WHEREAS, work-related musculoskeletal disorders are the leading occupational health problem plaguing the nursing workforce; and

WHEREAS, of primary concern are back injuries, which can be severely debilitating for nurses, though other types of musculoskeletal injuries can affect other parts of the body as the neck, shoulders, wrists, and knees; and

WHEREAS, compared to other occupations, nursing personnel are among the highest at risk for musculoskeletal disorders; and

WHEREAS, according to the United States Department of Labor, nursing aides, orderlies, and attendants ranked second and registered nurses sixth in a list of at-risk occupations for strains and sprains that included truck drivers (first), laborers (third), and construction workers (seventh); and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Labor also estimated that, for the year 2000, the incidence rate for back injuries involving lost work days was 181.6 per 10,000 full-time workers in nursing homes and 90.1 per 10,000 full-time workers in hospitals, whereas comparative incidence rates per 10,000 full-time workers were 98.4 for truck drivers, 70.0 for construction workers, 56.3 for miners, and 47.1 for agriculture workers; and

WHEREAS, in 2001, the United States Department of Labor found that for cases involving days away from work among registered nurses (total of 24,719), 4,547 were categorized as overexertion in lifting and 14,832 were listed as sprains or strains; and
WHEREAS, the risk for musculoskeletal injury secondary to manual patient handling crosses all specialty areas of nursing and as such, no nurse is effectively clear from risk; and

WHEREAS, the impact on the nursing workforce may lead to adverse consequences at the organizational level, as well, through increased absenteeism, lost work time, burnout, decreased retention, high turnover, and threatened recruitment; and

WHEREAS, the extent of musculoskeletal disorders among the United States nursing workforce is particularly distressing when contemplated in the context of the current nursing shortage; and

WHEREAS, injuries secondary to patient handling tasks compound factors such as the aging of the nursing workforce, declining retention and recruitment rates, and lowering social value of nursing to worsen the shortage problem; and

WHEREAS, in response to the significant number and severity of work-related back injuries and other musculoskeletal disorders among nurses, the American Nurses Association has launched the Handle With Care campaign; and

WHEREAS, the campaign seeks to build a health care industry-wide effort to prevent back and other musculoskeletal injuries; and

WHEREAS, this is being done through developing partnerships and coalitions, education and training, increasing use of assistive equipment and patient-handling devices, reshaping nursing education to incorporate safe patient handling, and pursuing federal and state ergonomics policy by highlighting technology-oriented safe-patient handling benefits for patients and nurses; and

WHEREAS, in the absence of ergonomics regulations at national or state levels that protect health care workers, the American Nurses Association has taken on alternative approaches to encourage a movement to control ergonomic hazards in the health care workplace and prevent back injuries among the nation's nursing workforce; and
WHEREAS, in 2005, the Council of State Governments' Health Capacity Task Force adopted and supported the policies contained in the American Nurses Association's Handle With Care campaign and asked member states to also support the campaign; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Twenty-third Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2006, the Senate concurring, that the Legislature of the State of Hawaii supports the policies contained in the American Nurses Association's Handle With Care campaign; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Council of State Governments' Health Capacity Task Force and the American Nurses Association.

OFFERED BY: Marnel B. Lee
Cindy Chavez
Ride Cabanilla

Kirk Caldwell