

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 16, 2006

RE: H.B. No. 2078
H.D. 1

Honorable Calvin K.Y. Say
Speaker, House of Representatives
Twenty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2006
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce, to which was referred H.B. No. 2078, H.D. 1, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO FOSTER CHILDREN,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this bill is to give foster children the resources and skills needed for independent living by:

- (1) Requiring a foster child's natural parents to pay for the child's car insurance;
- (2) Requiring a foster child's foster parents to bear the cost for the child's car insurance if the child's natural parents are unable to do so;
- (3) Requiring the Department of Human Services (DHS) to provide written consent to allow foster children to apply for a driver's license;
- (4) Indemnifying DHS from liability in the event a foster child is involved in an accident or a lawsuit resulting from driving;
- (5) Allowing higher education board allowances to be paid directly to former foster children; and



- (6) Providing free mandatory minimum personal injury protection, bodily injury, and property damage motor vehicle insurance coverage under the state joint underwriting plan, for minors whose natural and foster parents are unable to pay for the minor's insurance.

The Hawaii Youth Services Network, Hawaii Foster Youth Coalition, and numerous concerned individuals testified in support of this bill. DHS supported the intent of this measure. The Hawaii Insurers Council submitted comments.

Your Committee finds that many foster youth leave foster care at age 18 without having learned how to drive a motor vehicle. This bill will give foster youth the ability to learn this important skill while still in foster care, and increase their opportunities for higher education, employment, and successful independent living.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 2078, H.D. 1, and recommends that it be referred to the Committee on Finance.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Consumer
Protection & Commerce,



ROBERT N. HERKES, Chair



