

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 5, 2026

To: The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair,
The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair, and
Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

To: The Honorable Brandon J.C. Elefante, Chair,
The Honorable Rachele Lamosao, Vice Chair, and
Members of the Senate Committee on Labor and Technology

Date: Thursday, February 5, 2026
Time: 9:00 a.m.
Place: Conference Room 016, State Capitol

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

Re: S.B. 2841 RELATING TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The **DLIR supports the intent** of this measure to combat human trafficking and affirms its critical importance. However, the measure assigns responsibilities that are primarily law enforcement functions. After productive discussions with the Department of Law Enforcement (DLE), both departments agreed that these duties should be led by DLE to ensure effective enforcement and coordination. Accordingly, DLIR respectfully recommends transferring the responsibilities outlined in Section 2 to DLE.

DLIR is committed to collaborating closely with DLE and will actively support the program's success should the measure be enacted.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important matter.

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JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



MIKE LAMBERT
Director

ERNEST J. ROBELLO
Deputy Director
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SYLVIA LUKE
LT GOVERNOR
KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA

STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT
Ka 'Oihana Ho'okō Kānāwai
715 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

JARED K. REDULLA
Deputy Director
Law Enforcement

**TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 2841
RELATING TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING**
Before the Senate Committee on
JUDICIARY and LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY
Thursday, February 5, 2026, 9:00 AM
State Capitol Conference Room 016
WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

Chairs Rhoads and Elefante, Vice Chairs Gabbard and Lamosao, and members of the Committees:

The Department of Law Enforcement (DLE) strongly supports Senate Bill 2841, which requires the Department of the Attorney General to develop a Human Trafficking Awareness Training Program for workers in the transient accommodations sector.

This bill addresses a critical need in our ongoing efforts to combat human trafficking in Hawai'i. By requiring transient accommodations employers to provide human trafficking awareness training to employees and contract workers who have guest contact, the legislation creates a vital early detection and prevention system in locations frequently used for trafficking operations.

Human trafficking remains a persistent issue that affects vulnerable individuals in our communities. Hotel and lodging staff are uniquely positioned as frontline observers who, with proper training, can recognize potential trafficking situations and alert law enforcement. The requirements for employers to maintain training records, post

informational signage, and implement a human trafficking prevention policy with clear reporting procedures will significantly enhance our collective ability to identify and respond to suspected trafficking cases.

Because human trafficking investigations and victim response are inherently law enforcement–driven, the Department believes that DLE should serve as the lead operational agency for human trafficking training, in coordination with the Department of the Attorney General and the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations. DLE’s statewide jurisdiction, investigative authority, and direct responsibility for trafficking enforcement position to ensure that training content reflects real-world indicators, reporting protocols, and victim-centered response practices.

The penalties established in this bill provide necessary accountability for compliance, ensuring that the transient accommodations sector takes these responsibilities seriously. Additionally, coordinated rulemaking and implementation will help ensure consistency, clarity, and effectiveness across the industry.

Law enforcement cannot combat human trafficking alone. This training program builds essential partnerships with private-sector stakeholders who can provide invaluable assistance in identifying trafficking situations before they escalate. Early intervention not only prevents victimization but also provides law enforcement with timely information to pursue traffickers and dismantle trafficking networks.

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



February 5, 2026

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair,
Senator Brandon J. C. Elefante, Chair,
and Members of the Joint Committee on Judiciary and Labor and Technology

Hearing: Joint Committee on Judiciary and Labor and Technology
Date: Thursday, February 5, 2026
Time: 9:00 a.m.
Place: Conference Room 016 & Videoconference
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

Testimony in Support of SB 2841
Relating to Human Trafficking

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Chair Elefante, and Members of
the Joint Committee on Judiciary and Labor and Technology:

Hawaii Hotel Alliance (“HHA”) and American Hotel & Lodging Association (“AHLA”) believe human trafficking awareness and training in the transient accommodations sector is important to ensure protection of our most vulnerable communities, which is why we are proud to support SB 2841.

Several HHA and AHLA members have already implemented their own training programs, and we support an industry-wide approach. We are requesting the following minor revisions to SB 2841:

1. Revise Section 1 of SB 2841 to allow the use of approved training programs created outside of the department. New language is underlined and deleted language is indicated with a strikethrough:

**“§28-___ Human trafficking awareness training program;
transient accommodations sector.**

...

(b) Training programs developed externally may be used within the transient accommodations sector, provided they comply with subsection (a) and are approved by the department. The department shall review externally developed training programs

and either approve or disapprove their use no later than 60 days following written receipt of such program.

(b) (c)”

2. Revise Section 2 of SB 2841 to ensure training is implemented by the employer or contractor with the authority to require or implement the training and ensure short-term vacation rental owners also need to comply. New language is underlined language below:

“371-___ Human trafficking awareness; transient accommodations sector; training; records; signage; reporting; penalties. (a) Every transient accommodations employer and transient accommodations third-party contractor shall take and provide human trafficking awareness training developed pursuant to section 28-___ to its employees and/or contract workers, as applicable, within one hundred eighty days of employment or placement, as applicable, and at least every two years thereafter.

(b) Each transient accommodations employer and transient accommodations third-party contractor providing human trafficking awareness training under this section shall maintain records documenting the completion of the required training by its employees and contract workers, as applicable, pursuant to rules adopted by the department. The director of the director’s authorized representative shall, for the purpose of examination, have access to and the right to copy the records. Every transient accommodations employer and transient accommodations third-party contractor shall furnish to the director or the director’s authorized representative any information relating to the training of employees and contract workers, as applicable, pursuant to this section in any manner as the director may prescribe.

(c) No later than _____, every transient accommodations employer and transient accommodations third-party contractor shall post and keep posted in a conspicuous place readily accessible to its employees and contract workers, as applicable, signage regarding human trafficking awareness in a form prescribed by the department by rule; provided that the signage shall be printed in an easily legible font in English and

any other language spoken by at least ten per cent of its employees and contract workers.

(d) No later than _____, every transient accommodations employer and transient accommodations third-party contractor shall develop and implement a human trafficking prevention policy that shall:

(1) Apply to all of its individuals in employ and contract workers, as applicable; and

(2) Include procedures for the reporting of suspected human trafficking to the National Human Trafficking Hotline or to a local law enforcement agency.

(e) A transient accommodations employer or its employee, or a transient accommodations third-party contractor or its contract worker, who in good faith complies with this section or reports suspected human trafficking pursuant to policies adopted pursuant to this section shall not be subject to civil or criminal liability for any act or omission arising out of or related to human trafficking committed by a third party, unless the employer, employee, or worker knowingly assists in the commission of human trafficking.

(f) Any transient accommodations employer or transient accommodations third-party contractor who violates this section shall be fined not more than \$_____ for each separate offense.... ”

3. Revise Section 1 of SB 2841 to make minor clean-up edits. New language is underlined and deleted language is indicated with a strikethrough:

~~§28-_____ Human trafficking awareness training program; transient accommodations sector.~~ (a) No later than _____, the department of the attorney general shall develop a human trafficking awareness training program The training program shall include but not be limited to the following components:

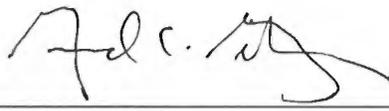
...

(6) Contact information for:

- (A) The National Human Trafficking Hotline toll-free number and text line; ~~and~~ or
- (B) Appropriate local law enforcement agencies.”

We thank you for your consideration of our requested revisions. HHA and AHLA thank the Senators for bringing this important measure forward.

Hawaii Hotel Alliance

By 

Gerard Gibson
President

American Hotel & Lodging Association

By 

Kekoa McClellan for The American Hotel &
Lodging Association
Principal, The McClellan Group

LATE



FEBRUARY 5, 2026

SENATE BILL 2841

CURRENT REFERRAL: JDC/LBT

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Kris Coffield,
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David Negaard,
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Mireille Ellsworth,
Director

Justin Salisbury,
Director

Eileen Roco,
Director

Beatrice DeRego,
Director

Corey Rosenlee,
Director

Amy Zhao,
*Policy and Partnerships
Strategist*

POSITION: SUPPORT

Imua Alliance supports SB 2841, relating to human trafficking, which would require the Department of the Attorney General to develop a Human Trafficking Awareness Training Program to educate and train workers in the transient accommodations sector; require transient accommodations employers to periodically provide the human trafficking awareness training to certain employees and contract workers; keep records of the training; post signage; and develop and implement a human trafficking prevention policy that includes procedures for the reporting of suspected human trafficking. Establishes penalties; and requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to adopt rules.

Imua Alliance is a Hawai'i-based organization dedicated to ending gender and sexual exploitation, and advancing human rights. We appreciate this measure, which recognizes the need for public-private collaboration to prevent human trafficking and sexual exploitation associated with our visitor industry.

Each of the survivors we have assisted has suffered from complex and overlapping trauma, including post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and anxiety, dissociation, parasuicidal behavior, and substance abuse. Trafficking-related trauma can lead to a complete loss of identity. A victim we cared for in 2016, for example, had become so heavily trauma bonded to her pimp that while under his grasp, she couldn't remember her own name. Yet, sadly, many of the victims with whom we work are misidentified as so-called "voluntary prostitutes" and are subsequently arrested and incarcerated, with no financial resources from which to pay for their release.

Sex trafficking is a profoundly violent crime. At least 23 percent of trafficking victims in Hawai'i report being first exploited before turning 18, according to a recent report, with the average age of trafficked keiki's initial exposure to exploitation being 11. Based on regular outreach and monitoring, we estimate that approximately 150 high-risk sex trafficking establishments operate in Hawai'i. In a recent report conducted by the State Commission on the Status of Women, researchers from Arizona State University found that 1

in every 11 adult males living in our state buys sex online. When visitors are also counted, that number worsens to 1 in every 7 men walking the streets of our island home, a daily online sex buyer market of 18,614 for O’ahu, and a total sex buyer population for Honolulu of 74,362.

ASU’s findings are grim, but not surprising to local organizations that provide services to survivors of sex trafficking. Imua Alliance, for example, has trained volunteers to perform outreach to victims in high-risk locations, like strip clubs, massage parlors, and hostess bars. More than 80 percent of runaway youth report being approached for sexual exploitation while on the run, over 30 percent of whom are targeted within the first 48 hours of leaving home. With regard to mental health, sex trafficking victims are twice as likely to suffer from PTSD as a soldier in a war zone.

Human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation are global and local concerns, and Hawai‘i’s unique tourism economy heightens risks. According to the National Human Trafficking Hotline, transportation, tourism, and hospitality industries are among the top sectors where traffickers recruit, exploit, and conceal victims, often using legitimate travel networks, hotels, and rental services to facilitate exploitation and conceal abuse.

Hawai‘i welcomed over 9.7 million visitors in 2024, generating significant economic activity, but also creating environments where traffickers can operate with anonymity and access. According to statewide law enforcement and service provider reports, trafficking cases often intersect with the visitor economy, especially in areas with high hotel density, nightlife, and short-term rentals. Survivors report being moved between Kailua-Kona, Waikīkī, Līhu‘e, and other tourism hubs where traffickers leverage tourist demand for commercial sex and exploit transportation networks.

Airports, hotel chains, and rental platforms provide the infrastructure that traffickers use to recruit, house, and move victims, while obscuring their activities among legitimate visitors.

The visitor industry is not inherently a source of harm, but it occupies critical vantage points for identifying and preventing exploitation. Hotels, airlines, tour operators, and other tourism stakeholders intersect with residents and visitors daily. With appropriate training and protocols, they can serve as first responders who identify red flags and connect survivors to help.

Other states and regions have adopted targeted partnerships with the visitor sector. In Orlando and Orange County, Florida, the Haven for Hope initiative works with major hotel chains and airport personnel to implement human trafficking recognition training, compliance protocols, and reporting mechanisms. Hotels in the region have reported increased victim identification and law enforcement referrals after staff participated in structured education programs.

Similarly, in Las Vegas, Nevada, the Hotel Safety Alliance is a consortium of hospitality providers, law enforcement, and NGOs that meets quarterly to

share intelligence, adopt best practices, and implement staff training. Their programs include protocols for responding to suspected trafficking in licensed premises and standardized reporting tools.

These models demonstrate how structured visitor industry engagement can disrupt trafficking networks and strengthen community awareness.

With aloha,

Kris Coffield

President, Imua Alliance

SB-2841

Submitted on: 1/30/2026 9:00:01 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy D Moser	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you

SB-2841

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 12:53:47 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Victor K. Ramos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

SB-2841

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 6:18:36 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Casey Park	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Casey Park and I am a Hawai'i resident in support of SB2841. We know that Hawai'i's large transient visitor population facilitates our sex trafficking problem, and we know that this problem disproportionately victimises houseless and Native Hawaiian people. Implementing ongoing training in sex trafficking prevention to workers in the transient accommodations sector is a positive step toward building safety nets that protect our most vulnerable community members.

Cecilia Wang, MD, FACS
General Surgery and Surgical Critical Care

Hearing Date/Time: Thursday, February 5, 2026 at 9:00 am
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 016 and Videoconference

SB2841 RELATING TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Good morning, Chair Rhoads, Chair Elefante, and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and of the Senate Committee on Labor and Technology

I respectfully submit testimony in **STRONGEST SUPPORT of SB2841 with one amendment** Section §28-(6) requires that training programs include the contact information for the National Human Trafficking Hotline and “local law enforcement agencies.” I respectfully suggest that contact information for “local emergency medical services agencies” also be listed and could be added as §28-(6)(C).

Greatest appreciation is extended to the Hawaii Women’s Legislative Caucus for sponsoring this bill which requires the Department of the Attorney General to develop a Human Trafficking Awareness Training Program to educate and train workers in the transient accommodations sector, to post signage; and that requires the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to adopt rules.

As a physician, I have cared for multiple victims of abuse and trafficking over the years. In Hawai‘i, I volunteer with Ho‘ola Na Pua, whose mission is to provide support for survivors and to end child sex trafficking statewide. Child sex trafficking remains a serious and persistent problem in Hawai‘i. It is most prevalent on the Big Island, where the average age of first exploitation is reported to be around eight years old.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

SB-2841

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 1:28:33 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelle R Stefanik	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this Bill. Human trafficking is worse than anyone could ever imagine. It is important that people who work in known contact areas are trained to be able to identify potential human trafficking victims and abusers, along with how to properly handle the situation. Please vote YES.

LATE

SB-2841

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 1:34:58 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2026 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stacey Moniz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I've missed the window to present a compelling statement but please support this bill. It is another important step toward protecting Hawaii's most vulnerable children from exploitation.

Mahalo,
Stacey Moniz

LATE

To: Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair, The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair and Members
Senate Committee on Judiciary
The Honorable Brandon J.C Elefante, Chair
The Honorable Rachele Lamosao, Vice Chair and
Members of the Senate Committee on Labor and Technology
From: S. Leimana Koehler
Re: SB 2841
Date: Thursday February 5, 2026
9:00am Conference Room 016

Aloha Chairs Karl Rhoads & Brandon J.C Elefante, Vice chairs Mike Gabbard & Rachele Lamosao and committee members;

My Name is Leimana and I am a resident of Puna. I currently work as a Domestic Violence Specialist and over the past 4 years have had the privilege of attending several trainings on Human and Sex trafficking and was made aware of the massive problem it poses to our community at large.

I **support SB 2841** Relating to Human Trafficking. A couple of years ago, I was driving home and observed a young girl with a backpack on the side of the road. I live in a rural area and it's odd to see a young person alone with a backpack. I pulled over and asked this young girl if she was ok. Within a few seconds of talking to her, It was clear she did not know the area she was in and stated she "Just wanted to get home". Thankfully, I had just attended a training of trafficking and knew to look this girl up on the missing child's data base and notify authorities. I don't know what became of the young girl after our interaction, but I was thankful I was aware enough to know what I was dealing with and try to connect this young girl to resources.

I believe that this measure will increase the amount of people to join our cause in combatting human trafficking in Hawaii. Having this measure may be the difference between someone's life being saved because the right people know what to look for and how to approach situation. Mahalo for your consideration.

Me ka Ha'aha'a,

S. Leimana Koehler



LATE

SEX WORKERS OUTREACH PROJECT OF HAWAII

TESTIMONY OFFERING COMMENTS ON [SB2841](#)

Senate Committee on Judiciary and Senate Committee on Labor and Technology
February 5th, 2026

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, Chair Elefante, Vice Chair Lamosao, and Members of the Committees,

We are the **Sex Workers Outreach Project of Hawai'i**, a group of people with lived experience providing material support to sex workers across the pae 'āina. Our main work includes offering harm reduction supplies, food supports, and otherwise providing for people materially. We also organize wellness and educational events, as well as advocate for policies that would help community members we serve.

While we support the intent of SB2841 to mandate human trafficking awareness training for workers in the transient accommodations sector, we wish to highlight the unintended harms of such training towards people in the sex trade. Trainings framed strictly through existing statutory language of “commercial exploitation” and “human trafficking” often misrepresent consensual sex work and disproportionately impact already marginalized groups by conflating it with trafficking.

Of course, our role as a society and your role as legislators is to **keep children and other vulnerable populations safe**. We take no issue with this part of the bill to raise awareness about the unacceptable existence of the commercial exploitation of children and adults. Furthermore, we acknowledge with the emerging details of the Epstein files there is an imminent need to address power vacuums within our systems, and prevent further abuses of power that routinely target the historically disenfranchised. With courage and a commitment to autonomy and dignity, we can co-create protections for all survivors of sexual harm as a community.

With that being said, under the jurisdiction of the U.S. (and sometimes even outside of it, as the empire continues to enforce itself as the global police), we have seen for years that **those doing the most harm to people who find themselves in the sex trade are the enforcers of the law themselves.** This is **not to implicate every individual** in the many forms that law enforcement takes, but instead to assert that **carceral responses are more harmful** to populations like migrant sex workers and survivors, who tend to have little other support.

Therefore, we:

- **Offer and invite you all to engage in conversations with local sex workers and survivors of trafficking** so that we can **struggle together in the movement towards a safer world** for us all;
- **Allow communities with lived experiences in the sex trades to help in the creation of competency training** as a way to ensure best practices are met for survivors and sex workers alike, ensuring those who may be experiencing trafficking get the services or assistance they need without further harm.
- **Oppose the inclusion of the National Sex Trafficking Hotline** as the best next step for transient workers to report suspected human trafficking, because of their history of further brutalizing migrant workers (as evidenced by recent ICE/DHS raids that have killed immigrants as well as citizens); “A hotline can *either* be for survivors *or* to increase policing and prosecution, but trying to be both is a conflict of interest. Many survivors will not call a hotline they know may report automatically to law enforcement. And hiding this information so they won’t know until they’ve disclosed? That just reinforces the message that other people can trick them in order to get something from them.” [Source material here](#)
- **Strongly advise a connection to the National Survivors Network and The Freedom Network USA as an alternative.** Both organizations offer a wealth of information on pathways to end trafficking and resources for survivors led by survivors.
- Suggest that the State may be better served by spending resources to **enforce existing anti-trafficking laws against businesses and corporations** who are shown to systematically exploit all kinds of vulnerable workers.
- Recommend that this legislature further **explore the potential benefits of decriminalizing consensual sex work entirely.** The New Zealand model, for example, has **proven successful in creating a better relationship between sex workers and law enforcement**, and the American Medical Association’s Journal of Ethics published a [study](#) that concludes **human trafficking could be decreased through sex work decriminalization.** The same sentiment is shared by several human rights and medical organizations around the world. [Here](#) is a link to our “Decrim to End Trafficking” zine on our Instagram, if you would like more information.

Again, **SWOP strongly supports protections for survivors of trafficking and sex workers alike.** But we also must assert that the harm caused by States, local agencies, and nonprofits that **purposefully exclude adult consensual workers perpetuates the very systems we must collectively oppose in this moment.**

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

SWOP Hawai'i