



February 16, 2026

The Honorable Brandon Elefante  
Chair, Senate Public Safety and Military Affairs Committee  
Hawai'i State Senate  
State Capitol  
Honolulu, HI 96813

**RE: ATA ACTION SUPPORT OF SB 3192**

Dear Chair Elefante and members of the Senate Public Safety and Military Affairs Committee,

On behalf of ATA Action, I am writing to express our strong support for Senate Bill 3192, relating to emergency healthcare licensure waivers.

ATA Action, the American Telemedicine Association's affiliated trade association focused on advocacy, advances policy to ensure all individuals have permanent access to telehealth services across the care continuum. ATA Action supports the enactment of state and federal telehealth policies to secure telehealth access for all Americans, including those in rural and underserved communities. ATA Action recognizes that telehealth and virtual care have the potential to truly transform the health care delivery system – by improving patient outcomes, enhancing safety and effectiveness of care, addressing health disparities, and reducing costs – if only allowed to flourish.

Hawai'i faces unique and escalating threats from wildfires, hurricanes, flooding and public health emergencies. As an island state with geographic isolation and limited healthcare workforce capacity in certain regions, Hawai'i must be able to rapidly mobilize qualified professionals when disaster strikes. SB 3192 appropriately codifies streamlined licensure flexibilities that allow eligible out-of-state healthcare practitioners in good standing to provide services during a declared emergency.

Importantly, SB 3192 strikes the right balance between flexibility and oversight. The bill requires that practitioners hold a current, active license in good standing; have no disqualifying disciplinary history; and be affiliated with a government agency, licensed healthcare facility, federally qualified health center, or nationally recognized emergency response organization. It also establishes a self-registration and verification process and authorizes immediate revocation for violations. These safeguards ensure accountability while enabling swift deployment of care.

ATA Action particularly supports subsection (c), which allows telehealth services to be provided by eligible out-of-state practitioners without requiring an in-person consultation or an existing provider-patient relationship during an emergency. In crisis conditions, requiring an initial in-person encounter or a pre-existing relationship can delay urgently needed care. Telehealth is frequently the fastest and safest way to deliver triage, behavioral health support, medication management and follow-up services when infrastructure is disrupted or travel is unsafe. Removing unnecessary procedural barriers ensures that patients can receive timely evaluation and treatment when they need it most.

ATA Action believes SB 3192 will significantly strengthen Hawai'i's disaster preparedness and response capacity while maintaining high standards of care and patient protection. Codifying these flexibilities in

**ATA ACTION**

13th St NW, 12th Floor Washington, DC 20005  
Info@ataaction.org



statute will prevent delays associated with ad hoc executive waivers and improve coordination with partners such as military medical units and national emergency response organizations.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. We respectfully urge the Committee to support SB 3192 in the interest of protecting public health and ensuring that Hawai'i residents have timely access to care during emergencies. Please do not hesitate to let us know how we can be helpful to your efforts to advance common-sense telehealth policy in Hawai'i. If you have any questions or would like to discuss the telehealth industry's perspective further, please contact me at [hyoung@ataaction.org](mailto:hyoung@ataaction.org).

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hunter Young". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Hunter Young  
Head of State Government Relations  
ATA Action



**Testimony Presented Before the Senate Committee on Public Safety and  
Military Affairs**

**HEARING: Monday February 18, 3:00 P.M.**

**PLACE: Room 016 State Capitol and via videoconference**

**SB3192 – Relating to Emergency Health Care Licensure Waivers**

Chair Senator Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair Senator Chris Lee, and members of the Senate Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs, thank you for providing this opportunity to testify.

Hawai'i-American Nurses Association (Hawai'i- ANA) is the professional association for over 17,000 registered nurses who live and work in Hawai'i. Our mission is to advocate for the improvement of the healthcare system in the communities where we live and work. **We stand in strong support of this bill.**

Hawai'i-ANA respectfully urges the committee to move this bill forward in the legislative process, to authorize the waiver of certain healthcare worker licensure requirements during emergencies. This measure reflects policy already enacted in more than twenty states and represents a prudent modernization of Hawai'i's emergency response framework.

Historically, Hawai'i has relied on gubernatorial proclamations and emergency actions to enable healthcare professionals licensed in other states to practice in our state during emergencies. That approach creates avoidable delays and coordination gaps with partners such as the American Red Cross and the military. SB 3192 modernizes our readiness by making emergency licensure flexibility automatic and immediate. Safety guardrails are built into the bill. The bill requires that these practitioners hold an active state license and be affiliated with recognized response/healthcare entities such as the American Red Cross, FEMA, or military medical units who have vetted them for such volunteer work with their

agency. It also requires an online registry, providing transparency and accountability during volunteer deployments. Annual reporting is required to evaluate usage, outcomes, and improvements.

Hawai'i-ANA respectfully asks the Committee to pass this measure to enhance Hawaii's disaster response capabilities by codifying streamlined emergency licensure flexibilities to enable the swift mobilization of qualified healthcare professionals.

Hawai'i-ANA thanks your committee for its commitment to the people of Hawai'i in supporting efforts to improve our emergency response capabilities, to the benefit of all Hawai'i residents. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.



Contact information for Hawai'i – American Nurses Association:

Chair of Advocacy Committee: Linda Beechinor, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC

President: Denise Cohen, PhD, APRN, FNP-BC

Executive Director: Elizabeth Kahakua, RN, BSN

phone (808) 779-3001      500 Lunalilo Home Road, #27-E, Honolulu HI 96825



**February 16, 2026 at 3:00 pm**  
**Conference Room 016**

**Senate Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs**

To: Chair Carol Fukunaga  
Vice Chair Chris Lee

From: Paige Heckathorn Choy  
VP, Government Affairs  
Healthcare Association of Hawaii

Re: **Submitting Comments**  
**SB 3192, Relating to Emergency Healthcare Licensure Waivers**

The Healthcare Association of Hawaii (HAH), established in 1939, serves as the leading voice of healthcare on behalf of 170 member organizations who represent almost every aspect of the health care continuum in Hawaii. Members include acute care hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, home health agencies, hospices, assisted living facilities and durable medical equipment suppliers. In addition to providing access to appropriate, affordable, high-quality care to all of Hawaii's residents, our members contribute significantly to Hawaii's economy by employing over 30,000 people statewide.

Thank you for the opportunity to **submit comments** on this measure, which seeks to codify waivers and oversight measures for certain healthcare professions during a declared emergency. Hawaii's experience during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as during recent natural disasters, demonstrated how critical licensure flexibility can be in ensuring timely access to care. Temporary waivers allowing qualified out-of-state healthcare professionals to practice in Hawaii helped hospitals and other providers respond to patient surges, workforce shortages, and rapidly evolving clinical needs.

It was important that those waivers included requirements that ensure accountability for individuals entering the state to practice that were not overly burdensome. During the pandemic, thousands of nurses were brought in to manage the surge and a workable process was created with the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs (DCCA) to help validate and register individuals coming in to work at our member hospitals and nursing homes. We would suggest similar provisions could be included in statute to ensure that any requirements reflect the need for a flexible process. We would also suggest that the DCCA may be best positioned to administer licensure-related requirements under this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important measure.



**American  
Red Cross**

4155 Diamond Head Rd  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96816

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**ATTN:** Hawai'i State Legislature

Distinguished committee members,

It is with deep humility that I write to you regarding the American Red Cross and our work across the State of Hawai'i. As the CEO for the Red Cross of Hawai'i and Pacific Islands, I am honored to lead an organization whose mission reflects the values of compassion, resilience, and service. Our priority is to strengthen our local impact by honoring the Red Cross legacy in Hawai'i by listening to our communities, leading with purpose, and moving forward together. **It is with this in mind that I strongly encourage the committee to move to pass SB 3192.**

SB 3192 was developed to support the rapid deployment of licensed health professionals during disasters and provide license reciprocity to responders only in a volunteer capacity, ensuring that the state of Hawai'i can meet the needs of its citizens during a time of great need. The disaster response to the Maui Wildfires put community needs up-front, as they should be, and this bill further solidifies that resiliency, response, and recovery sit at the forefront of our minds always.

This bill is modeled on legislation that has already been adopted by more than 20 other states, and is currently in legislation in California. When disasters occur, the rapid availability of qualified health care personnel is essential to effective response. Because federal resources can be limited in the early stages of an emergency, states have taken important steps to enable volunteer practitioners to deploy quickly to declared emergencies. With a uniform system in place, organizations, including the American Red Cross, can mobilize health and mental health volunteers efficiently, deliver health and mental health services without delay. The Uniform Emergency Volunteer Health Practitioner Act (UEVHPA) positions responders to move faster, operate more effectively, and reach communities with essential care when and where it was needed most.

The American Red Cross fully supports the passage of SB 3192, and we thank the committee in advance for consideration of this critical and life-saving legislation.

Mahalo for your consideration and continued partnership across the state,

*Molly Schmidt*

Molly Schmidt, CEO

Red Cross of Hawai'i and Pacific Islands



To: The Honorable Carol Fukunaga, Chair  
The Honorable Chris Lee, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs

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

Hearing: Wednesday, February 18, 2026, 3:00pm, Conference Room 016

RE: **SB3192 Relating to Emergency Healthcare Licensure Waivers**

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AlohaCare appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of the intent of SB3192**. This measure would authorize the waiver of certain healthcare worker licensure requirements during emergencies.

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 is committed to improving access to care and addressing healthcare workforce shortages. For example, starting in 2012, AlohaCare and others provided funding for the Hawai'i State Loan Repayment Program created by JABSOM Area Health Education Center. The program has successfully brought more healthcare workers to underserved areas across the state. However, Hawai'i's physician workforce data continue to show an urgent access and capacity problem. The most recent Hawai'i Physician Workforce Shortage Report finds that although 12,688 physicians are licensed in Hawai'i, only 3,647 are currently providing patient care, and that translates to about 3,044 full-time equivalents (FTEs)<sup>1</sup>. The report estimates the state needs 3,688 FTEs of practicing physicians, which equates to a shortage of 644 FTEs. When island geography and specialty coverage realities are accounted for, the unmet need increases to 833 physician FTEs statewide<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> University of Hawai'i John A. Burns School of Medicine, Area Health Education Center. (2025). *Hawai'i Physician Workforce Report 2025*.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid



ALOHACARE

Provider shortages, especially for our neighbor island residents, translates directly into reduced appointment availability, delayed care, and greater reliance on emergency departments for conditions that could have been managed in primary or preventive settings. These access barriers often exacerbate health inequities among our most vulnerable communities, especially during natural disasters and public health emergencies.

We recognize that ongoing medical education and professional standards are best addressed by the Hawai'i Medical Board, local medical societies, and other relevant experts. However, we believe this bill offers an innovative approach to addressing the healthcare workforce shortage, as we continue to face future natural disasters and public health emergencies. As such, AlohaCare supports the intent of the bill to codify streamlined emergency licensure flexibility to allow the swift mobilization of qualified healthcare professionals and improve our state's disaster response capabilities.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in **support of the intent of SB3192.**



**WAIANAЕ COAST  
COMPREHENSIVE  
HEALTH CENTER**

**Wednesday, February 18, 3:00PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 016**

**Senate Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs**

**To:** Senator Carol Fukunaga, Chair,  
Senator Chris Lee, Vice Chair

**From:** Ian Ross  
Public Affairs Director  
ianross@wcchc.com | (808) 697-3457

**RE: SUPPORT FOR SENATE BILL 3192 - RELATING TO EMERGENCY HEALTHCARE  
LICENSURE WAIVERS**

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Aloha and mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony **in support** of Senate Bill No. 3192, which would authorize the waiver of certain healthcare worker licensure requirements during emergencies.

Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center (WCCHC) is a Federally Qualified Health Center dedicated to improving the health and well-being of the West O'ahu community by providing accessible and affordable medical care. With 53 years of service, WCCHC is committed to providing comprehensive healthcare that supports the whole person and improves long-term health outcomes for the communities we serve.

During emergencies, such as natural disasters or public health crises, healthcare facilities often face severe workforce shortages. The flexibility proposed in SB 3192 would authorize WCCHC and other organizations to deploy additional qualified healthcare professionals, helping to meet urgent community needs.

WCCHC respectfully notes that while this measure has merit in helping during disasters, it is important that the State pursue additional policies to train and retain more of the next generation of healthcare workers to better address our chronic shortage.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.



**Testimony Presented Before the Senate  
Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs  
Wednesday, February 18, 2026, at 3:00 pm  
Conference Room 016 & Videoconference  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street**

**Ms. BJ Bartleson, MS, RN, NEA-BC, FAONL  
President-Elect  
Hawai'i Organization of Nurse Leaders  
An Independent Chapter of AONL**

**TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT of S.B. 3192- Relating to Emergency Healthcare  
Licensure Waivers**

Chair Fukunaga, Vice Chair Lee, and members of the committee:

Thank you for introducing and hearing this measure.

**This measure codifies streamlined emergency licensure flexibilities** to enable Hawai'i to mobilize qualified healthcare professionals immediately when an emergency is declared.

I am a state and national nurse leader and a resident of Lahaina, where our community experienced the devastating wildfire disaster. During that response, **Red Cross nurses and other responders reported real-world delays in bringing qualified out-of-state clinicians** into Hawai'i quickly enough to meet urgent patient and behavioral health needs. **In disasters, hours matter**—for triage, wound care, medication continuity, dialysis coordination, mental health stabilization, and public health sheltering. **When licensure activation is slow or requires multiple procedural steps, community members and responders pay the price.**

**Hawai'i has relied on gubernatorial proclamations and emergency actions** to enable out-of-state practice. However, that approach, while helpful, can still create avoidable delays and coordination gaps with partners such as the American Red Cross and the military. **SB 3192 modernizes our readiness by making emergency licensure flexibility automatic upon a declared emergency under HRS Chapter 127A, rather than requiring an additional, time-consuming process.**

**Safety guardrails are built into the bill.** The bill requires practitioners to hold an active, good standing license, have no history of disciplinary revocation/suspension, and be affiliated with recognized response/healthcare entities such as the American Red Cross, FEMA, or military medical units. It also requires an **online registry, self-registration within 24 hours, and expedited verification within 48 hours, providing transparency and accountability during volunteer deployments.**

Additionally, the bill **includes behavioral health, telehealth services, and annual reporting to evaluate usage, outcomes, and improvements.**

As Lahaina continues to heal, one lesson is unmistakable: disasters are becoming more frequent and complex, and Hawai'i must be able to mobilize a qualified healthcare workforce immediately. **SB 3192 is an efficient way to modernize Hawai'i's emergency preparedness, reducing delays and preventable illness and death.**

**On behalf of the Hawai'i Organization of Nurse Leaders, I respectfully urge you to PASS S.B. 3192.**

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

**Ms. BJ Bartleson, MS, RN, NEA-BC, FAONL**  
**Health Policy Consultant, President- Elect**  
**Hawai'i Organization of Nurse Leaders**  
**Lahaina, Maui 96761**  
[bartlesonbj@gmail.com](mailto:bartlesonbj@gmail.com)

## **Testimony Presented Before the**

### **Senate Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs**

**HEARING: Wednesday February 18, 03:00 P.M.**

**PLACE: Room 016 State Capital, and via videoconference**

Aloha Chair Sharon Y. Moriwaki Fukunaga, Vice Chair Chris Lee, and Members of the Senate Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs,

I respectfully urge your committee to hear SB 3192, relating to health care licensure waivers during a declared emergency. This measure reflects policy already enacted in more than twenty states and represents a prudent modernization of Hawai'i's emergency response framework.

I have practiced nursing on Maui since 1981. During the Maui wildfires, I initially volunteered and was subsequently hired as a temporary disaster employee responsible for overseeing the health and well-being of more than 7,000 individuals in Red Cross care over a six- to eleven-month period. More than half of my clinical workforce came from outside Hawai'i. Each time an emergency proclamation was issued, amended, or lifted, I was required to prepare a significant portion of that team to stand down solely because of licensure constraints. In the midst of a mass-casualty disaster, these regulatory disruptions created avoidable instability in an already critically understaffed environment.

SB 3192 would enable proactive operational planning rather than reactive workforce demobilization. Hawai'i is home to a substantial number of highly trained military health care professionals, particularly on O'ahu, who cannot be deployed in support of civilian disaster operations absent a formal licensure waiver. Likewise, qualified clinicians from other states and U.S. territories stand ready to serve but are procedurally constrained at the very moment their expertise is most needed.

As climate-driven and complex emergencies increase in frequency and duration, Hawai'i must align its statutory framework with contemporary emergency management realities. SB 3192 is a targeted, evidence-based policy solution that enhances surge capacity, strengthens patient safety, and stabilizes the health care workforce during declared emergencies.

I respectfully request that your committee schedule SB 3192 for hearing.

Respectfully,

Denise Cohen, PhD, APRN  
President, Hawai'i-American Nurses Association

**SB-3192**

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 3:56:05 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/18/2026 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Katherine Sieu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

As a member of the American Red Cross Disaster Health Services Team both in Hawai'i and California, I have assisted many people affected by disaster. While all disasters start locally, some grow to become much larger than our region. When such growth happens, we need the assistance of team members from outside our state.

Of course, we all remember the Maui fires that took so many lives and devastated thousands as they lost their homes. The local region of the various emergency services quickly responded. People joined together to show that the people of Hawai'i value their ohana. It was beautiful and so heart warming to see.

Of those people, not all could do what the health care professionals could do and there are only so many providers available. The governor opened up the licensure requirements and volunteers from out of state came in to Maui to help.

This bill would save time by allowing for the licensure restriction to be lifted sooner for those individuals who meet the requirements as set forth in the bill. I have deployed to disasters and seen delays due to restrictions on who can assist due to state licensure requirements. The delay causes unnecessary delays in care.

While it would be ideal for the country to grant special licensure to those of us who volunteer with relief organizations in the same way they the military nurses and physicians, for now we ask that the state of Hawai'i, allow for the lifting of the in-state only licensure requirement during disasters.

Mahalo for your time in considering this crucial matter.

Katherine Sieu, RN, Nurse Practitioner

**SB-3192**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 9:33:59 AM

Testimony for PSM on 2/18/2026 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alison Kaneshiro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Senate Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs**

**HEARING: Wednesday February 18, 03:00 P.M.**

**PLACE: Room 016 State Capital, and via videoconference**

Aloha Chair Sharon Y. Moriwaki Fukunaga, Vice Chair Chris Lee, and Members of the Senate Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs,

I respectfully urge your committee to hear SB 3192, relating to health care licensure waivers during a declared emergency. This measure reflects policy already enacted in more than twenty states and represents a prudent modernization of Hawai‘i’s emergency response framework.

I have heard from other nurses who assisted during the Maui wildfires, that many out of state nurses were required to stand down due to licensure constraints and regulatory disruptions which created avoidable instability in an already critically understaffed environment during this mass-casualty disaster.

SB 3192 would enable proactive operational planning rather than reactive workforce demobilization. Hawai‘i is home to a substantial number of highly trained military health care professionals, particularly on O‘ahu, who cannot be deployed in support of civilian disaster operations absent a formal licensure waiver. Likewise, qualified clinicians from other states and U.S. territories stand ready to serve but are procedurally constrained at the very moment their expertise is most needed.

As climate-driven and complex emergencies increase in frequency and duration, Hawai‘i must align its statutory framework with contemporary emergency management realities. SB 3192 is a targeted, evidence-based policy solution that enhances surge capacity, strengthens patient safety, and stabilizes the health care workforce during declared emergencies.

I respectfully request that your committee schedule SB 3192 for hearing.

Respectfully,

Alison G. Kaneshiro, DNP, APRN-Rx, FNP-BC

98-067 Puailima Place

Aiea, Hawaii 96701

**SB-3192**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 1:56:34 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/18/2026 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Elizabeth Kahakua	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Elizabeth Kahakua, and I serve as the Executive Director of Hawai'i-ANA. I am writing to you today to express my strong support for SB 3192, which addresses health care licensure waivers during declared emergencies.

This measure represents a prudent modernization of Hawai'i's emergency response framework and reflects policy already successfully enacted in more than twenty other states. In my role leading Hawai'i-ANA, I see the critical need for a stable and reliable healthcare workforce, especially when our islands face the pressure of a declared emergency. Currently, our system often relies on reactive workforce demobilization due to licensure constraints, which creates avoidable instability in environments that are already understaffed.

SB 3192 would enable proactive operational planning. On O'ahu, we are home to a substantial number of highly trained military health care professionals who currently cannot be deployed to support civilian disaster operations without a formal licensure waiver. Additionally, qualified clinicians from other states and U.S. territories stand ready to assist our local teams but are often procedurally constrained at the very moment their expertise is most vital.

As climate-driven and complex emergencies increase in frequency, Hawai'i must align its statutory framework with contemporary emergency management realities. This bill is a targeted, evidence-based solution that enhances our surge capacity, strengthens patient safety, and stabilizes the health care workforce during times of crisis.

I respectfully request that your committee pass SB 3192.

Respectfully,

Elizabeth Kahakua, RN, BSN

**SB-3192**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 2:57:42 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/18/2026 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Christine Kramer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, Chair Sharon Y. Moriwaki Fukunaga, Vice Chair Chris Lee, and Members of the Senate Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs,

I urge your committee to hear SB 3192, which streamlines health care licensure waivers during emergencies. This policy, adopted by over twenty states, modernizes Hawai‘i’s disaster response and ensures we can efficiently deploy qualified medical professionals when they are needed most.

During the Maui wildfires, we saw firsthand how current licensure barriers forced key clinical team members to stand down in the midst of crisis. These preventable disruptions jeopardized care for thousands and worsened critical staffing shortages.

SB 3192 allows for proactive planning, enabling both local military and out-of-state clinicians to serve Hawai‘i communities during emergencies. Updating our laws to match today’s challenges will strengthen patient safety and stabilize our health care workforce. Please schedule SB 3192 for a hearing soonest.

Christine Kramer, DNP, RN, NEA-BC, CPHQ

**SB-3192**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 2:22:52 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/18/2026 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Denn Ko	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As an American Red Cross Disaster Health Services nurse with a Hawaii RN license for 21 years, it is absolutely imperative that we have the ability to serve wherever we are so urgently needed outside of our state. Our American Red Cross mission is to allieve suffering and save lives but we can only do that if we are able to serve in a disaster in an immediate capacity without having to wait for a waiver to deploy or work virtually.

**LATE**

**SB-3192**

Submitted on: 2/18/2026 9:46:34 AM  
Testimony for PSM on 2/18/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cyndi Davies Wong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To: Chair Sharon Y. Moriwaki Fukunaga, Vice Chair Chris Lee, and Members of the Senate Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs

From: Cyndi Davies Wong, Disaster Health Services Regional Advisor, American Red Cross – Pacific Islands Region

Subject: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 3192 – Relating to Health Care Licensure

Aloha Chair Fukunaga, Vice Chair Lee, and Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for SB 3192, which would allow for health care licensure waivers during declared emergencies. As a Hawaii Registered Nurse, and the Disaster Health Services Regional Advisor for the American Red Cross Pacific Islands Region, I have seen firsthand how administrative barriers can hinder our ability to provide immediate, life-saving care to our communities.

This measure is a prudent modernization of Hawai‘i’s emergency response framework, reflecting policies already successful in over twenty other states. It ensures that our disaster response is defined by clinical need and available expertise rather than regulatory delays.

I was on the ground on Maui within the first 48 hours of the wildfires, responding to the immense needs of our community. Had SB 3192 been in place during that critical window, we could have met our primary operational goal to "hold our own" for the first 72 hours. We had licensed healthcare professionals already physically available on the Hawaiian islands—including highly trained military personnel and out-of-state clinicians—who were ready to serve but were legally sidelined by licensure constraints. This bill would have allowed us to immediately utilize that existing talent to stabilize our neighbors during their most vulnerable moments.

As climate-driven disasters become more frequent and complex, Hawai‘i must be empowered to use every resource at its disposal. SB 3192 allows for proactive operational planning, ensuring

that we never have to demobilize qualified clinical staff in the middle of a crisis due to paperwork.

I respectfully urge your committee to pass SB 3192 to strengthen our surge capacity and ensure the safety of all Hawai'i residents during future emergencies.

Respectfully,

Cyndi Davies Wong, MBA RN

IDC/DHS/MN

Volunteer, Disaster Health Services Regional Program Advisor

American Red Cross Pacific Islands Region, Hawaii Chapter

Hawaii - Guam - CNMI - American Samoa

Cell : (808) 765-0471

[cyndi.davieswong@redcross.org](mailto:cyndi.davieswong@redcross.org)