



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**  
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**Testimony in SUPPORT of H.B. 0655 H.D. 1**  
**RELATING TO HEALTH**

REPRESENTATIVE CHRIS LEE, CHAIR  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Hearing Date: 02/22/19

Room Number: 325

1 **Fiscal Implications: NONE**

2 **Department Testimony: The Department of Health supports H.B. 655 H.D. 1 that amends**  
3 SECTION 2, Chapter 8, Hawaii Revised Statutes by adding a new section to designate the month  
4 of September as “Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month”.

5 In response to HCR66 passed by the 2016 Legislature, the Prevent Suicide Hawaii Task Force,  
6 (PSHTF) in collaboration with the Emergency Medical Services and Injury Prevention System  
7 Branch (EMSIPSB) developed and launched a strategic plan to reduce suicides in Hawaii by  
8 25% by 2025.

9 From 2013 to 2017, 926 Hawaii residents died from suicide. The annual average was 185. It  
10 was the leading cause of fatal injuries accounting for 25% of the 3,695 total deaths during this  
11 time period. Suicides were the 9<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death among state residents over that time,  
12 but the 3<sup>rd</sup> leading cause among residents under 50 years of age.

13 A key goal of the plan is to establish a sustained media and communication strategy to raise  
14 awareness around suicide prevention. Codifying September as Suicide Prevention and  
15 Awareness Month in Hawaii is one of the strategies for achieving this objective since it provides  
16 a yearly focus for coordinated statewide public awareness activities.

17 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



ONLINE SUBMITTAL: February 20, 2019

**HEARING** February 22, 2018 2:05 p.m. in room 325

**TO:** COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY  
Rep. Chris Lee, Chair  
Rep. Joy A. San Buenaventura, Vice Chair

**FROM:** Eva Andrade, President

**RE:** **Strong Support for HB 655 HD1 Suicide Prevention Month**

Hawaii Family Forum is a non-profit, pro-family education organization committed to preserving and strengthening life, family and religious freedom in Hawaii. We are committed to defending the sanctity of human life from conception until natural death, and everything that comes between. We are very concerned about suicide, because it affects the vulnerable people in our community, especially our youth, elderly and infirm.

A report to the 2018 Hawaii Legislature indicated that between 2012-2016, suicide was the most common cause of fatal injuries among Hawaii residents, accounting for one-quarter of all fatal injuries. The most striking statistic was that one person dies by suicide in Hawaii every two days<sup>i</sup>.

We believe, however, that it is not just the young people who are victims of suicide and depression. Many elderly people and people who are terminal, are also at risk for depression and suicide. The CDC reported that it was the eighth leading cause among people 55 to 64 years of age<sup>ii</sup>. Even if that number is not as high as youth, it is still not what we want for our kupuna.

Experts rightly point out that suicidal behaviors, for people of any age, are usually rooted in many different factors, with mental health issues playing an important role in the overall mix. It is a "perfect storm" of emotional issues and the only way to begin making a difference, is by identifying and treating each person. And the good news, is that it is fixable by awareness, education and treatment.

Designating the month of September of each year as Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month is a step in the right direction because it sends a message that suicide is never a solution by providing education, resources, and support to the community. This bill makes a strong statement on something with which the community can agree.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support!

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<sup>i</sup> Hawaii Suicide Task Force Report, 2018

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/suicide-factsheet.pdf> (accessed 02/09/19)

**HB-655-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/20/2019 11:33:53 PM

Testimony for JUD on 2/22/2019 2:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Anonymous	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Oppose with comments. I think its better to just do suicide awareness how ever many times you want to and first of all, why are they doing this? September has so many issues assigned to it by so many people and issues that it makes it unfair to have it just be suicide prevention month legally. Perhaps start changing your own social interactions and attacking loneliness. There was a book about how we're more lonely than ever. Stop waiting, setting up booths, and print material and start reaching out and providing resources right at their doorsteps.<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/suicide-prevention/are-you-feeling-suicidal.htm/> There is maybe a reason none of these works, there is a deep interplexed barrier. Food desert.

Also there is an video from Youtuber called Knowing Better about the series 13 reasons, and how its all wrong and caused people to be more suicidal.