



STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
'A'UNIKE MOKU'ĀPUNI NO KA NĀ KĀWAI KULA

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February 18, 2026

The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
The Thirty-Third Legislature
State Capitol
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair San Buenaventura and Committee Members:

SUBJECT: S.B. 3244, Relating to the Statewide Independent Living Council

The Hawai'i State Council on Developmental Disabilities respectfully provides comments and requests that **S.B. 3244 be DEFERRED** at this time.

We appreciate the intent of this measure to recognize the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) and strengthen Hawai'i's independent living infrastructure. Independent living services are critical to advancing autonomy, self-determination, and community integration for individuals with disabilities.

However, key partners, including the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation as the Designated State Entity, SILC leadership, and system stakeholders, have indicated that the bill is not yet ready to move forward as drafted and requires further collaboration. Federal independent living law places specific requirements on SILC independence, governance, and the delineation of responsibilities between the SILC and the Designated State Entity. Statutory codification must be carefully aligned with these federal requirements to avoid unintended compliance and implementation issues.

Deferring this measure would allow the State, SILC, DVR, and disability partners the necessary time to clarify roles, ensure federal alignment, preserve SILC independence, and develop consensus language through a coordinated and collaborative process. Moving forward prematurely could create ambiguity that undermines the long-term stability the bill seeks to achieve.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to **defer S.B. 3244** at this time to allow for thoughtful stakeholder collaboration and proper federal alignment.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Daintry Bartoldus, Executive Administrator

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



RYAN I. YAMANE
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELawe KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

February 15, 2026

TO: The Honorable Senator San Buenaventura, Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 3244 – RELATING TO THE STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL.**

Hearing: February 18, 2026, 1:00 p.m.
Conference Room 225 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of this measure and respectfully requests that it be deferred at this time.

DHS appreciates the purpose of this measure, which is to provide statutory recognition of the Statewide Independent Living Council of Hawaii (SILC) and to designate the DHS Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) as the designated state entity for compliance with federal independent living requirements. DVR values its longstanding partnership with the SILC and the Centers for Independent Living and remains committed to strong collaboration in support of individuals with disabilities statewide.

Since the introduction of this measure, DHS, SILC leadership, and other partners have begun to engage in discussions regarding the bill's structure and potential implications. Through these conversations, it has become clear that additional refinement is necessary to ensure the proposed statutory language is fully aligned with federal independent living requirements and clearly delineates the respective roles and responsibilities of the SILC and the Designated State Entity.

Federal law governing independent living programs includes specific provisions on SILC independence, governance, funding flows, and the responsibilities of the Designated State Entity. Codifying these structures in state statute requires careful coordination to avoid unintended compliance, fiscal, or administrative consequences.

Deferring this measure would allow DHS, SILC, the State Council on Developmental Disabilities, and other stakeholders the time needed to:

- Ensure precise alignment with federal law and regulations;
- Clarify governance and administrative roles;
- Preserve SILC independence consistent with federal requirements; and
- Develop consensus language that supports long-term stability.

Advancing the bill prematurely could create ambiguity that may require future corrective legislation. DHS believes additional stakeholder collaboration will strengthen the measure and better serve Hawai'i's independent living community.

DHS respectfully requests that SB 3244 be deferred at this time to allow for that collaborative process.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
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KE KIA'ĀINA



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Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

SB-3244

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 5:55:57 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/18/2026 1:00:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Leilani Kailiawa | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

ALoha Chair and Committee Members,

I am in strong Support of this bill

With gratitude

Leilani Kailiawa