1
Wednesday, April 8, 2026; 2:00 p.m.
Page 2**

In 2023, an estimated 6.7 million Americans aged 65 year or older had Alzheimer's disease. **This number is projected to nearly triple to 14 million people by 2060.**

Further, death rates for Alzheimer's disease are increasing, unlike heart disease and cancer death rates that are on the decline. Dementia, including Alzheimer's disease, has shown to be under-reported in death certificates and therefore the proportion of older people who die from Alzheimer's may be considerably higher.

In Hawaii, Alzheimer's disease is a growing public health crisis:

- 29,000 people aged 65 and older are living with Alzheimer's in Hawaii;
- 6.7% of people aged 45 and older have subjective cognitive decline;
- 60,000 family caregivers bear the burden of the disease in Hawaii;
- 91 million hours of unpaid care are provided by Alzheimer's caregivers;
- \$1.9 billion is the value of the unpaid care; and
- \$240 million is the cost of Alzheimer's to the State Medicaid Program.

For these reasons, the HPCA believes that this bill will further the goal of making the University of Hawaii a leading institution on the research of this malady. We assert that because the vast majority of our population is growing older, we need to better prepare our citizens on how to deal with Alzheimer's Disease and Dementias.

Accordingly, we are honored to partner with the Alzheimer's Association on this important measure and urge your favorable consideration.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Public Affairs and Policy Director Erik K. Abe at 536-8442, or eabe@hawaiiipca.net.

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LJ R. Duenas,
Executive Director
Alzheimer's Association

Testimony to the House Committee on Finance Wednesday, April 8, 2:00 PM, Room 308 and Videoconference

**RE: Senate Bill No. 2657 SD1 HD1 – RELATING TO ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE
AND RELATED DEMENTIAS RESEARCH**

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of SB2657 SD1 HD1, which establishes a Dementia Research Unit (DRU) at the University of Hawai'i. My name is Coby Chock, Director of Public Policy and Advocacy for the Alzheimer's Association.

Hawai'i urgently needs a coordinated research structure for Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. Nationally, the NIH invests \$3.9 billion annually in Alzheimer's research, and federally designated Alzheimer's Disease Research Centers (ADRCs) can receive up to \$2.925 million per year in direct core funding, along with additional project and clinical trial awards. Yet out of more than 460 NIH funded Alzheimer's trials, Hawai'i currently leads just one. This means substantial federal funding, clinical trials, and scientific partnerships are not flowing into our state because we do not have the foundational infrastructure required to compete for these awards.

The SR163 report states that while Hawai'i has many dementia related research activities, they are spread across institutions and not coordinated through shared cores, integrated data systems, or unified leadership. Without an organized research unit, Hawai'i cannot realistically pursue ADRC designation or attract multiyear federal support. At the same time, our population offers a unique scientific opportunity. Hawai'i is home to one of the largest Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander populations in the nation, groups that experience earlier onset, higher vascular risk, and younger age at diagnosis. These disparities are underrepresented in national dementia studies, and the lack of local research infrastructure prevents Hawai'i from contributing the data needed to close these gaps.

What SB2657 SD1 HD1 accomplishes:

- Establishes the DRU as an organized research unit within JABSOM, enabling shared services, collaboration, and coordinated research oversight.
- Provides start-up funding to hire a senior clinician scientist and a coordinator. These positions are necessary to develop grant applications, clinical protocols, and partnerships that bring in federal funding.
- Unifies existing dementia related assets across the UH Center on Aging, UH Cancer Center, Kuakini Medical Center, Hawai'i Pacific Health, and Queen's Health Systems, creating a statewide structure that meets NIH expectations for competitive centers, trials, and data integration.

The DRU is the essential first step toward unlocking federal research dollars. It creates the foundation needed for Hawai'i to join national clinical trials, host locally accessible research studies, and eventually apply for ADRC designation, which brings large and recurring federal awards. It also improves access to diagnosis and treatment innovation, strengthens workforce development, and brings new economic activity through research jobs and indirect cost recovery. Most importantly, it expands research opportunities for neighbor island and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities that have been historically underrepresented in dementia science.

SB2657 SD1 HD1 represents a strategic and high value investment. It fills Hawai'i's research gap, strengthens our ability to compete for federal funding, and establishes the structure required for long term growth. By creating the Dementia Research Unit, the Legislature positions Hawai'i to advance scientific discovery, improve care, and capture the federal resources that are currently out of reach.

Mahalo for your consideration. If you have any questions, please contact Coby Chock at 808-451-3410 or ckchock@alz.org.



Coby Chock
Director, Public Policy and Advocacy
Alzheimer's Association - Hawaii



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**The Hawaii State Legislature
House Committee on Finance
Wednesday, April 8, 2026
Conference Room 308, 2:00 p.m.**

TO: The Honorable Chris Todd, Chair
FROM: Keali'i S. López, State Director
POSITION: Support for S.B. 2657, SD1, HD1 Relating to Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementia Research

Aloha Chair Todd and Members of the Committee:

My name is Keali'i Lopez and I am the State Director for AARP Hawai'i. AARP is a nonpartisan, social impact organization that advocates for individuals aged 50 and older. We have a membership of nearly 38 million nationwide and nearly 135,000 in Hawaii. We advocate at the state and federal level for the issues that matter most to older adults and their families.

AARP Hawai'i is in support for S.B. 2657, SD1, HD1 which establishes and provides funding for an Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias (ADRD) research center at the University of Hawai'i John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM). This measure represents a critically needed investment in the future health, well-being, and economic resilience of Hawai'i's rapidly aging population.

Hawai'i faces a significant and growing burden of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. According to state analyses, more than 31,000 Hawai'i residents are living with Alzheimer's disease, yet as many as half may remain undiagnosed due to limited access to specialized memory services. [alzimpact.org] This demographic challenge is magnified by Hawai'i's unique population makeup. Senate Bill 2657, HD1 correctly notes that the state's large Asian American and Pacific Islander population offers a rare opportunity to advance research into genetic, cultural, and environmental dementia-related factors that remain understudied in mainland cohorts.

More than 6 million Americans live with dementia including Alzheimer's disease, and the number is rising sharply. Family caregivers provide billions of hours of unpaid care each year, often at great economic, emotional, and physical cost. [aarp.org]



Innovative research is essential because traditional drug-development pathways have repeatedly failed, underscoring the urgency for new approaches and expanded clinical research capacity. Thus, AARP strongly supports efforts that expand research infrastructure, improve diagnosis, foster innovation, and enhance culturally appropriate care—all key goals of S.B. 2657, SD1, HD1.

The establishment of an Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias research center at the University of Hawai’i represents a forward-looking, cost-effective, and scientifically sound investment that aligns with AARP’s support in dementia research and our commitment to improving the lives of older adults and their families.

We urge the Committee to pass this measure. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support.

April 7, 2026

House Committee on Finance
Chair Chris Todd
Vice Chair Jenna Takenouchi
Members of the Committee

Re: SB 2657 SD 1 HD 1 – Relating to Alzheimer’s Disease and Related to Dementia Research – SUPPORT

Aloha kākou!

LeadingAge Pacific West is pleased to support Senate Bill 2657 SD 1 HD 1 which would establish and fund a research center dedicated to Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias within the University of Hawaii.

LeadingAge Pacific West is a leading advocate for quality, mission-driven housing, care and services for older adults. Our nonprofit members include providers of affordable senior housing, residential care facilities for the elderly (assisted living), life plan communities, skilled nursing care, home and community-based services, home health and hospice care.

Currently, there are over 31,200 individuals in Hawaii living with Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias, which accounts for 11.3% of adults over the age of 65¹. In addition, Alzheimer’s disease is the 5th leading cause of death in Hawaii. SB 2657 SD 1 HD 1 provides Hawaii with the opportunity to build on current national research being done on Alzheimer’s disease and fills important gaps in the demographics currently being studied in other areas of the country.

SB 2657 SD 1 HD 1 is an important step toward supporting Hawaii as a leader in Alzheimer’s disease research. For these reasons, LeadingAge Pacific West is pleased to support SB 2657 SD 1 HD 1 and urges your support on this important measure.

Sincerely,
Amber King
Vice President, Legislative Affairs

¹ State data provided by: [Alzheimer's Association](http://www.alz.org)

SB-2657-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 5:15:36 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/8/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Glen Kagamida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT!!! WILL HELP ALL OF US. MAHALO!

SB-2657-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 7:24:59 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/8/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jo Hittner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony on SB2657 SD1 HD1

RELATING TO ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND RELATED DEMENTIAS RESEARCH

Wednesday, April 8, 2026, 2:00 PM

Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

State Capitol - 415 South Beretania Street

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the committee,

My name is Jo Hittner and I live in Hilo. I come from a family with dementia on both sides for generations. For both my parents and grandparents, there was little information about the disease, much less about treatment and/or prevention. Since they have passed, there is a tremendous amount of research that has improved the lives of many people. However, this research has been on the mainland of the U.S. and the results are lagging in the state of Hawaii, particularly on neighbor islands where access to national research projects and clinical trials is limited. As I age, I am concerned about having dementia for myself and members of my family. I am testifying in strong support of SB2657 SD1 HD1 that would establish an Alzheimer's research unit at UH which would allow the University to receive federal research funding to conduct culturally relevant Alzheimer's research, participate in national research projects, and provide local access to clinical trials.

Hawai'i is home to more than 31,000 residents living with Alzheimer's disease, and this number is expected to grow as our population ages. Yet despite the increasing need, our state currently lacks a coordinated research structure to better understand dementia, improve early detection, and expand access to new treatments and clinical trials. Families across Hawai'i, especially those caring for loved ones diagnosed at younger ages or experiencing rapid decline, often struggle to find answers or research opportunities close to home.

The Dementia Research Unit (DRU) would help fill this gap by creating a centralized hub at the University of Hawai'i dedicated to dementia research, collaboration, and community support.

Establishing the DRU is the first step Hawai'i needs to eventually qualify for major federal Alzheimer's research funding and to bring more clinical trials and scientific resources to our state. This will ensure that Hawai'i's diverse communities, including Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander populations who face higher dementia risks, are included in research that reflects their unique needs.

I respectfully urge you to support this important bill so that Hawai'i can build the research capacity needed to better understand dementia, improve care, and bring new hope and new resources to families across our islands.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,

Jo Hittner

Testimony on SB2657 SD1 HD1
RELATING TO ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND RELATED DEMENTIAS RESEARCH
Wednesday, April 8, 2026, 2:00 PM
Conference Room 308 & Videoconference
State Capitol - 415 South Beretania Street

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the committee,

My name is Calvin Hara, and I reside in Kaimuki. My career was in senior care and long term care in California and Hawai'i. Throughout those years, I have been with residents with Alzheimer's disease. The disease still exists and there is no cure. I have also been a family caregiver for loved ones with dementia.

I am testifying in strong support of SB2657 SD1 HD1 that would establish an Alzheimer's research unit at the University of Hawai'i which would allow the University to receive federal research funding to conduct culturally relevant Alzheimer's research, participate in national research projects, and provide local access to clinical trials.

Hawai'i is home to more than 31,000 residents living with Alzheimer's disease, and this number is expected to grow as our population ages. Yet despite the increasing need, our state currently lacks a coordinated research structure to better understand dementia, improve early detection, and expand access to new treatments and clinical trials. Families across Hawai'i, especially those caring for loved ones diagnosed at younger ages or experiencing rapid decline, often struggle to find answers or research opportunities close to home.

The Dementia Research Unit (DRU) would help fill this gap by creating a centralized hub at the University of Hawai'i dedicated to dementia research, collaboration, and community support. Establishing the DRU is the first step Hawai'i needs to eventually qualify for major federal Alzheimer's research funding and to bring more clinical trials and scientific resources to our state. We need to have culturally sensitive and responsible research in our state to address the needs of our multi-cultural and multi-ethnic population.

I respectfully urge you to support this important bill so that Hawai'i can build the research capacity needed to better understand dementia, improve care, and bring new hope and new resources to families across our islands.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,

Calvin Hara

**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 2657
RELATING TO ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND RELATED DEMENTIAS RESEARCH**

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Rep. Chris Todd, Chair

Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Dear Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Honorable Members of the Committee, Thank you for hearing this measure! My name is Tani Salazar and I'm a Social Worker, born and raised in Honolulu, testifying as an individual in support of SB 2657. Three of my grandparents lived with dementia. Our 'ohana experienced the struggles of not knowing what type of dementia they had and not knowing what kinds of treatment or care options there were.

I support the establishment of an Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Research Center of Hawai'i within the University of Hawai'i John A. Burns School of Medicine. We have several amazing local researchers who are trailblazing Alzheimer's research in Hawai'i, from disease-modifying treatments, to risk reduction, and dementia care. The Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Research Center of Hawai'i would build the infrastructure for more collaboration and build capacity in our state to competitively apply for more federal funding. With more resources for local research, we can ensure that interventions are appropriate for our diverse island population. I appreciate the sustainability of these efforts with the new positions and the strategic partnerships outlined in this measure.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Tani K. Salazar

Tani Salazar, LSW, MSW

SB-2657-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/8/2026 7:59:30 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/8/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gina Fujikami	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony on SB2657 SD1 HD1

RELATING TO ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND RELATED DEMENTIAS RESEARCH

Wednesday, April 8, 2026, 2:00 PM

Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

State Capitol - 415 South Beretania Street

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the committee,

My name is Dr.Gina Fujikami, and I live in Honolulu, HI. I am a Geriatrician at Queen's where I take care of mainly those suffering from dementia. My maternal grandfather also had Alzheimer's which is why I became a Geriatrician. In Hawaii, we have a unique population that is aging long and is a melting pot. We need more research on how to prevent and treat dementia in our people as this disease affects not only those suffering from it, but their caregivers and community. I am testifying in strong support of SB2657 SD1 HD1 that would establish an Alzheimer's research unit at UH which would allow the University to receive federal research funding to conduct culturally relevant Alzheimer's research, participate in national research projects, and provide local access to clinical trials.

Hawai'i is home to more than 31,000 residents living with Alzheimer's disease, and this number is expected to grow as our population ages. Yet despite the increasing need, our state currently lacks a coordinated research structure to better understand dementia, improve early detection, and expand access to new treatments and clinical trials. Families across Hawai'i, especially those caring for loved ones diagnosed at younger ages or experiencing rapid decline, often struggle to find answers or research opportunities close to home.

The Dementia Research Unit (DRU) would help fill this gap by creating a centralized hub at the University of Hawai‘i dedicated to dementia research, collaboration, and community support. Establishing the DRU is the first step Hawai‘i needs to eventually qualify for major federal Alzheimer’s research funding and to bring more clinical trials and scientific resources to our state. This will ensure that Hawai‘i’s diverse communities, including Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander populations who face higher dementia risks, are included in research that reflects their unique needs.

I respectfully urge you to support this important bill so that Hawai‘i can build the research capacity needed to better understand dementia, improve care, and bring new hope and new resources to families across our islands.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,

Gina Fujikami, MD

SB-2657-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/8/2026 9:26:24 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/8/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gregory Misakian	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I support SB2657 SD1 HD1.

Gregory Misakian