



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
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HB 2293 – RELATING TO HEALTH

Chair Nakashima, Vice Chair Matayoshi, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today. The John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) **supports HB 2293**, which codifies the Prevent Suicide Hawai'i Task Force that would make progress on the recommendations made to the legislature in 2017 to reduce suicide by 25% by 2025. JABSOM has participated in task force activities since its inception in 2006. This bill gives the task force oversight of the State's strategic plan and adds strength to the recommendations for implementation and evaluation.

Suicide accounts for twenty-five percent of all fatal injuries in Hawai'i. On average, one person dies by suicide every two days. Suicide is the fourth leading cause of death for children between the ages of ten and fourteen and is the leading cause of death for young people between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four.

A teen in Hawai'i is nearly twice as likely to attempt suicide as a teen elsewhere in the United States. This data has been confirmed by the Department of Health which found that Hawai'i has the highest attempted suicide rate in the country for youth ages 10 to 24. For every suicide death in the islands, there are more than 30 attempted suicides.

Suicide rates vary by area, with neighbor island and rural communities seeing higher rates than urban areas. Suicide attempts, like suicide deaths, have harmful, lasting, and profound impacts on families and communities.

This measure would be beneficial in making progress into hope, help, and healing steps that could be taken in order to reduce the number of suicide deaths, as well as seeking solutions to prevent suicide.

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