



## The Senate

STATE CAPITOL  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Safe Places for Youth Mini Conferences Held at State Capitol**

Honolulu- One hundred and fifty children and youth advocates gathered at the State Capitol today to attend a **Safe Places for Youth Mini Conference**. The conference provided an opportunity for members of the community to discuss the concept of the State's "Safe Places for Youth" initiative and receive community outreach and training.

Children, youth and community advocates identified the provision of "Safe Places for Youth" as a top priority during the 2012 Children and Youth Submit. As a result, Hawaii is embarking on an initiative designed to provide a network of safe places statewide where children and youth can seek help in a timely and supportive manner.

"Today's conference provided a great opportunity for members of our community to continue to discuss and build on our efforts to develop a network of places where youth can access safety and services," said Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Co-Convener of the Keiki Caucus. "Protecting our youth from vulnerable situations, whether at home, school, or on the streets, is a top priority. Safe Places would give our youth a secure location to turn to when they need it most."

[Senate Bill \(SB\) 391](#) and [House Bill \(HB\) 395](#), relating to youth, were two measures introduced during the 2013 Legislative Session to help establish safe places for youth.

SB 391 requires the office of youth services to coordinate a two-year safe places for youth pilot program to establish a network of safe places where youth can access safety and services. It also establishes the position of safe places for youth program coordinator.

HB 395 requires the Office of Youth Services to coordinate a Safe Places for Youth Pilot Program to coordinate a network that youth may access for safety and where they may obtain advice, guidance, programs, and services. Additionally, the measure provides that in awarding custody and visitation of a minor child, the court shall consider the preference that custody be awarded to both parents to ensure maximum continuing physical, emotional, and meaningful contact with both parents.

Although neither measure made it through conference, both can still be acted on in the 2014 Legislative Session.

"This is an exciting community effort," said Chun Oakland. "This is a good plan and a valuable program. We will continue to work hard to pass supportive legislation this upcoming session."

Today's event was hosted by the Hawaii State Legislature's Keiki Caucus, Office of Youth Services, Hawaii State Student Council, and Hawaii Youth Services Network.

(Photo Caption: Children and youth advocates gather at the State Capitol for the Safe Places for Youth Mini Conference.) (Photo Courtesy: Senate Communications.)

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