



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 Higher Education
Monday, March 16, 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 – RELATING TO ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND RELATED DEMENTIAS RESEARCH.

Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amano, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on SB 2657 SD1 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 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.



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)

March 16, 2026

TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Senate Bill 2657 Senate 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 – Relating to Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Research. This bill establishes the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Research Center of Hawai'i within the University of Hawai'i. It requires the Research Center to be administratively affiliated with the University of Hawai'i John A. Burns School of Medicine. 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. And it establishes positions and appropriates funds.

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 Higher Education
Monday, March 16, 2026; 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 309
Via Videoconference**

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

Chair Garrett, Vice Chair San Amato, 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, 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 one full-time equivalent faculty senior clinician scientist position, and one full-time equivalent administrative lead staff position.

This bill would take effect on July 1, 2026.

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
Monday, March 16, 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@hawaiipca.net.

March 12, 2026

House Committee on Higher Education
Chair Andrew Takuya Garrett
Vice Chair Terez Amato
Members of the Committee

Re: SB 2657 SD 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 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 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 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 and urges your support on this important measure.

Sincerely,
Amber King
Vice President, Legislative Affairs

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



March 15, 2026

Position: **SUPPORT** of **SB2657 SD1**, Relating to Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Research

To: Representative Andrew Takuya Garrett, Chair
Representative Terez Amato, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Higher Education

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

Re: Testimony in SUPPORT of SB2657 SD1, Relating to Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Research

Hearing: Monday, March 16, 2026, 2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 309, State Capitol

The Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women **supports SB2657 SD1** and 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. The establishment of the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Research Center of Hawaii within the University of Hawaii, as proposed by **this bill, is an important step toward advancing research, education, and support services** that can address these gendered impacts in our communities.

Women are more likely to develop Alzheimer's disease and are also more likely to serve as unpaid caregivers for family members affected by dementia. This dual burden has well-documented effects on women's health, economic security, and overall well-being. By fostering collaboration between the John A. Burns School of Medicine, the Center on Aging, and other University of Hawaii entities, **the proposed Research Center is well-positioned to generate research and programming that reflect the lived experiences of women and other disproportionately affected groups.**

The bill's emphasis on maximizing operational efficiencies and **interdepartmental collaboration** is commendable and aligns with best practices in research and service delivery. Such coordination **can help ensure that resources are used effectively and that research findings translate into practical improvements in care, support, and policy.**

To strengthen the impact of this initiative, the Commission respectfully recommends that the Research Center explicitly include gender analysis in its research agenda and reporting, ensuring the unique needs and challenges faced by women, both as patients and caregivers, are addressed in research priorities, outreach, and service development.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony.



THE QUEEN'S HEALTH SYSTEMS

To: The Honorable Andrew Garrett, Chair
The Honorable Terez Amato, Vice Chair
Members, House Committee on Higher Education

From: Jace Mikulanec, Director, Government Relations, The Queen's Health Systems

Date: March 13, 2026

Re: Comments on SB2657 SD1- Relating to Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Research.

The Queen's Health Systems (Queen's) is a nonprofit corporation that provides expanded health care capabilities to the people of Hawai'i and the Pacific Basin. Since the founding of the first Queen's hospital in 1859 by Queen Emma and King Kamehameha IV, it has been our mission to provide quality health care services in perpetuity for Native Hawaiians and all of the people of Hawai'i. Over the years, the organization has grown to four hospitals, and more than 10,000 affiliated physicians, caregivers, and dedicated medical staff statewide. As the preeminent health care system in Hawai'i, Queen's strives to provide superior patient care that is constantly advancing through education and research.

Queen's appreciates the opportunity to submit comments supporting the intent of SB2657 SD1, which establishes and appropriates funds for an Alzheimer's disease and related dementias research center at the University of Hawai'i, including the establishment of two full time positions. This Research Center will expand access to clinical trials, research, education, and community outreach, particularly benefiting rural and neighbor island communities who often face the greatest barriers to dementia care. Hawai'i's unique AAPI population is deeply underrepresented in dementia research; this center fills critical gaps and supports culturally relevant care.

Queen's has one of the largest and most robust Geriatrics programs in the state and we believe this measure correctly attempts to leverage these programs across systems to ensure better care for our kupuna. Mahalo for the opportunity to provide comments on SB2657 SD1.

The mission of The Queen's Health System is to fulfill the intent of Queen Emma and King Kamehameha IV to provide in perpetuity quality health care services to improve the well-being of Native Hawaiians and all of the people of Hawai'i.

SB-2657-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2026 3:27:20 PM

Testimony for HED on 3/16/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, Support

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

SB-2657-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2026 3:46:40 PM

Testimony for HED on 3/16/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
LJ Duenas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this bill, mahalo for your support.

SB-2657-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2026 4:06:01 PM

Testimony for HED on 3/16/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stacy Kilty	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato, and members of the committee,

My name is Stacy Kilty, and I live in Kailua. Dementia has had a profound impact on my family. Both of my parents were diagnosed in their late 80s—my father with Lewy body dementia and my mother with dementia—and both passed away within two years of diagnosis. As their conditions progressed, confusion, disorientation, and anxiety became more common. Situations that might appear routine to others could quickly become frightening or overwhelming for them, particularly when unfamiliar people or stressful circumstances were involved. I am testifying in strong support of SB2657 SD1 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,

Stacy

SB-2657-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2026 4:20:13 PM

Testimony for HED on 3/16/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rick Tabor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you Commitee Members for your time and consideration on SB2657 SD1 (ADRD Research Center) bill. The University of Hawai‘i; Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias; Research Center; JABSOM; Center on Aging proposal RELATING TO ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND RELATED DEMENTIAS RESEARCH.

I stand in strong support of SB2657 SD1 which will establish an Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Research Center of Hawai‘i within the University of Hawai‘i.

I testify on behalf if PABEA (Policy Advisory Board gor Elderly Affairs) as their Legislative Committee Chairman and an eight year volunteer Alzheimer’s Associstion Champion.

Please note my family’s saddness. We celebrated my mother’s life well lived, February, two years ago. Her primary care physician said, ‘she’s eighty, forgetful with cognitive challenges. She has Alzheimers.’ I asked, what type of Dementia will she be living with. Dr. Goff replied, ‘Alzheimers is Alzheimers it’s a part of being old.’ And that’s what my mother and family lived with for twenty years.

For the record, I’m a retired mental health clinician, past in-home care operation manager, and veteran field medical Navy hospital corpsman.

With no accurate assessment, no access to trends, findings or data, my mother and family lived every day on the edge. Unpredictable beviors, numerous consequences, tears and fears too often realized.

Hopes of better days ahead. If not for us, for those who follow this arduous path. More information for individuals, families and all levels of care would be very helpful.

When established, with your help, the research center will be affiliated with the University of Hawai‘i John A. Burns School of Medicine, JABSOM, the Research Center, University of Hawai‘i Center on Aging, and University of Hawai‘i at Manoa. It’s mission is to identify opportunities to capitalize on collaboration between the parties and maximize operational efficiencies.

Outcome Requirements for the Research Center to submit annual reports on Alzheimer’s Hawaii findings to the Legislature. When passed and initiated the center will establish positions (jobs).

What we can look forward to will help our Island Kūpuna and their families in ways that we've dreamt for many years.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration. I appreciate all you do for Hawaii!

Mahalo Nui Loa,

Rick Tabor

SB-2657-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2026 4:34:49 PM

Testimony for HED on 3/16/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Testimony on SB2657

RELATING TO ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND RELATED DEMENTIAS RESEARCH

Monday, March 16, 2026, 2:00 PM

Conference Room 309 & Videoconference

State Capitol - 415 South Beretania Street

Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato, 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 80 now) I am concerned about having dementia for myself and members of my family. I am testifying in strong support of SB2657 SD1 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.

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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

SB-2657-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2026 4:34:49 PM

Testimony for HED on 3/16/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Testimony on SB2657

RELATING TO ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND RELATED DEMENTIAS RESEARCH

Monday, March 16, 2026, 2:00 PM

Conference Room 309 & Videoconference

State Capitol - 415 South Beretania Street

Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato, and members of the committee,

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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

SB-2657-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/13/2026 3:04:22 PM

Testimony for HED on 3/16/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lila Mower	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this measure.

Testimony on SB2657 SD1
RELATING TO ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND RELATED DEMENTIAS RESEARCH
Monday, March 16, 2026, 2:00 PM
Conference Room 309 & Videoconference
State Capitol - 415 South Beretania Street

Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato, 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 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

SB-2657-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2026 11:09:38 AM

Testimony for HED on 3/16/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Testimony on SB2657 SD1

RELATING TO ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND RELATED DEMENTIAS RESEARCH

Monday, March 16, 2026, 2:00 PM

Conference Room 309 & Videoconference

State Capitol - 415 South Beretania Street

Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato, and members of the committee,

My name is Dr.Gina Fujikami, and I live in Honolulu. My grandfather had Alzheimer's and it's because of him and this disease that I became a Geriatrician. I currently work at Queen's and see predominantly kupuna with dementia. It is a horrible disease not only for the person but for the families. There is no cure and we need better access to care and diagnosis. We have such a unique aging population here that needs to have access to research studies. I am testifying in strong support of SB2657 SD1 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.

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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

Testimony on Senate Bill No.2657
RELATING TO WAY AND MEANS COMMITTEE
Conference Room 308 & Videoconference
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

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

My name is Hayden Cobb, and as I've stated in my previous testimonials that I'm an orphan because of what dementia has done to my family. This disease has become extremely detrimental to the Hawai'i population with approximately 31,200 individuals 65 and older currently having the disease in Hawai'i and that number is increasing rapidly. On top of that there is an underwhelming amount of organized and concise research that has been able to be conducted on Oahu because of the limited resources and access to facilities that are currently on the island. Which is why I am in full support of SB 2657 which aims to create a dementia research unit within the UH John Burns medicine center. The creation of this research unit has the ability to collect more concise data and statistics on how much of an impact dementia has had on the Hawaiian Islands. This unit also has the ability to act as a hub for different medical organizations by providing a structured separate research unit specifically focused on dementia.

On behalf of my lost loved ones and those impacted by dementia, thank you for allowing the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

Mahalo Hayden Cobb,

LATE

**Testimony on SB2657 SD1
RELATING TO ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND RELATED DEMENTIAS RESEARCH
Monday, March 16, 2026, 2:00 PM
Conference Room 309 & Videoconference
State Capitol - 415 South Beretania Street**

Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato, and members of the committee,

My name is Peter Black and I live in Ninole on the Big Island. I am testifying to strongly support SB2657 SD1 that would establish an Alzheimer's and related dementias research unit at UH which would allow the University to receive federal research funding to conduct culturally relevant dementia research, participate in national research projects, and provide local access to clinical trials.

I live with Alzheimer's and my wife, Barbara, is my caretaker. I think the establishment of an Alzheimer's research unit at UH would be a huge step forward for the people of these islands, especially for those living with Alzheimer's and their caregivers, since they could then have local access to clinical trials and research studies. Culturally relevant Alzheimer's research is much needed in our culturally rich and very diverse state.

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 proposed research unit 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 this Unit 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 of all kinds, improve care, and bring new hope and new resources to families across our islands.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,
Peter Black

LATE

**Testimony on SB2657 SD1
RELATING TO ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND RELATED DEMENTIAS RESEARCH
Monday, March 16, 2026, 2:00 PM
Conference Room 309 & Videoconference
State Capitol - 415 South Beretania Street**

Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato, and members of the committee,

My name is Barbara Black and I live in Ninole on the Big Island. I am testifying to strongly support SB265 SD1 that would establish an Alzheimer's and related dementias research unit at the University of Hawaii which would allow the University to receive federal research funding to conduct culturally relevant dementia research, participate in national research projects, and provide local access to clinical trials.

My spouse, Peter, is living with Alzheimer's and I am his caretaker. I think the Alzheimer's research unit at UH would be a huge step forward for the people of these islands, especially for those living with Alzheimer's and their caregivers, since especially to those living with Alzheimer's and their caregivers since they could then have local access to clinical trials and research studies. Culturally relevant Alzheimer's research is much needed in our culturally rich and very diverse state.

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,
Barbara Black

LATE

SB-2657-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2026 5:51:46 AM

Testimony for HED on 3/16/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I give strong support for this bill. Mahalo!