



MANPOWER AND
RESERVE AFFAIRS

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF WAR
1500 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-1500

February 13, 2026

Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Honorable Senator Angus L.K. McKelvey, Vice Chair
Committee on Health and Human Services

Honorable Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair
Honorable Senator Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair
Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

Hawai'i State Senate
415 S Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Subj: Senate Bill 3105 (Relating to the Physician Assistant Licensure Compact.)

Dear Chairs San Buenaventura and Keohokalole, Vice Chairs McKelvey and Fukunaga, and committee members,

On behalf of the U.S. Department of Defense and military families stationed in the State of Hawai'i, I would like to provide comments in strong support of the provisions reflected within Senate Bill (SB) 3105, which would enter the State into the Physician Assistant Licensure Compact (PA Compact).

Supporting military family readiness and economic stability is a top priority of the Department. There are many unique requirements that come with a life of service in the military, to include frequent moves across state lines. For military spouses particularly, these cross-state relocations, compounded with varied state professional licensing requirements, cause enduring challenges contributing to their high rate of unemployment and underemployment.

To further expand employment opportunities for military spouses, the Department has been directed to accelerate the establishment of interstate licensure compacts to ease a burden for spouses who must go through the often challenging and frustrating process of transferring their professional licenses with each move.

In addition to relieving licensure and employment barriers for military spouses, interstate licensing compacts, such as the PA Compact, also benefit other professionals within the military community to include active-duty members, members of the guard and reserve, veterans, and the civilian community.

Broadly, enacting the PA Compact in Hawai'i would benefit the state and local communities in the following ways:

- Promoting workforce development and strengthening labor markets
- Expanding patient access to highly qualified practitioners
- Preserving state sovereignty
- Increasing collaboration among states
- Facilitating practitioner mobility during public health emergencies

Finally, the Rural Health Transformation (RHT) Program¹, a \$50 billion initiative (2026–2030) established by 2025 federal legislation, empowers states to strengthen rural communities across America by improving healthcare access, quality, and outcomes by transforming the healthcare delivery ecosystem. Specifically, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) assigns a greater share of the 50% "workload funding" scoring to states that participate in, or pledge to adopt, interstate licensure compacts for key professions, to include physician assistants/associates.

In fiscal year 2026, Hawai'i secured an initial \$189 million from the RHT Program to bolster its healthcare infrastructure and workforce.² As part of the grant application that secured these funds, the State made a commitment to pursue the enactment of the PA Compact, alongside the Nurse License and Psychology Compacts. Passing this legislation will not only fulfill that commitment but also position Hawai'i to receive additional federal dollars in the coming years, further strengthening our healthcare system and improving access to care for all residents.³

On behalf of the Department and nearly 58,000 service members and 21,000 military spouses stationed in Hawai'i, we appreciate the opportunity to express our support for this important measure.

Respectfully,

DOUGLAS.KELLI. Digitally signed by
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Date: 2026.02.13 11:46:48 -08'00'

Kelli May Douglas
Defense-State Liaison Office
Pacific Southwest Region

¹ Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Rural Health Transformation (RHT) Program*, <https://www.cms.gov/priorities/rural-health-transformation-rht-program/overview>

² Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, *CMS Announces \$50 Billion in Awards to Strengthen Rural Health in All 50 States*, <https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/press-releases/cms-announces-50-billion-awards-strengthen-rural-health-all-50-states>

³ Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, *Rural Health Transformation 50 State Spotlights*, <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/rural-health-transformation-50-state-spotlights.pdf>

Testimony of the Hawaii Medical Board

**Before the
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
and
Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
Tuesday, February 17, 2026
9:45 A.M.
Conference Room 229 and Via Videoconference**

On the following measure:

S.B. 3105 RELATING TO THE PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT LICENSURE COMPACT

Chair San Buenaventura, Chair Keohokalole, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this administrative bill. My name is Young-Im Wilson, and I am the Executive Officer of the Hawai'i Medical Board (Board). The Board supports the bill's intent to improve access to care; however, we respectfully offer comments and recommendations regarding timing, implementation structure, and operational readiness to ensure patient safety, regulatory clarity, and sustainable operations.

SB 3105 would authorize Hawai'i to join the Physician Assistant (PA) Licensure Compact (Compact), creating a streamlined multistate pathway for physician assistants to obtain practice authority across participating states. Similar to the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact (IMLC) for physicians, this could improve access to care in rural areas, on neighbor islands, and through telehealth. However, unlike the IMLC, which was well established when Hawai'i joined, the PA Compact's national infrastructure remains new and largely untested. There is limited real-world data on system reliability, cross-state discipline coordination, and impact on net workforce benefits without creating additional regulatory burdens, particularly for a small, geographically isolated state with limited regulatory staffing.

A primary concern is the "privilege to practice" authority granted by the Compact to PAs, which would allow them to practice in Hawai'i without holding a Hawai'i PA

license. This differs from the IMLC model, which requires physicians to obtain a Hawai'i license, thereby rendering them subject to Hawai'i licensing, renewal, and disciplinary regulations. Without requiring Hawai'i PA licensure, the "privilege to practice" Compact model could create confusion for hospitals, supervising physicians, credentialing entities, insurers, complaint processing, and public license verification, and would weaken Hawai'i's direct licensure oversight. The Board therefore recommends amending SB 3105 to require issuance of a Hawai'i PA license through the PA Compact pathway, consistent with the IMLC model, to ensure clear regulatory authority and accountability.

The Board is also concerned in the absence of fingerprint-based criminal background checks. To qualify as a home state under Compact Sections 2.D and 3.5, states must implement FBI-supported fingerprint-based background checks. Currently, Hawai'i does not require fingerprinting for PA licensure. Without this, Hawai'i would likely only serve as a remote state, and potentially incentivizing Hawai'i-licensed PAs to move their home licenses elsewhere while continuing to practice in Hawai'i through a Compact privilege. This could reduce Hawai'i PA licensure numbers and fee revenue while oversight responsibilities remain. The Board recommends adopting fingerprint-based background check requirements for Hawai'i PA licensure by a defined date so Hawai'i can qualify as a home state under the Compact and preserve its licensure infrastructure.

Finally, the current timeline would position Hawai'i as an early operational adopter, which raises a number of concerns. Participation in the Compact would require reliance on the Compact's centralized data system for eligibility verification and disciplinary reporting, despite the absence of a proven operational track record for uptime, data accuracy, or error resolution. Additionally, multi-year implementation data is not currently available from other states. The Board recommends delaying full participation until meaningful operational data demonstrate system reliability and regulatory functionality. By comparison, the IMLC has had more than 40 states operational since 2017. If this bill advances, the Board respectfully requests language

be added to condition Hawai'i's operational go-live on upon compliance that the Compact's data systems are functional, secure, and interoperable with Hawai'i's licensing systems.

The Board also notes that the appropriation amount in this measure may not fully account for the operational costs, including additional staffing, IT integration, ongoing monitoring of data systems, complaint handling, and interstate disciplinary coordination. The Board recommends explicit authority to establish sufficient licensing and renewal fees to fully fund these functions.

In conclusion, the Board supports SB 3105's goal of improving access to care, but strongly recommends amendments, including a license-based implementation model, adoption of fingerprint background checks, cost recovery authority, data system safeguards, and a delayed activation timeline. These steps will help protect public safety, preserve the integrity of Hawai'i's licensure system, and ensure sustainable operations.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support with comments and recommended amendments.



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

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February 17, 2026

TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION AND ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Senate Bill 3105 – Relating to the Physician Assistant Licensure Compact

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports Senate Bill 3105 – Relating to the Physician Assistant Licensure Compact. This bill authorizes the Governor to enter the PA Licensure Compact to create a comprehensive process that complements the existing licensing authority of the state medical board and provides a streamlined process that allows a PA to become licensed in multiple states, thereby enhancing the portability of a PA license and ensuring the safety of patients.

Hawaii's physician assistant shortage is acute, and this bill represents a short term solution. DCAB encourages the Legislature to find long term solutions to increase the number of physician assistants who are licensed directly by the State of Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

KRISTINE PAGANO
Acting Executive Director



15 Feb 2026

TO: Chair San Buenaventura & Vice-Chair Angus McKelvey
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

Chair Jarrett Keohokahole & Vice Chair Carol Fukunaga
Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

FROM: Leocadia Conlon, PhD, MPH, PA-C

Legislative Chair and President-Elect

Hawai'i Academy of Physician Assistants (HAPA)

RE: Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 3105 WITH SUGGESTED AMENDMENTS

Hearing Date/time: Tuesday, February 17, 2026 at 9:45 AM

Conference Room 229 and Videoconference

Chairs San Buenaventura & Keohokahole, Vice-Chairs McKelvey & Fukunaga, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for hearing this measure, SB 3105, which would authorize the Governor to enter the PA Licensure Compact. The Hawai'i Academy of Physician Assistants (HAPA) is in strong support for SB3105.

The Physician Assistant Licensure Compact will provide a streamlined path for qualified PAs to obtain authorization to practice in other compact member states via a single compact privilege. This system eliminates the need for separate state-by-state licensure applications for each state where a PA intends to practice, potentially reducing administrative burdens and improving mobility for providers, especially those serving rural areas or delivering care through telehealth.

According to the American Academy of PAs, there are currently 21 states who have joined the interstate licensure compact that will streamline multistate practice for PAs and expand access to care across state lines.



Under the compact framework, eligible PAs must hold an unrestricted license in a compact state, maintain current certification, and meet other professional standards. It is important to note that compact explicitly requires PAs to practice under the laws of the state where services are rendered, regardless of their home state licensure provisions. Therefore, even if a PA holds primary licensure in a state with different practice authority, compact privilege in Hawai'i will still mandate full compliance with Hawai'i's practice requirements.

Key benefits of the PA Licensure Compact for the community of Hawai'i include streamlining healthcare for telemedicine, particularly benefiting patients needing access to specialty care across state lines. Second, the compact provides critical support for military spouse PAs who move frequently, allowing them to maintain licensure and avoid licensing-related downtime between jobs. When a military spouse PAs moves to Hawai'i, they could serve the community of Hawai'i without having a delay in applying for new licensure.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony for SB3105. The PA Licensure Compact represents a practical, forward-thinking solution that strengthens Hawai'i's healthcare workforce while maintaining our state's full regulatory authority over PA practice.



To: The Honorable Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
The Honorable Angus McKelvey, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair
The Honorable Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

From: Paula Arcena, External Affairs Vice President
Mike Nguyen, Director of Public Policy
Maria Rallojey, Public Policy Specialist

Hearing: Tuesday, February 17, 2026, 9:45am, Conference Room 229

RE: **SB3105 Relating to the Physician Assistant Licensure Compact**

AlohaCare appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **support** of **SB3105**. This measure would authorize the Governor to enter the Physician Assistant Licensure Compact to create a comprehensive process that complements the existing licensing authority of the state medical board and provides a streamlined process that allows a PA to become licensed in multiple states, thereby enhancing the portability of a PA license and ensuring the safety of patients.

AlohaCare is a community-rooted, non-profit health plan founded by Hawai'i's Community Health Centers and the Queen Emma Clinics. We serve over 66,000 Medicaid and Medicaid-Medicare dual-eligible residents on all islands. Since 1994, AlohaCare has partnered with providers, government entities, and community-based organizations to meet the evolving needs of our safety net community as Hawai'i's only health plan focused solely on Medicaid-eligible individuals. Our mission is to serve individuals and communities in the true spirit of aloha by ensuring and advocating for equitable access to quality, whole-person care for all.

AlohaCare's commitment to whole-person care includes providing timely access to care. Workforce shortages are one of the most significant barriers to timely, appropriate care. For Medicaid/QUEST enrollees, they experience long wait times for primary and specialty appointments, limited provider participation in certain geographic areas, and disruptions in continuity when clinicians relocate or when vacancies cannot be filled quickly. These barriers are felt most acutely by those with low incomes, chronic conditions, disabilities, and transportation challenges. The licensure compact directly addresses these patient-facing barriers by improving provider mobility and enabling faster deployment of qualified Physician Assistants across compact states. For these reasons, AlohaCare supports this measure to strengthen the Physician Assistant workforce pipeline and allow responsible interstate practice.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in **support** of **SB3105**.

Feb. 17, 2026, 9:45 a.m.

Hawaii State Capitol

Conference Room 229 and Videoconference

To: Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

Sen. Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair

Sen. Angus L.K. McKelvey, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

Sen. Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair

Sen. Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair

From: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

Ted Kefalas, Director of Strategic Campaigns

RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB3105 — RELATING TO THE PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT LICENSURE COMPACT

Aloha chairs, vice chairs and other members of the committees,

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii **supports** [SB3105](#), which would allow Hawaii to join the Physician Assistant Licensure Compact.

The interstate compact approach outlined in this bill would make it easier for licensed physician assistants to practice in Hawaii. This would help alleviate one of the major challenges for healthcare access in Hawaii: the ongoing shortages in physicians and medical staff.

According to the Physician Workforce 2026 annual report, Hawaii has a shortage of 833 full-time equivalent doctors statewide, with the greatest deficit being in primary care, where the shortage is 178 FTEs across all islands.¹

¹ ["Annual Report on Findings from the Hawai'i Physician Workforce Assessment Project,"](#) University of Hawaii System, Dec. 2025, p. 1.

Addressing the problem requires a multipronged strategy aimed at alleviating burdens such as Hawaii's high cost of living to the state's regulatory scheme for healthcare facilities.

Perhaps most important is the need to reform licensing regulations for healthcare professionals.

One-fourth of all licensed workers in the U.S. work in healthcare.² Those licenses can be difficult to obtain, are expensive and carry geographic or "scope of practice" limitations.

Licensing laws can also affect wages and overall medical costs. A study from the National Bureau of Economic Research³ considered restrictions on nurse practitioners and found that fewer restrictions on nurse practitioners' scope of practice correlated with higher wages for nurses and lower wages for physicians. Higher restrictions increased the cost of a well-child medical exam by 3% to 16%.

A similar study from the Mercatus Center examining scope of practice for nurse practitioners and physician assistants found that less restrictive regulations for physician assistants reduced the cost of outpatient claims made by Medicare recipients by more than 11%.⁴

Physician assistants can help alleviate the problems caused by the physician shortage, but only if we make it easier for PAs to work in Hawaii. This is where the PA Compact can help.

At present, the [PA Licensure Compact](#) comprises 21 states, and more than a dozen states have introduced legislation to join. The growing popularity of medical compacts testifies to the safety and effectiveness of this approach to license reciprocity.

Joining the PA Compact would be an important step toward addressing the medical staff and healthcare shortages in our state.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Ted Kefalas
Director of Strategic Campaigns
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

² Ryann Nunn, "[Improving Health Care Through Occupational Licensing Reform](#)," RealClear Markets, Aug. 28, 2018

³ Morris Kleiner, et al., "[Relaxing Occupational Licensure Requirements: Analyzing Wages and Prices for a Medical Service](#)," Working Paper 19906, National Bureau of Economic Research, February 2014.

⁴ Edward J. Timmons, "[Healthcare Licensure Turf Wars: The Effects of Expanded Nurse Practitioner and Physician Assistant Scope of Practice on Medicaid Patient Access](#)," Mercatus Working Paper, Mercatus Center, George Washington University, January 2016.