

BILL014(22)
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 194

BUDGET

BUDGET Meeting

Meeting Date: May 10, 2022 @ 09:00 AM

Support: 36

Oppose: 33

I wish to comment: 5

Name: Johnnie-Mae Perry	Email: waianaenb569@gmail.com	Zip: 96792-2519
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: May 4, 2022 @ 07:30 PM
Testimony: I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry strongly support BILL 14 on behalf of District 1, CM Tupola budget/CIP items.		
Name: Annette Lancaster	Email: netter000@gmail.com	Zip: 96744
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 9, 2022 @ 06:48 AM
Testimony: I oppose funding in Budget Bill 14 for removal of the Haik Stairs. Managed access can be achieved and is a win-win for all. Thank you for your consideration.		
Name: Yvonne Lancaster	Email: netter000@gmail.com	Zip: 96744
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 9, 2022 @ 06:51 AM
Testimony: I oppose funding in Budget Bill 14 for removal of the Haik Stairs. Open the stairs under managed access in order to address the community's concerns, generate revenue, and share this incredible outdoor asset.		
Name: Chris Shively	Email: chris.shively@kelleher.com	Zip: 96744
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 9, 2022 @ 06:55 AM
Testimony: I oppose funding in Budget Bill 14 for removal of the Haik Stairs. Public opinion in support of re-opening the stairs vastly outweighs the removal option. Please act on the majority's wishes, thank you.		
Name: Jay Morford	Email: jay.morford@dignitymemorial.com	Zip: 96817
Representing: Hawaii Funeral & Cemetery Association	Position: Support	Submitted: May 9, 2022 @ 08:35 AM
Name: Jordan Gallen	Email: jkgallen@hotmail.com	Zip: 96701
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: May 9, 2022 @ 11:38 AM
Testimony: My name is Jordan Gallen. I am a Pastor at United Church of Christ Pohnpei in Pearl City, Hawaii. I lived in Hawaii for 30 years and am incredibly grateful to be a resident. My testimony is to support Councilmember Kiaina's amendment (page 2) to Bill 14. Bill 14 requests the creation of a COVID-19 death benefits program for Honolulu residents who are citizens of the Freely Associated States of Micronesia that are not eligible for the Federal Emergency Management Administration's (FEMA) COVID-19 Funeral Assistance reimbursement program. The Pacific Islanders were gravely impacted by COVID-19. The pandemic took away many members of our community and we were impacted physically, emotionally, and financially. Financially, our normal means of donations were taken away because of the restrictions imposed on community activities and worship. Many of our family members who were unemployed struggled financially to find other means to bury their love ones. Today, we ask you to help our communities who struggled and continue to struggle with this reimbursement program. Thank you for your time and consideration.		
Name: Randall Kennedy	Email: rkennedy52@hawaii.rr.com	Zip: 96744
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:

Self	Oppose	May 9, 2022 @ 11:56 AM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>As a 32 year resident of Kaneohe/Heeia, I strongly OPPOSE the line item in the Budget that funds the demolition of the Haiku Stairs.</p> <p>Just last year there was momentum by the City to finally correctly resolve this long lasting issue - so to re-open the Stairs for managed access. This came after a managed access was the highest rated option in the BWS's draft EIS, fourteen letters of interest was submitted to the City to manage the facility, and with the longstanding local support for the re-opening with managed access. This local support includes a recent unanimous resolution by Kaneohe Neighborhood Board.</p> <p>The residents of Kaneohe have patiently waited for over 20 years to reopen the Stairs. Now is time to work together to reopen the Haiku Stairs and Valley.</p> <p>Mahalo for your consideration on this matter,</p>		
Name: Jaron Chong	Email: jaronchong2011@gmail.com	Zip: 96734
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: May 9, 2022 @ 12:25 PM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>I support BILL014(22). Ocean Safety needs this funding for positions, salaries, current expenses, and equipment.</p> <p>Visitors come to Hawaii for its beaches. Ocean Safety Lifeguards are some of the best, if not, the best in the world at what they do every day. They need more personnel, improved wages and equipment.</p>		
Name: Randy Compton	Email: rcompton@hawaii.edu	Zip: 96822
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: May 9, 2022 @ 12:42 PM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>Please support this bill as it would help our community members who have suffered disproportionately throughout this pandemic. It is not only the just thing to do, but it is also a way to address the economic hardship created during this pandemic. Loss of family members and income earners negatively effect both the family and the larger economy. Please continue to embody Hawaii's values of aloha and respect for all its people.</p>		
Name: Liza Ryan-Gill	Email: lryangill@hicir.org	Zip: 96822
Representing: HI Coalition for Immigrant Rights	Position: Support	Submitted: May 9, 2022 @ 03:28 PM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>Dear Council members,</p> <p>The HI Coalition for Immigrant Rights, representing more than 25 immigrant led/serving organizations is in strong support of Councilmember Kia'ina's amendment. Our brothers and sisters from the Freely Associated States have faced countless structural inequities in our country, state and county. During the height of the pandemic this historically marginalized community faced high rates of inflection despite constituting a very small portion of the populations. On our twice monthly calls as a coalition we often heard stories of families unable to afford the cost of funerals and burial expenses. It was heartbreaking to hear of the many loved ones that had been lost and then the double heartbreak of not being able to bury the dead in the manner they deserved. Despite being tax-paying residents in our county, with a special immigration status that recognizes the many injustices that these nations has borne, it is only reasonable that the county extend this small grace to them and allow them to receive some support for funerary expenses.</p>		
Name: Barbara Tom	Email: barbara.yukie@gmail.com	Zip: 96701
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:

Waipahu Safe Haven Immigrant/Migrant Resource Center	Support	May 9, 2022 @ 03:29 PM
Name: Dawn Kurisu	Email: dawnakie@gmail.com	Zip: 96816
Representing: Self	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: May 9, 2022 @ 04:05 PM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>Aloha Councilmembers,</p> <p>Pacific Islanders make up roughly 4 percent of the State's population but have the third most deaths from COVID-19, making up roughly 17 percent of the statewide death county. Due to pre-existing Federal Law, citizens of Freely Associated (COFA) States living in the United States are unable to benefit from FEMA's COVID-19 Funeral Assistance program that is open to US citizens, non-citizen nationals, and qualified non-citizens. Accordingly, we stand by Councilmember Kiaina's proposed budget amendment to Bill 14 - to create a COVID-19 death benefits program for Honolulu residents who are citizens of the Freely Associated States of Micronesia that are not eligible for the Federal Emergency Management Administration's (FEMA) COVID-19 Funeral Assistance reimbursement program. This proposal for the City to appropriate \$2 million of the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, a part of the American Rescue Plan, includes our COFA citizens and creates parity for our Micronesian 'ohana.</p> <p>Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.</p>		
Name: Josie Howard	Email: josie@weareoceania.org	Zip: 96817
Representing: We Are Oceania	Position: Support	Submitted: May 9, 2022 @ 04:06 PM
Name: Michael Epp	Email: mepp@kkv.net	Zip: 96819
Representing: Kokua Kalihi Valley (Comprehensive Family Services)	Position: Support	Submitted: May 9, 2022 @ 04:49 PM
Name: Rick Egged	Email: tmawaikiki@gmail.com	Zip: 96815
Representing: WTMA	Position: Support	Submitted: May 9, 2022 @ 04:53 PM
Name: Della Nakamoto	Email: dwase@yahoo.com	Zip: 96753
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: May 9, 2022 @ 05:42 PM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>I am in support of Bill 14 (2022) CD1 - City Management Amendment relating to "Death Benefit" Reimbursement of Citizens of the Freely Associated States. As many of you already know, although only 4% of the state population, Pacific Islanders have the third most deaths from COVID-19, making up roughly 17% of the statewide death county. According to a DOH report to the Civil Rights Commission in 2021, over 50% of 17% was from the COFA community. Due to pre-existing Federal Law, citizens of the Freely Associated States living in the US are unable to benefit from FEMA's COVID-19 Funeral Assistance program that is open to US citizens, non-citizen nationals, and qualified non-citizens. Accordingly, Councilmember Kia'aina is proposing that the City appropriate \$2 million of the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, as part of the American Rescue Plan, and create parity for our Micronesian 'Ohana burial expenses.</p> <p>Many Pacific Islanders families do not have funeral plans or life insurance policies as they simply cannot afford either one. The average cost of a funeral is anywhere from \$15,000 to \$20,000 (this does not include the cost transport the deceased person's body home). The surviving family members are left to take care of the funeral expenses that they cannot afford.</p>		

When I read FEMA's qualifications of who should receive benefits from FEMA's COVID-19 Funeral Assistance program, it includes "qualified non-citizens". When I looked up the definition of "qualified non-citizens", this is what I found:

The term "qualified non-citizen" includes:

- Lawful Permanent Residents (LPR/Green Card Holder)
- Asylees
- Refugees
- Cuban/Haitian entrants
- Paroled into the U.S. for at least one year
- Conditional entrant granted before 1980
- Battered non-citizens, spouses, children, or parents
- Victims of trafficking and his or her spouse, child, sibling, or parent or individuals with a pending application for a victim of trafficking visa
- Granted withholding of deportation
- Member of a federally recognized Indian tribe or American Indian born in Canada
- Citizens of the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, and Palau who are living in one of the U.S. states or territories (referred to as Compact of Free Association or COFA migrants)

Since COFA migrants are listed as a "qualified non-citizen", they are entitled to FEMA's COVID-19 Funeral Assistance program and, although I live in Maui County, I strongly recommend and support the current Death Benefit Amendment be increased to match FEMA's \$9,000 per qualifying family and the number of families be increased to include the neighbor island COFA migrants.

Thank you for your consideration.

Name: Rebecca Delafield	Email: delafiel@hawaii.edu	Zip: 96816
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Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: May 9, 2022 @ 05:44 PM
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Name: Wilfred Alik	Email: wilfalik@gmail.com	Zip: 96720-3596
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Representing: Marshallese Hawaii Covid19 Task Force	Position: Support	Submitted: May 9, 2022 @ 05:50 PM
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Testimony:

Aloha,

I am writing in support of this bill to provide much needed financial assistance for the FAS community which was negatively impacted by the pandemic.

Per capita FAS citizens borne a heavy burden of the pandemic as expected given its existing health and socioeconomic disparities.

However, FAS citizens are legal residents and do contribute to the Hawaii economy as most work as front line workers in the service industry.

Moreover, per capita FAS citizens proudly serve in the US military protecting the very freedom we all enjoy

It's our wish, as the Aloha State, and fellow Pacific Islanders to extend the same benefits in this bill to our citizens.

Komol

Wilfred C Alik, M.D

Chair, Marshallese Hawaii Covid19 Task Force

Name: Tester Puas	Email: tadasypuas5@gmail.com	Zip: 96797
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Representing: Chuukese Gospel Church	Position: Support	Submitted: May 9, 2022 @ 05:51 PM
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Name:	Email:	Zip:
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Joe Bartholomew	joe_23_b@yahoo.com	97306
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 9, 2022 @ 05:52 PM
Testimony: Please keep Haiku Stairs.		
Name: Sandra Moersch	Email: sandramoersch@me.com	Zip: 96813
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 9, 2022 @ 06:07 PM
Testimony: I believe in the preservation of haiku stairs		
Name: Jesse Palmer	Email: jdp078@gmail.com	Zip: 96762
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 9, 2022 @ 06:22 PM
Testimony: I am strongly opposed to removing the Haiku stairs. I believe this is extremely short sighted and will deprive Hawaii of what could be a world class attraction for locals and visitors alike.		
Name: Estevan Barocio	Email: estvbacio@gmail.com	Zip: 94597
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 9, 2022 @ 06:32 PM
Testimony: PLEASE KEEP THE HISTORY OF THE STAIRS ALIVE		
Name: Lyndsay Smith	Email: smith.lyndsayc@gmail.com	Zip: 92253
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 9, 2022 @ 06:34 PM
Testimony: The Haiku stairs gave the potential to be a profitable attraction. DO NOT DEMOLISH THE STAIRS. People from all over the world will pay to access the stairs as they do other attractions in Hawaii. Demolishing is unnecessary.		
Name: Dan Froehlich	Email: bigfroe@gmail.com	Zip: 66503
Representing: Self	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: May 9, 2022 @ 06:36 PM
Testimony: The Haiku Stairs need to remain! I have dreamed of doing this hike and will make a special trip to Hawaii with my family once it is legal. We would be happy to pay a fee to climb, bringing our expendable income with us - a boost for Hawaii tourism! Please save the stairs!		
Name: Paul Otoko	Email: aileen.otoko@gmail.com	Zip: 96706
Representing: Evangelical Church of Chuuk in Hawaii	Position: Support	Submitted: May 9, 2022 @ 06:48 PM
Name: Laura Crane	Email: lauralynncrane@gmail.com	Zip: 96734
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:

Self	Oppose	May 9, 2022 @ 06:50 PM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>At the September 8th, 2021 City Council hearing when the agenda item regarding the removal of the Ha'iku Stairs was being addressed, Councilwoman Estern Kia'aina made a motion to dismiss all written testimony from area codes that are not 808 numbers. I feel compelled to give oral testimony as this now larger budget item for the same issue is again under Citycouncil review and I want my voice to be heard. First and foremost I would like to clarify that my zip code is used to determine my electoral district, not my area code, and my area code has not matched where I've lived for the past 15 years. My zip code is in district 3 and deserves to be heard for as this is my community.</p> <p>I would like this budget item for the removal of the Ha'iku Stairs to be struck from this budget. I believe that there are many benefits to keeping the Ha'iku Stairs that are not being properly addressed, and that the loss of the Stairs would be a loss of WWII history as well as a resource that could be utilized as a community benefit.</p> <p>The first issue I have is that the budget seems shortsighted. \$1.3 million dollars is what it costs to demolish a building, on grade, with adequate crane access from multiple sides. The second issue is the historical aspect, by definition of being older than 50 years the 80 year-old Stairs are historic and should be saved to protect history and Hawaii's role in winning the second world war. My grandfather was a prisoner of war for two years of his life, and as that generation is passing we are losing their stories, memories, and relics of that time - a time that should not be forgotten.</p> <p>The final issue I have is the community benefit these Stairs could provide. If access is managed as to not disturb the adjacent neighbors, revenue from the stairs could help serve the adjacent community. The Stairs are a landmark and should be protected as so not a demolition item on a poorly crafted budget.</p>		
Name: Beth Sepp	Email: easepp@gmail.com	Zip: 96822
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 9, 2022 @ 07:12 PM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>The Council is pursuing a misguided path by moving forward with removal of Haiku Stairs despite an unanimous vote for a one-year hiatus by Kaneohe Neighborhood, despite overwhelming testimony opposing removal, and despite serious questions regarding the spiraling costs of demolition, the environmental harms it will cause, and the inadequate planning by the City. Removal will cost millions of taxpayer dollars and will NOT solve the problem. A community-driven managed access plan remains the best option, and the Council needs to halt its demolition funding and give managed access a chance.</p>		
Name: Innocenta Sound-Kikku	Email: innocenta.soundkikku@gmail.com	Zip: 96819
Representing: Micronesia Health Advisory Coalition (MHAC)	Position: Support	Submitted: May 9, 2022 @ 07:20 PM
Name: Steve Palsis	Email: stevepalsis68@gmail.com	Zip: 96826
Representing: Kosrae Pentecostal Church	Position: Support	Submitted: May 9, 2022 @ 07:29 PM
Name: Sass Gouland	Email: sassgouland@yahoo.com	Zip: 96819
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: May 9, 2022 @ 07:32 PM
Name: Paul Nelson	Email: paulericnelson@gmail.com	Zip: 80203
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 9, 2022 @ 08:08 PM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>I have dreamed of the day to be able to hike the Haiku Stairs. I am an honorable, trustworthy, law abiding citizen who loves hiking with all my heart. I am blessed with the opportunity to hike all over this beautiful country and world. I have not done the haiku stairs hike. It is a dream of mine. It is why I want to go back to Oahu and spend a lot of money there. Instead of spending 1</p>		

million dollars to destroy this marvelous highlight of Mother Earth, instead use that money to make it safe and open to all. I promise that we will always hike it with love, care and peace. We do not party, make loud noise, nor leave trash. I want to bring many friends to Oahu just to do this hike. Please see in your hearts the opportunity to bless Oahu by improving the stairs instead of removing them. Let's come together through love not fear. Thank you for your time.

Mahalo

Name: Taber Maier	Email: tjmaier5@gmail.com	Zip: 90266
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 9, 2022 @ 08:12 PM

Testimony:

I oppose this bill and support keeping of the Haiku stairs.

Name: Nick Wood	Email: nickwoodhi@gmail.com	Zip: 96817
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 9, 2022 @ 08:13 PM

Testimony:

The Haiku Stairs should be a managed recreational activity that generates revenue. It is completely reasonable to operate with limited usage during daytime hours in a way that does not upset the neighborhood.

Name: Dominic Licata	Email: licatadrhs@yahoo.com	Zip: 89523
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 9, 2022 @ 08:58 PM

Testimony:

I oppose having the stairs torn down. Instead put the money into maintaining them and charge people a fee to hike them.

Name: Beth Anderson	Email: Kailua5@aol.com	Zip: 96734
Representing: Hui Kawainui Kailua Ka Wai Ola	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 9, 2022 @ 09:06 PM

Testimony:

I oppose the allocation of any taxpayer money for the purpose of funding removal of Haiku Stairs. Removal will cost millions and accomplish nothing. The City Council's track record on Haiku Stairs has already been extremely wasteful, ineffective, and negligent and this would augment that pattern. What is the purpose of demolishing this historical landmark? I've never heard one honest, logical reason as to why the Council views demolition is necessary. We do know the City Council has already wasted almost 6 million dollars of taxpayer money on inadequate security, environmental impact statements, and other things that have not benefitted taxpayers. We also know managed access plans work and they have already been implemented for several trails and venues in our state to solve problems like those that have plagued the Haiku neighborhood near the hike. There are dozens of neighborhoods that would beg for a managed access plan like the comprehensive one developed for Haiku Stairs. It would cost taxpayers nothing and harmful destruction to the environment predicted with demolition, including native species, would be avoided. The popularity of hiking and the overwhelming majority of testimony that always opposes removal of Haiku Stairs, indicates trails need to remain accessible, maintained, managed and increased, not destroyed by government. Thank you for considering my testimony.

Name: Adriana Hunter	Email: adriana627@me.com	Zip: 96825
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 9, 2022 @ 09:15 PM

Testimony:

The Haiku stairs represent to me more than just a way to hike up the mountain. They represent an important piece in the History of our Island. Please don't dismantle them!!!

Name:	Email:	Zip:
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Evan Lewis	ealewis1989@hotmail.com	96734
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 9, 2022 @ 09:20 PM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>Please do not support the destruction and demolition of the haiku stairs. This will cost millions more than anticipated, will kill endemic flora and fauna, and will destroy any future generations the chance of enjoying the stairs. Friends of Haiku Stairs has outlined a management plan that would make the state money rather than spend millions without any benefit.</p>		
Name: Bobby Carter	Email: bobby@diversionvm.com	Zip: 96817
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 9, 2022 @ 09:28 PM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>Do not waste budget destroying the stairs. Money should be spent to fix them up. At least make it easier to go the back way. So residents aren't bothered with hikers going the front way.</p>		
Name: Amber Smith	Email: ambr7as@gmail.com	Zip: 96813
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 9, 2022 @ 10:20 PM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>I strongly oppose the demolition of the haiku stairs. I also understand the neighborhood concern and feel that alternative measures should be made to access the stairs.</p>		
Name: Wayne Tanaka	Email: wctanaka@gmail.com	Zip: 96744
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: May 9, 2022 @ 10:53 PM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>Aloha Chair Say, Vice Chair Cordero, and members of the Committee,</p> <p>Please SUPPORT amendments to this budget measure that would provide equal access to financial support for our COFA community members who have had to bear the tragic loss of their loved ones due to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>Members of our COFA community have carried us through this terrible pandemic in so many ways, from ensuring our community has sufficient food, healthcare, and access to essential needs to helping guide policymaking and recommendations that would build us back up into a stronger, more equitable, and more resilient society.</p> <p>To ensure that our COFA residents, *at the very least,* receive financial support for the loss of family members due to both the COVID-19 pandemic and the social inequities that it laid bare is the bare minimum we can do to acknowledge our fellow community members and their still unjustly undervalued contributions to Oahu and Hawaii as a whole.</p> <p>Please support this amendment in your review of this measure tomorrow.</p> <p>Respectfully,</p> <p>Wayne Chung Tanaka</p>		
Name: Tiana Wilbur	Email: tianawilbur2022@gmail.com	Zip: 96792
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: May 9, 2022 @ 10:57 PM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>What is real rates mean? And just a comment why should homeowners pay property tax if we dictate what they can do as far as who can rent or how they lease out their rooms or home for a specific amount of time. We would more likely get tax paid easier if we would allow home owners their rights to rent their properties how it sees fit!! Especially to make that extra to pay their taxes!!!!</p> <p>??</p>		
Name: Sophia Dimoulakis	Email: scd8403@yahoo.com	Zip: 96734

Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 9, 2022 @ 10:57 PM
Testimony: The haiku stairs are not unsafe and should not be taken down.		
Name: Chris Rose	Email: chrisgrose22@gmail.com	Zip: 96730
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 9, 2022 @ 11:04 PM
Testimony: Keep the stairs.		
Name: Philmar Mendoza Kabua	Email: mendozakabua@gmail.com	Zip: 96818
Representing: Self	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: May 10, 2022 @ 12:17 AM
Name: Katlyn Hayes	Email: gkat713@yahoo.com	Zip: 16426
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 10, 2022 @ 12:32 AM
Testimony: Turn move the stairs is sad in so many ways for us well it's a part of history there's no reason to destroy history. Secondly people from all over the world travel to want to come see them and experience the amazing opportunity they give it to people. To feel like you are on top of the clouds looking over the island is pretty amazing and for me it was the beginning of falling in love with hiking and fitness and doing good for my body and my soul. I would love to take my kids someday at as if the stairs are still there. I understand it is an issue for people who live in the neighborhood but I think if it was controlled with permits and/or a fee that it could be a happy ending for everyone!		
Name: Brenda Nemec	Email: brenbasil@aol.com	Zip: 53188
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 10, 2022 @ 12:57 AM
Testimony: I personally believe that there is a way that you can save the Haiku stairs that benefits everybody in the state of Hawaii. If you repaired the stairs and charged a fee, in whatever form that looks like, and install a parking lot you could generate enough revenue to support the management of the stairs and income for the city of Honolulu. It would provide the residents with the opportunity to not have people traipsing through their yard all night long, it would keep people from illegally trespassing to legally access the stairs, most importantly it would save a piece of your state's history. There has to be a compromise where everybody wins. Spending the kind of money you want to tear it out is going to destroy your ecosystem, allow for wash out during heavy rain and basically destroy what has been there for many years. It's going to completely go against everything you claim to be wanting to save and protect. And contrary to popular belief nobody's been rescued from the Haiku stairs! Despite the trespassing and even those going up the legal way, people have managed to get up and down without injury.		
Name: Lucas-Benjamin Kleine	Email: lucaskl@gmx.de	Zip: 10407
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 10, 2022 @ 01:22 AM
Testimony: Removing the stairs is a huge financial and environmental burden and does not take care of the issue. Instead a renovation & licensed and controlled access to the stairs should be granted.		
Name: Naysha Rivera	Email: nayshar38@gmail.com	Zip: 06611

Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: May 10, 2022 @ 03:12 AM
Testimony: This holds a special place in my heart. Last year i visited Hawaii and got proposed at the very top of stairway to heaven. Although I did not take the stairs, I hiked through the back way I think after all these years you should keep it how it is. This place holds a lot of memories for everyone around the world like myself. It is a beautiful site to see.		
Name: Teodora Garan	Email: garan.teodora@yahoo.com	Zip: 89139
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 10, 2022 @ 03:19 AM
Testimony: I would love if we can save the haiku stairs! Demolishing the stairs will destroy so much history and nature. The money spend to demolish the stairs can be used towards inventing system to fix the stairs and make hikers pay fee to visit the stairs! Please don't destroy that miracle		
Name: Yevhen Shrub	Email: shurshik87@gmail.com	Zip: 18028
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 10, 2022 @ 05:01 AM
Testimony: Hello from Ukraine. Haiku Stairs for me is the 8th new wonder of the world. This is so unique project that it should be improved, preserved and open as a big tourist destination. I first see the photo of Haiku Stairs in 2017 and I became obsessed with it. In 2019 I came to Hawaii to visit it! I read about "legal way" using the long trail, so I did it, I took 2000\$ with me to pay a fine in case there is any problem, cause I was able to pay 2000\$ for such a unique place. This is so cool! I did the whole trail to it but didn't go down by stairs, I just took some photos and went back, the trail is awesome, no need to use the stairs at all. And I would pay 100\$ for the entrance ticket and I think many will pay for it. You can limit the number of tourists, improve the trail and let people go down just to the first "house" (~300 steps), but do not make the big error, leave the stairs there! We all love it :)		
Name: Wendy Barrios	Email: wbarrios1291@gmail.com	Zip: 80026
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 10, 2022 @ 05:29 AM
Testimony: Please do not tare down the stairs of this beautiful hike. It has been a safe haven of peace, and tranquillity to people's well-being. Attuning to nature at the peak Can be a wonderful experience, if you tare it down there be possibility of constructing other lands. Please keep this safe.		
Name: Cheryl Batterton	Email: cbatterton@live.com	Zip: 96809
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 10, 2022 @ 05:42 AM
Testimony: The amount of tourism that this hike brings alone makes it worth the cost to repair over tear down.		
Name: Ke Ellsworth	Email: kre62@live.com	Zip: 89123
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 10, 2022 @ 05:45 AM
Testimony: Aloha from the 9th island. Las Vegas had a problem with its welcome sign. They didn't dynamite the sign but instead created a parking area so all could enjoy without disrupting neighboring cars. True leadership finds a way to preserve, not destroy. What will		

this councils legacy be?		
Name: Angie Russell	Email: amilacek@yahoo.com	Zip: 68136
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 10, 2022 @ 06:05 AM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>I think it will be a huge waste to take our the stairs. They should leave them and if anything repair some and let the community set up guidelines.</p>		
Name: Kelli Bullock Hergert	Email: kellibullock808@gmail.com	Zip: 96816
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 10, 2022 @ 06:44 AM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>I vehemently oppose the budget that will allow for the destruction of the Haiku Stairs.</p> <p>0 accidental deaths and 0 lawsuits in the Ha'ik Stairs' entire 80-year history. There is NO ground for the council to stand on calling these stairs dangerous to the community.</p> <p>The problem and issues in the community attached to the lower stair access stems from the lack of support by the City Council, private land owners and the State to provide adequate support and solutions to the neighborhood's complaints of trespassing and traffic. PROPER MANAGEMENT of the access and the stairs themselves can provide many benefits and relief to the locals who live in the neighborhood, and maintain the historical and cultural importance of this engineering marvel.</p> <p>The Haiku Stairs, Stairway to Heaven, is a unique and special part of the landscape of O'ahu, and deserves protection. The residents of the neighborhood surrounding this hike/access point, also deserve to have their issues addressed; this can be achieved by properly managing the permitting, access, entry, parking and traffic to the stairs.</p> <p>The Stairs are safer, when properly managed, than the many other hikes that draw visitors (recent deaths at Olo Mana, and constant rescues at Lanikai Pillboxes to name a few.)</p> <p>Save the money of the destruction costs (which has grown exponentially and will continue to do so) to address the larger problems in our neighborhoods: bad roads, homelessness and mental illness, drugs and crime, and lack of school funding. City Council needs to listen to ALL of their constituents, and not just a localized minority</p>		
Name: Tammy King	Email: kami_girl@sbcglobal.net	Zip: 78247
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: May 10, 2022 @ 06:59 AM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>This should never be up for destruction for the mere fact that this stairway is a historical landmark. Preserve this...it is a beautiful and safe hike.</p>		
Name: Ann Chang	Email: annchang@hawaii.edu	Zip: 96815
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: May 10, 2022 @ 07:09 AM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>Please support this bill that will greatly assist a group within our community, a group who was already socioeconomically disadvantaged prior to the COVID pandemic, who experienced disproportionately high morbidity and mortality rates due to COVID.</p>		
Name: Joseph Cruz	Email: josephginapp@yahoo.com	Zip: 96816
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: May 10, 2022 @ 07:22 AM
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>I support bill 14 (2022) cd1</p>		

Specifically councilmember Tupola's
Amendments for Ocean Safety
Adding 7 lifeguard positions
And equipment for Kahe point

Frankly we need more money, training, and attention for all aspects of Ocean Safety.

Mahalo

Name: John Kahalewai	Email: jakahalewai@gmail.com	Zip: 96816
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: May 10, 2022 @ 07:26 AM

Testimony:
I SUPPORT Bill14 (2022), CD1, specifically councilmember Tupola's amendments for Ocean Safety adding 7 lifeguard positions and equipment for Kahe Point.

Name: Jaime Blanco	Email: Jaimealex913@yahoo.com	Zip: 33186
Representing: Self	Position: Oppose	Submitted: May 10, 2022 @ 07:28 AM

Testimony:
I oppose the tear down of Haiku Stairs. It's a majestic , iconic part of the island of Oahu that can generate so much revenue with controlled access. It's like the Empire State Building or Eiffel Tower. Removing it will be removing a piece of Hawaii's heart.

Name: Shawn Wolff	Email: swolff.hnl@gmail.com	Zip: 96815
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: May 10, 2022 @ 07:32 AM

Testimony:
Lifeguards save lives. The oceans first responders. Whether flat or fifty foot, lifeguards risk personal injury, even death, to see that people go home to their families. Strategically placed fully staffed towers, and fully equipped mobile response units are imperative to our communities and visitors safety and education.

Name: Tom Renville	Email: hauoliboy@hotmail.com	Zip: 78724
Representing: Self	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: May 10, 2022 @ 07:40 AM

Testimony:
In regard to the Haiku stairs. Please do not take them down. They're a wonderful adventure. An experience that people should be able to choose to take part in. Their history alone is worth keeping them. Having lived in Lanikai, I experienced the "traffic" with people wanting to do the Pill Box hike. Where sometimes it could be annoying, you can't blame people for getting out and wanting to experience the beauty of this fantastic island. Again, please reconsider. I still need to climb them! Mahalo, Tom Renville

Name: David Derauf, MD	Email: dderauf@kkv.net	Zip: 97819
Representing: Kokua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Family Services	Position: Support	Submitted: May 10, 2022 @ 07:44 AM

Name: Brendan Shea	Email: bs96712@gmail.com	Zip: 96712
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Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: May 10, 2022 @ 07:53 AM
Testimony: I SUPPORT Bill14 (2022), CD1, specifically councilmember Tupola's amendments for Ocean Safety adding 7 lifeguard positions and equipment for Kahe Point.		
Name: Colby Ogata	Email: colbyogata10@gmail.com	Zip: 96814
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: May 10, 2022 @ 08:10 AM
Testimony: I SUPPORT Bill14 (2022), CD1, specifically council member Tupola's amendments for Ocean Safety adding 7 lifeguard positions and equipment for Kahe Point.		
Name: Kurt Lager	Email: lager.kurt@gmail.com	Zip: 96816
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: May 10, 2022 @ 08:12 AM
Testimony: I SUPPORT Bill14 (2022), CD1, specifically council member Tupola's amendments for Ocean Safety adding 7 lifeguard positions and equipment for Kahe Point.		
Name: Letani Peltier	Email: cnhapolicycenter@hawaiiancouncil.org	Zip: 96816
Representing: Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement (CNHA)	Position: Support	Submitted: May 10, 2022 @ 08:16 AM
Name: Matthew Higgins	Email: m0007higgins@yahoo.com	Zip: 96734
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: May 10, 2022 @ 08:36 AM
Testimony: I support Council woman Tupola's amendment to Bill 14 CDI . To include Funds for 7 additional Full time Ocean Safety Officer (Life Guards) And and Funding for a fully equipped Lifeguard Tower (to include , a mobile vehicle, water craft , all necessary equipment needed) . For the Public Safety of the residents and visitors in this Extremely popular Ocean area .		
Name: Donald Rodgers	Email: djrodgers03@yahoo.com	Zip: 96822
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: May 10, 2022 @ 08:39 AM
Testimony: I SUPPORT Bill14 (2022), CD1, specifically councilmember Tupola's amendments for Ocean Safety adding 7 lifeguard positions and equipment for Kahe Point.		
Name: Kayla Chang	Email: kaylachang12@gmail.com	Zip: 96762
Representing: Ocean Safety Department	Position: Support	Submitted: May 10, 2022 @ 08:53 AM

<p>Testimony:</p> <p>I SUPPORT Bill14 (2022), CD1, specifically councilmember Tupola's amendments for Ocean Safety adding 7 lifeguard positions and equipment for Kahe Point.</p>		
<p>Name:</p> <p>Brett Carter</p>	<p>Email:</p> <p>brettcarter4444@gmail.com</p>	<p>Zip:</p> <p>96813</p>
<p>Representing:</p> <p>Self</p>	<p>Position:</p> <p>Support</p>	<p>Submitted:</p> <p>May 10, 2022 @ 08:57 AM</p>
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>I SUPPORT Bill14 (2022), CD1, specifically councilmember Tupola's amendments for Ocean Safety adding 7 lifeguard positions and equipment for Kahe Point.</p>		
<p>Name:</p> <p>Paulina Perman</p>	<p>Email:</p> <p>Psperman67@gmail.com</p>	<p>Zip:</p> <p>96822</p>
<p>Representing:</p> <p>Self</p>	<p>Position:</p> <p>Support</p>	<p>Submitted:</p> <p>May 10, 2022 @ 08:58 AM</p>
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>There were 2 members of my community that I know of that died due to covid. These members were long time residents and essential workers. We all pay taxes and yet our community members are unable to access emergency funeral assistance such as FEMA. I support this bill and am grateful for the City's assistance. Mahalo.</p>		
<p>Name:</p> <p>Ryan Kusumoto</p>	<p>Email:</p> <p>rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org</p>	<p>Zip:</p> <p>96819</p>
<p>Representing:</p> <p>Parents And Children Together</p>	<p>Position:</p> <p>I wish to comment</p>	<p>Submitted:</p> <p>May 10, 2022 @ 08:58 AM</p>
<p>Testimony:</p> <p>Aloha Councilmembers,</p> <p>Pacific Islanders make up roughly 4 percent of the State's population but have the third most deaths from COVID-19, making up roughly 17 percent of the statewide death county. Parents And Children Together serves many of these individuals and families and have helped our clients navigate the complexities that the COVID-19 pandemic exposed, especially due to illness, in some cases death, and overall family hardship. Due to pre-existing Federal Law, citizens of Freely Associated (COFA) States living in the United States are unable to benefit from FEMAs COVID-19 Funeral Assistance program that is open to US citizens, non-citizen nationals, and qualified non-citizens. Accordingly, we stand by Councilmember Kiaina's proposed budget amendment to Bill 14 - to create a COVID-19 death benefits program for Honolulu residents who are citizens of the Freely Associated States of Micronesia that are not eligible for the Federal Emergency Management Administration's (FEMA) COVID-19 Funeral Assistance reimbursement program. This proposal for the City to appropriate \$2 million of the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, a part of the American Rescue Plan, includes our COFA citizens and creates parity for our Micronesian 'ohana.</p> <p>Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.</p>		



Hawaii Funeral & Cemetery Association, Inc.

1330 Maunakea Street, Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

May 8th 2022

Calvin K.Y. Say

Chair, Committee on Budget

Radiant Cordero

Vice Chair, Committee on Budget

Honolulu City Budget Committee Members

Committee on Budget Hearing - May 10, 2022 Special Meeting

Re: **SUPPORT** - Bill 14 (2022) CD1

City Management Amendment relating to "Death Benefit" Reimbursement for Citizens of the Freely Associated States

- **Request Amendment be increased to \$2,000,000 - \$3,000,000**

Dear Chair Say,

The Hawaii Funeral & Cemetery Association, Inc. is a Domestic Nonprofit Corporation, comprised of 12 independent Board of Directors representing 14 mortuaries and 10 cemeteries that serve the largest majority of Hawaii's families. We would like to give our support on the Death Reimbursement amendment that would help families of the Freely Associated States that were unable to qualify for the FEMA Reimbursement program for Covid related deaths. The FEMA reimbursement program provided up to \$9000 that, if qualified could be reimbursed to a family that incurred funeral and burial expenses.

The current management amendment is budgeted \$1000 which is extremely low based on actual funeral and cemetery cost and the number of families we believe affected. In addition, due to gathering restrictions and travel lockdowns families were unable to transport their loved ones back to their home (overseas). The transcontinental air-transport of decedents was shut down for a long period of time due to country lock-downs. This placed added stress on families, including added cost depending on their decisions to burial in Hawaii permanently, or temporarily until restrictions were lifted. The last two years have been extremely difficult on Hawaii families that had a death, "Covid or non-covid related deaths" families not only had to go through the grief of loss, they were not allowed to have their customary traditional "spiritual and religious ceremonies" due to the State and County restrictions, this just added to their grief.

Based on the mortality rate data gathered by the Hawaii State Department of Health, https://health.hawaii.gov/coronavirusdisease2019/tableau_dashboard/mortality-data/ as of May 4th 2022 there have been 1391 Statewide covid related deaths; "1043 Honolulu County". (Attached exhibit) The primary race affected were Filipino - 329 deaths, Pacific Islander - 224 deaths, Japanese - 226 deaths and Native Hawaiian - 252 deaths. I think it's a fair statement to estimate that a large percentage of the Pacific Islander deaths would not have qualified for the FEMA reimbursement program and are citizens of the Freely Associated States.

We have an opportunity to help families that did not qualify for the FEMA reimbursement program. We suggest the current Death Benefit Amendment be increased to match FEMA's \$9000 per qualifying family and is budgeted for approximately 224 families and families affected in the future. We support the current amendment be increased to a minimum of \$2M - \$3M.

Note: Fema qualifications should be used as a guideline to qualify families for the Honolulu County Reimbursement Program.

Thank you for the consideration,

Jay Morford
Sincerely,

Jay Morford - President



Summary of COVID-19 Deaths, Hawaii 2022

Last Updated Wednesday, May 4, 2022 (updated weekly)

Click the info icon for
notes on this data



1,391

Total Number of Deaths*

10

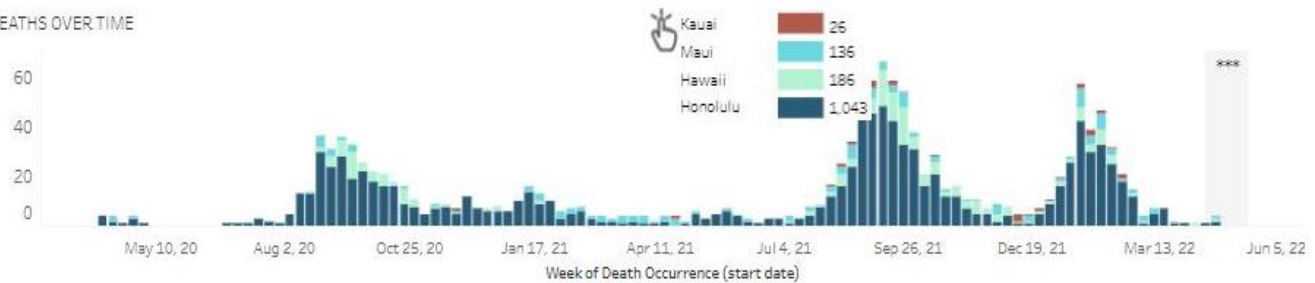
New Deaths Reported in Last 7 Days**

Click on the orange button to view deaths
reported in the last 7 days



New Deaths

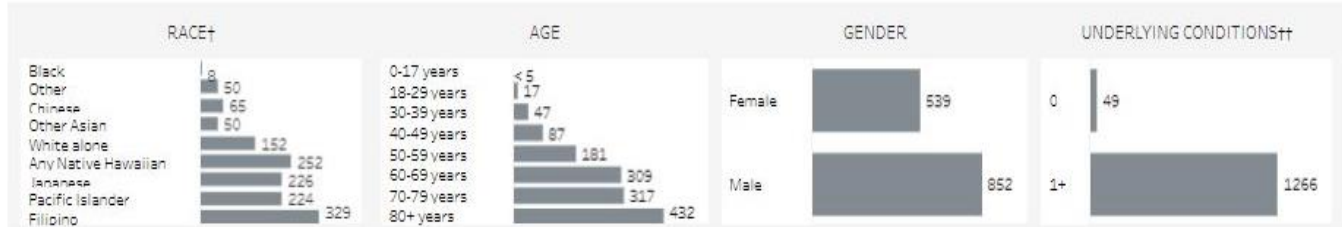
DEATHS OVER TIME



Select Metric: Hover over the 'i' to read metric descriptions



Count (n)



Selected Metric: Count (n)

Aloha Council Members,

My name is Barbara Tom, and I am the Director of the Waipahu Safe Haven Immigrant/Migrant Resource Center in Waipahu. We provide services for all Migrant/Immigrant residents of Waipahu. I am in full support of Bill 14 as it will provide the support needed for our COFA residents who were heavily impacted by deaths during this Pandemic. It will create assistance and parity for our Micronesian residents.

Mahalo,

Director, Waipahu Safe Haven Immigrant/Migrant Center



720 N. King Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817
(808) 754-7303
www.weareoceania.org

May 9th, 2022

Calvin K.Y Say

Chair, Committee on Budget

Radiant Cordero

Vice Chair, Committee on Budget

Honolulu City Budget Committee Members

Committee on Budget Hearing – May 10, 2022, Special Meeting

Re: **SUPPORT** – Bill 14 (2022) CD1

City Management Amendment relating to “Death Benefit” Reimbursement for Citizens of the Freely Associated States

- **Request Amendment be increased to \$2,000,000 - \$3,000,000**

Dear Chair Say,

My name is Josie Howard, the Chief Executive Officer of We Are Oceania (WAO), a 501(c)(3) non-profit public charity serving the Micronesian and Pacific Island communities throughout the State. WAO’s mission is to empower our Micronesian community to navigate success while honoring the integrity of their diverse heritage. I am writing on behalf of the WAO ‘Ohana and the people we serve to provide our support on the Death Reimbursement amendment that would help families of the *Freely Associated States* that were unable to qualify for the FEMA Reimbursement program for Covid related deaths.

As many of you already know, although only 4 percent of the state population, Pacific Islanders have the third most deaths from COVID-19, making up roughly 17 percent of the statewide death county. According to a DOH report to the Civil Right Commission in 2021, over 50% of 17% was from the COFA community. Due to pre-existing Federal Law, citizens of Freely Associated States living in the United States are unable to benefit from FEMA’s COVID-19 Funeral Assistance program that is open to US citizens, non-citizen nationals, and qualified non-citizens. Accordingly, Councilmember Kia‘āina is proposing that the City appropriate \$2 million of the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, a part of the American Rescue Plan, and create parity for our Micronesian ‘Ohana burial expenses.

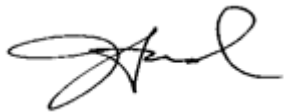
Based on our direct work with the COFA community during the pandemic, we provide over 28,000 services including funeral services from March 16, 2020, to current. We work directly with the families by providing support in these areas: finding affordable mortuaries, funeral services, transporting bodies of loved ones back home, and PPE before burial or transporting home period and seen the impact on them. The average costs of a funeral reported to us by these families we helped were from \$15,000 to \$20,000.

This is an opportunity to help families that did not qualify for the FEMA reimbursement program. We strongly recommend and support the current Death Benefit Amendment be increased to match FEMA's \$9000 per qualifying family and is budgeted for approximately 224 families and families affected in the future. We support the current amendment be increased to a minimum of \$2M - \$3M.

Note: FEMA qualifications should be used as a guideline to qualify families for Honolulu County Reimbursement Program.

Thank you for this consideration.

Kinisou chapur, Kommol tata, Kulo mulalap, Kalahngan, Kammagar and Sulang,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Howard', with a stylized, flowing script.

Jocelyn H. Howard

Chief Executive Officer

We Are Oceania

Testimony to the Honolulu City Council
By Kokua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Family Services
Regarding Including a COFA COVID Death Benefit in Bill 14
May 8, 2022

Kokua Kalihi Valley (KKV) fully supports Councilmember Kia'aina's amendment to Bill 14, which would create a death benefit program for Honolulu residents who are citizens of Micronesian nations that are under Compacts of Free Association with the US (COFA citizens) but who are not eligible for the Federal Emergency Management Administration's (FEMA) COVID-19 Funeral Assistance reimbursement program.

Our Micronesian friends and neighbors have been disproportionately affected by COVID illness and death. For the period of March 2020 to February 2021 in the State of Hawaii, among all races, illness and death rates were 1,477 and 32 per 100,000 people, respectively. For Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, they were 2,501 and 39 per 100,000, people, respectively. Rates among Micronesians were astronomically higher: **8,991 per 100,000 people (illness) and 243 per 100,000 people (death), the highest rates in the State.**¹ KKV's service area of Kalihi has been an epicenter of COVID, with daily positivity rates in our COVID testing clinic reaching more than 60% at the height of the pandemic. More than forty percent of KKV's 11,000-plus patients are Micronesian.

This disproportionate impact was primarily due to systemic and structural inequities in COVID communications and response. These included, for example, early failures to take into account the Micronesian cultural context, inadequate interpretation and translation services, limited engagement of Micronesian leadership (especially in the early days of the pandemic), limited use of communications platforms common in the Micronesian community (especially social media), and a history of discrimination common to every new migrant wave in Hawaii but exacerbated among Micronesians by additional administrative barriers associated with their unique citizenship status. **These barriers include exclusion from FEMA Funeral benefits, which are nonetheless available to other non-citizens nationals and qualified non-citizens.** Among other barriers, Micronesians are also subject to:

- Significant housing insecurity due to lack of equitable access to affordable homes, limited knowledge of legal self-advocacy, and limited interpretation services for housing-related benefits;
- Constantly shifting and complex health insurance requirements specific to the Micronesian community that result in additional costs, periodic disenrollment, administrative exhaustion, and stigmatization;
- Clear patterns of discriminatory law enforcement;
- Confusing identity documentation requirements that can make tasks as simple as getting a driver's license challenging, complicated and expensive.

Some services to Micronesians are denied outright based on erroneous eligibility information at government agencies.

In light of this history, and of Hawaii's deep tradition of inclusion, we thank Councilmember Kia'aina and other City Councilmembers who support this amendment, for their commitment to removing racial inequities in public benefits programs and ensuring greater Aloha for our beloved COFA friends and neighbors in the State of Hawaii. Mahalo!



Dr. David Derauf
Executive Director
Kokua Kalihi Valley



Michael Epp
Special Projects
Kokua Kalihi Valley

¹ "Disaggregating Data to Measure Racial Disparities in COVID-19 Outcomes and Guide Community Response — Hawaii, March 1, 2020–February 28, 2021", Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, September 17, 2021, Vol. 70, No. 37.

Waikīkī Transportation Management Association Special Improvement District



*Making Waikīkī better
...one curb at a time.*

May 9, 2022

The Honorable Calvin K. Y. Say
Chair and Members
Committee on Budget
Honolulu City Council
530 South King Street, Room 202
Honolulu, HI 96813

SUBJECT: **Support** for Proposed Amendment to Bill 14 (2022)
CD1 appropriating Waikīkī SID Permit Fee Revenues

Dear Chair Say,

The Waikīkī Transportation Management Association (WTMA) greatly appreciates your personal support in drafting a proposed CD2 to Bill 14 (2022) CD1 containing an amendment to reflect the Waikīkī SID Permit Fee revenues collected pursuant to Ordinance 19-23 and fulfilling the purpose of Ordinance 17-58.

We also want to thank Councilmember Tommy Waters for his proposed amendment to Bill 14 (2022) CD1 appropriating the Waikīkī SID Permit Fee revenues. The WTMA **supports** this proposed Bill 14 (2022) CD1 amendment offered by Councilmember Tommy Waters.

This Bill 14 (2022) CD1 amendment will add a Current Expense item to the Department of Transportation Services line item FY23 Operating Budget with the proviso to use the funds for the Waikīkī Special Improvement District to fulfill the purpose of Ordinance 17-58. The proposed funding will go a long way in addressing the complaints about traffic safety problems in Waikīkī.

I would be glad to meet with any Councilmember who desires further background on the work of our WTMA whenever it is at convenient and timely to do so.

Sincerely yours,

Rick Egged, President
Waikīkī Transportation Management Special Improvement District

Cc: Committee on Budget Councilmembers
WTMA Board of Directors

May 9, 2022

Calvin K.Y. Say
Chair, Committee on Budget
Radiant Cordero
Vice Chair, Committee on Budget
Honolulu City Budget Committee Members

Committee on Budget Hearing – May 10, 2022, Special Meeting

Dear Chair Say,

I am writing to express my support for increasing the current Death Benefit Amendment to match FEMA's \$9000/family to help citizens of the Freely Associated States that were unable to qualify under the FEMA reimbursement program. I encourage you to adopt the proposal by Councilmember Kiaāina and appropriate, at minimum, \$2M to help cover the cost of funerals and associated costs for these hard-hit families in Oahu. This action by the City would help create parity for communities that have borne a disproportionate burden of loss during this pandemic.

In the first 10 months of this pandemic, data from the Hawaii State Department of Health showed that at least 75% of the deaths within the Pacific Islander category were among Chuukese and Marshallese individuals [1]. From the time of that report, **the number of deaths among Pacific Islanders nearly tripled and currently stands at 224 deaths, which is over 4 times their representation in the population** [2].

Increasing the current Death Benefit Amendment to adequately support the burial costs incurred by citizens of the Freely Associated States can prevent further inequity being visited upon our islander communities and support them in their time of grief and healing.

Respectfully,

Rebecca Delafield, PhD
Kaimuki resident

1. Hawaii State Department of Health (2021). COVID-19 in Hawaii: Addressing Health Equity in Diverse

Populations. Disease Outbreak Control Division: Special Report. Honolulu, Hawaii.

2. Hawaii State Department of Health. Disease Outbreak Control Division COVID-19 Race/Ethnicity Data.

https://health.hawaii.gov/coronavirusdisease2019/tableau_dashboard/race-ethnicity-data/

My name is Tester Puas. I am a Pastor at the Chuukes Gospel Church with about 75 church members. I lived in Oahu for 18 years and I am grateful to you all for sharing your home with us.

My testimony is in support of Councilmember Kia'aina's amendment (page 2) to Bill 14 for COVID-19 death benefits program for Honolulu residents who are citizens of the Freely Associated States of Micronesia. The pandemic had greatly impacted our community in so many ways. We were restricted from coming together to mourn for love ones; to financially support each other for funeral expenses, and pay our final respect to our love ones. Additionally, we had to bury our love ones here because the borders were shutdown. These are lifetime impacts and today we ask that you support this program so that we can recover together. Thank you for listening and for your support.

I am Pastor Paul Otoko as well as an Indigenous Cultural and Spiritual Consultant internationally. I am writing this letter in support of Council member Kia'āina's amendment (page 2) to Bill 14, requesting the creation of a COVID-19 death benefits program for Honolulu residents who are citizens of the Freely Associated States of Micronesia that are not eligible for the Federal Emergency Management Administration's (FEMA) COVID-19 Funeral Assistance reimbursement program. Considering the impacts of COVID-19 on the Micronesians in Hawaii financially and otherwise, I would humbly request your kind consideration over this needed bill.

Humbly Yours,
Pastor Paul Otoko

My name is Mama Inno. I lived in Hawaii for over 10 years and in those 10 years I served as a community navigator, founder of Pacific Voices, and co-founder of Micronesian Health Advisory Coalition (MHAC), among other roles. It has been a great honor and privilege to serve this community.

My testimony is in support of Councilmember Kia'aina's amendment (page 2) to Bill 14. Bill 14 requests the creation of a COVID-19 death benefits program for Honolulu residents who are citizens of the Freely Associated States of Micronesia that are not eligible for the Federal Emergency Management Administration's (FEMA) COVID-19 Funeral Assistance reimbursement program.

As we all know, the Pacific Islanders were seriously impacted by COVID-19 and we have lost many of our community members. Their untimely passing was made worse by the inability to travel home during the pandemic, as we could not observe our burial traditions and return them to rest in our ancestral home. Since cremation is not acceptable in our culture, many families were forced to bury their loved ones in Hawaii. This decision has generational consequences as our people are now committed to living on this island, which has a cost of living tens of times higher than our homes in Micronesia, just so that we can remain close to our loved ones.

We struggle to support all of those trapped in this situation as our normal means of donations were stripped away because of the COVID-19 restrictions which barred us from participating in community gatherings and worship. Our people, who were disproportionately displaced by the pandemic's effect on service jobs, struggled against all odds to provide for their families, with no room to take care of those who had already passed.

Today, we ask you to help our communities begin to heal by supporting this reimbursement program. Thank you for your time and consideration.

My name is Steve Palsis. I am a Pastor for Kosrae Pentecostal Church with over 70 members. I lived in Oahu for 30 years and have raised my children here. We call Oahu our home; thank you for sharing your Aina with us.

My testimony is in support of Councilmember Kia'āina's amendment (page 2) to Bill 14 for COVID-19 death benefits program for Honolulu residents who are citizens of the Freely Associated States of Micronesia who are not eligible for the FEMA death benefit program. I lost my wife to COVID last year; her untimely passing crushed us, emotionally and financially. Our children and I along with our family and friends could not see her and bid our last goodbyes because of the restrictions. No money could compensate for her loss, but your support in this bill could give us some financial relief as we slowly heal. Thank you for listening and for your support.

I am Pastor Sass Gouland. I lived in Hawaii for over 25 years, attended public school here, and raised my children in this beautiful island we now are privilege to call home.

I am writing this letter in support of Council member Kia'āina's amendment (page 2) to Bill 14, requesting the creation of a COVID-19 death benefits program for Honolulu residents who are citizens of the Freely Associated States of Micronesia that are not eligible for the Federal Emergency Management Administration's (FEMA) COVID-19 Funeral Assistance reimbursement program. I have witnessed first-hand the overwhelming impacts of COVID-19 on the Micronesians in Hawaii financially and otherwise. I know the city has diverse and numerous needs but I am here on behalf of my families and the communities I serve to humbly request for your support and kind consideration.

Killisou Chapur,
Sass Gouland

Aloha,

My name is Philmar Mendoza Kabua and I am one of the very few Micronesian RN on O'ahu. During the outbreak, I had the honor and privilege to be a part of the COVID-19 vaccination outreach teams that provided testing and vaccinations to every community on Oahu. As a front line worker, I've personally seen the impact of COVID-19 amongst my Micronesian community and it's terribly heartbreaking to see the severity of the impact COVID-19 left behind, and continues to leave behind today. Due to the high prevalence of underlying conditions amongst many of my Micronesian communities, many beloved and vulnerable Micronesian families have been robbed away by death. Who knew that the grandma I laughed with today would be gone tomorrow. Who was prepared for this? Not only had my community suffered emotionally by the deaths of our loved ones but financially as well. As a family member, it's been quite challenging to provide financially to support the deaths of loved ones, even as an RN. Families who are already financially struggling due to COVID-19 had to figure out ways to come up with just enough funds to bury their loved ones. Funerals are very costly and we genuinely need your help to include us in the funeral assistance programs.

During the peak of delta, many family members had no choice but to go out and seek job opportunities and any means just to contribute financially to the deaths of loved ones. Yet while out there trying to help our grieving families come up with just enough funds, some ended up dying in the process. A father died of COVID-19 leaving behind his very little children and his wife. So the grief and financial burdens had doubled, tripled, even quadrupled.

This COVID outbreak has no boundaries. It doesn't care about our race, our income, our citizen status, and our struggles. What it does is robbing away our loved ones from our families at home or by isolating them in the hospital until their lonesome passing, forever! It breaks my heart to remember all my fellow Micronesian families who went through such horrific unprecedented times. As an RN that risked my life for the safety of all O'ahu residents to increase the vaccination rate and to ensure many ohanas are screened for COVID-19, is it possible to share that spirit of Ohana with my Micronesian family with the

funeral assistance, as I have shared mine with yours?

With humility I am in full support of Councilmember Kia'āina's amendment (page 2) to Bill 14. The Bill 14 requests the creation of a COVID-19 death benefits program for Honolulu residents who are citizens of the Freely Associated States of Micronesia that are not eligible for the Federal Emergency Management Administration's (FEMA) COVID-19 Funeral Assistance reimbursement program. Like myself and many of my Micronesian families, we are workers and we pay taxes. Would the city and county find it JUST to be inclusive of us as we are abiding COFA citizens who contribute to the wellbeing and economic improvement of this country? With sincere heart, mahalo nui loa for listening to my testimony. And I pray hearts may be moved to support my Micronesian family. As the Lord says, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Luke 6:31

Testimony to the Honolulu City Council
By Kokua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Family Services
Regarding Including a COFA COVID Death Benefit in Bill 14
May 8, 2022

Kokua Kalihi Valley (KKV) fully supports Councilmember Kia'aina's amendment to Bill 14, which would create a death benefit program for Honolulu residents who are citizens of Micronesian nations that are under Compacts of Free Association with the US (COFA citizens) but who are not eligible for the Federal Emergency Management Administration's (FEMA) COVID-19 Funeral Assistance reimbursement program.

Our Micronesian friends and neighbors have been disproportionately affected by COVID illness and death. For the period of March 2020 to February 2021 in the State of Hawaii, among all races, illness and death rates were 1,477 and 32 per 100,000 people, respectively. For Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, they were 2,501 and 39 per 100,000, people, respectively. Rates among Micronesians were astronomically higher: **8,991 per 100,000 people (illness) and 243 per 100,000 people (death), the highest rates in the State.**¹ KKV's service area of Kalihi has been an epicenter of COVID, with daily positivity rates in our COVID testing clinic reaching more than 60% at the height of the pandemic. More than forty percent of KKV's 11,000-plus patients are Micronesian.

This disproportionate impact was primarily due to systemic and structural inequities in COVID communications and response. These included, for example, early failures to take into account the Micronesian cultural context, inadequate interpretation and translation services, limited engagement of Micronesian leadership (especially in the early days of the pandemic), limited use of communications platforms common in the Micronesian community (especially social media), and a history of discrimination common to every new migrant wave in Hawaii but exacerbated among Micronesians by additional administrative barriers associated with their unique citizenship status. **These barriers include exclusion from FEMA Funeral benefits, which are nonetheless available to other non-citizens nationals and qualified non-citizens.** Among other barriers, Micronesians are also subject to:

- Significant housing insecurity due to lack of equitable access to affordable homes, limited knowledge of legal self-advocacy, and limited interpretation services for housing-related benefits;
- Constantly shifting and complex health insurance requirements specific to the Micronesian community that result in additional costs, periodic disenrollment, administrative exhaustion, and stigmatization;
- Clear patterns of discriminatory law enforcement;
- Confusing identity documentation requirements that can make tasks as simple as getting a driver's license challenging, complicated and expensive.

Some services to Micronesians are denied outright based on erroneous eligibility information at government agencies.

In light of this history, and of Hawaii's deep tradition of inclusion, we thank Councilmember Kia'aina and other City Councilmembers who support this amendment, for their commitment to removing racial inequities in public benefits programs and ensuring greater Aloha for our beloved COFA friends and neighbors in the State of Hawaii. Mahalo!



Dr. David Derauf
Executive Director
Kokua Kalihi Valley



Michael Epp
Special Projects
Kokua Kalihi Valley

¹ "Disaggregating Data to Measure Racial Disparities in COVID-19 Outcomes and Guide Community Response — Hawaii, March 1, 2020–February 28, 2021", Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, September 17, 2021, Vol. 70, No. 37.



HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL

Testimony in Support of Councilmember Kia'aina's Proposed Amendment to Bill 14
Tuesday, May 10, 2022, 9:00am, via Videoconference

The Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement (CNHA) submits testimony in **SUPPORT** of Councilmember Kia'aina's proposed amendment to Bill 14, the Executive Operating Budget. The proposed amendment would establish a COVID-19 death benefits program for Honolulu residents who are citizens of the Freely Associated States (FAS), who are not eligible for the Federal Emergency Management Administration's (FEMA) COVID-19 Funeral Assistance reimbursement program.

The Pacific Islander community was devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Although they comprise only 4% of the state population, Pacific Islanders account for 17% of deaths in Hawai'i.¹ This disparity in outcomes was even more pronounced before the vaccine became available; as of January 31, 2021, while Hawai'i had the lowest COVID-19 mortality rate in the country with approximately 22 deaths per 100,000 population, the age-adjusted mortality rate of Pacific Islanders was 319.6 deaths per 100,000 population.²

Unfortunately, due to pre-existing federal law, FAS citizens living in the United States are unable to benefit from FEMA's COVID-19 Funeral Assistance Program, which is open to U.S. Citizens, non-citizen nationals, and qualified non-citizens. The proposed amendment would address this egregious wrong and provide invaluable assistance and support to FAS citizens who also part of our community in Hawai'i.

Accordingly, CNHA urges the Honolulu City Council to adopt Councilmember Kia'aina's proposed amendment to Bill 14. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully,

J. Kūhiō Lewis, CEO
Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement

¹ See Hawaii State Department of Health, *Race of COVID-19 Cases, Hawaii 2021*, https://health.hawaii.gov/coronavirusdisease2019/tableau_dashboard/race-ethnicity-data/ (last visited May 9, 2022)

² HAWAII STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, COVID-19 IN HAWAII: ADDRESSING HEALTH EQUITY IN DIVERSE POPULATIONS 18 (2021), available at <https://hawaiiicovid19.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/COVID-19-Race-Ethnicity-Equity-Report.pdf>.