

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR - 2 2006

RE: S.B. No. 2443
S.D. 1

Honorable Robert Bunda
President of the Senate
Twenty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2006
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs, to which was referred S.B. No. 2443, S.D. 1, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TASK FORCE TO DETERMINE VISITATION RIGHTS FOR GRANDPARENTS AND HANAI INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE INFORMALLY RAISING THESE CHILDREN,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to establish a joint legislative task force to determine the visitation rights, if any, of grandparents and hanai individuals with the children they have informally raised while the children's biological parents were unwilling or unable to do so.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Office of Hawaiian Affairs.

It has been reported that there are approximately fourteen thousand grandparents and hanai individuals who are raising children because the child's biological parents are unable to raise the child due to circumstances such as incarceration, substance abuse, divorce, death, or deployment. Many grandparents and hanai individuals raise these children informally, without intervention by the family court or the department of human service's child protective services.

Your Committee finds that when the child is subsequently returned to a biological parent, the child's parent often prevents the grandparents and hanai individuals from visiting the child.

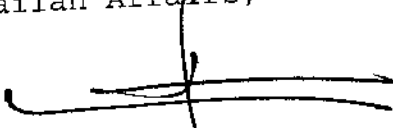


Grandparents and hanai individuals have no legal mechanism to permit them to visit the minor child that they raised when the child's biological parents were unable or unwilling to do so.

The task force would examine the issues related to grandparents and hanai individuals informally raising children in Hawaii and make recommendations to the legislature regarding what visitation rights these individuals should have, if any, after the children are reunited with their biological parents.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 2443, S.D. 1, and recommends that it pass Third Reading.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Judiciary and
Hawaiian Affairs,



COLLEEN HANABUSA, Chair



