

February 5, 2018

The Honorable Brian Schatz
722 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Schatz:

I am writing on behalf of the Hawaii Society of Anesthesiologists (HSA) to express support for S. 2260, the Opioids and STOP Pain Initiative Act. We commend you for your leadership on this important issue and we look forward to working with you to advance this legislation.

The HSA is a component society of the larger, umbrella organization, the American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA), comprised of nearly 52,000 members. As the medical specialty dedicated to patient safety and the care and treatment of pain, physician anesthesiologists are pleased to know that you are addressing opioid abuse and making pain research a priority.

The Opioids and STOP Pain Initiative ACT will ensure that new research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) continues to grow and focus on initiatives directed at opioid abuse. The bill will advance both a greater understanding of pain, as well as the discovery and development of safer and more effective treatments and preventative interventions for pain. The HSA is pleased S. 2260 encompasses the significant appropriation of funding for the NIH (\$5 billion over five years) set out in previous passed legislation, the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2016 (CARA or P.L. 114-198). CARA directed the NIH to intensify pain research, including alternative treatments to opioids. Unfortunately, the NIH still faces challenges in growing these opportunities and this additional funding would be greatly beneficial to addressing the nation's opioid epidemic.

Physician anesthesiologists are uniquely positioned to provide recommendations on how to address the opioid crisis. Not only do we understand the intricacy of post-surgical pain and alternative treatment options to best manage this pain, many of our members also specialize in pain medicine and treat complex patients affected by chronic pain. In fact, the HSA Vice President, Roy Esaki, M.D., is a fellowship trained pain management specialist and the issues addressed by S. 2260 are especially important to our organization's leadership. The HSA and the broader ASA would welcome the opportunity to work with your office on this important health issue.

Thank you for your tireless efforts and dedication to address a problem impacting so many Americans and their families. The physician anesthesiologists of Hawaii are pleased to support the Opioids and STOP Pain Initiative Act and we are hopeful this legislation can be part of the bigger solution to the opioid crisis. Should you have any questions or would like to discuss these issues further, please do not hesitate to contact me at orenb28@gmail.com or Ashley Walton in the Washington, D.C. office of the ASA at A.Walton@ASAhq.org or (202) 289-2222.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'O' followed by a series of loops and a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.

Oren Bernstein, M.D.
President
Hawaii Society of Anesthesiologists