

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

2542

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 17

, 2006

RE: S.B. No. 2615
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 Human Services, to which was referred S.B. No. 2615 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO CHILD PROTECTION,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to require the Department of Human Services to make a good faith effort to locate, identify, and interview extended family members for possible foster custody placement of a child and to specify the procedures used and steps taken in this regard in the dependency petition.

Your Committee received testimony in support of the measure from the Department of Human Services, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, the Hawaii Foster Parent Association, Legal Aid Society of Hawaii, and one individual who is a board member of the Hawaii Foster Youth Coalition.

Your Committee finds that this measure also incorporates the provisions of S.B. No. 3218, which earlier received a public hearing. Specifically, this measure acknowledges the importance of kinship care and will ensure that the Department of Human Services makes a good faith effort to locate a child's relatives when the child is placed in the Department's foster custody. The measure specifies required actions by the Department to satisfy this directive. It also requires the Department to collaborate with the Na Kupuna Tribunal, which maintains a genealogical database of Native Hawaiian and non-Native Hawaiian residents in Hawaii, to obtain assistance in locating a child's kin.

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Your Committee further finds that this measure will ensure adequate documentation of the Department's efforts to locate members of the child's extended family and underscores the necessity of having all foster care providers held to the same training and licensing standards.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Eliminating the time restriction for identifying and locating a child's fit and willing kin;
- (2) Directing the Department to consult the Na Kupuna Tribunal for assistance in identifying a child's kin;
- (3) Requiring that the Department continue its search for a child's kin until the permanent placement is final;
- (4) Revising the definition of "kin";
- (5) Deleting the reference to placement with risk-adopt foster parents; and
- (6) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and style.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Human Services that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 2615, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 2615, S.D. 1, and be referred to the Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Human Services,


SUZANNE CHUN OAKLAND, Chair



