



**The One Percent Coalition
Honorary Chairmen:**

The Honorable Bob Dole

The Honorable Bob Kerrey

**One Percent Coalition Hails Hawaii Jobs Initiative;
S.B.2625 Modeled After “Employer Work Incentive Act for
Individuals with Severe Disabilities”**

Immediate Release

WASHINGTON, DC (July 13, 2006) – The One Percent Coalition today hailed the near-passage of S.B.2625, legislation pending before the Hawaii Legislature. Supporters of Hawaii’s S.B.2625 modeled the initiative after the federal “Employer Work Incentive Act for Individuals with Severe Disabilities” (S.1570) introduced by Senators Pat Roberts, R-Kansas, and Edward Kennedy, D-Mass.

The purpose of Hawaii’s S.B.2625 is to promote employment opportunities for people with disabilities by requiring the state, county, and University of Hawaii to provide a procurement preference for business that employs “eligible individuals with disabilities.” The proposal is a procurement preference in equal percentage as the percentage of the number of employees with disabilities, up to 25 percent (Note: Part time employees will be counted in proportion with the number of hours worked in a 40-hour week; i.e., an employee that works 10 hours per week will be counted as “1/4” an employee). Participation by business would be voluntary.

“We are honored to have the support of Rene’ Berthiaume, Chairman of the Hawaii State Rehabilitation Council,” stated John D. Kemp, spokesperson of the One Percent Coalition. “Rene understands that new, innovative approaches are needed to address the high unemployment facing his State’s residents with severe disabilities. The Hawaii legislation is a promising step toward achieving that goal.”

According to the HSRC, Hawaii is currently enjoying the lowest unemployment rate in the nation, staying below 3 percent for a sustained period of time. The unemployment rate for persons with disabilities, however, is 62 percent.

“We share a sincere interest in seeing this type of legislation pass into law at both the federal and state level,” stated Berthiaume. “The Hawaii State Rehabilitation Council worked very hard with our State Workforce Development Council in attempting to pass a state version of S.1570.”

Berthiaume further stated, “S.B.2625 did not pass this last legislative session simply because we ran out of time since our legislature is only in session 60 working days a year. What is important moving forward is S.B.2625 did unanimously pass out of subject matter committees before the session ended. We’ll be back again next year.”

The One Percent Coalition is a nonprofit, tax-exempt charity under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The One Percent Coalition is committed to the achievable goal of helping at least one percent (94,000) of severely disabled Americans find competitive employment. Individuals with physical or mental impairments that limit one or more functional capabilities with respect to work are extremely disadvantaged in the world of competitive employment. With this understanding, the One Percent Coalition believes that all facets of the community can work together to achieve the modest, yet realistic, goal of improving their employment rate by at least one percent.

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