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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR CIVIL LEGAL SERVICES.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the legal needs of  
2 Hawaii's indigent and low-income communities are compelling and  
3 extensive. Every day, members of these communities can grapple  
4 with enormous legal issues relating to homelessness, eligibility  
5 for affordable housing, incidents of violence, child custody and  
6 guardianship, elder issues, eligibility for public benefits,  
7 consumer fraud, and immigration issues. Last year alone,  
8 Hawaii's civil legal service organizations provided direct legal  
9 services in 15,000 matters statewide involving family law,  
10 public entitlements, housing, immigration, domestic violence,  
11 civil rights, health, consumer issues, estate planning,  
12 employment, and education. As great as these needs are, the  
13 resources to meet these needs can fall short. The Access to  
14 Justice Hui's November 2007 report, *Achieving Access to Justice*  
15 *for Hawaii's People*, revealed that despite the dedicated efforts  
16 of Hawaii's civil legal service organizations, over seventy-



1 seven per cent of Hawaii's low-income community was without  
2 access to critical legal services.

3 The legislature has evidenced a long-standing commitment to  
4 funding legal services for the poor and the indigent, and  
5 believes that free and low-cost civil legal services for certain  
6 segments of the population are essential to ensuring that a free  
7 and democratic way of life is not reserved solely for those who  
8 can afford it. The legislature recognizes the dedication of  
9 Hawaii legal service providers and their continued efforts to  
10 raise operating funds from a variety of private and federal  
11 resources to meet the legal needs of Hawaii's indigent and lower  
12 income communities in new and innovative ways. The purpose of  
13 this Act is to appropriate funds for civil legal services which  
14 will allow civil legal service organizations to continue to  
15 provide essential legal services for indigent and low-income  
16 Hawaii residents at current levels of operation, and to increase  
17 their capacities wherever possible to meet the needs of Hawaii's  
18 residents.

19 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general  
20 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so  
21 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2008-2009 to  
22 support the provision of free or low-cost civil legal services



1 for Hawaii's low-income and indigent residents by the following  
2 legal service organizations:

- 3 1. Catholic Charities;
- 4 2. Domestic Violence Clearinghouse and Legal Hotline;
- 5 3. Hawaii Family Law Clinic;
- 6 4. Legal Aid Society of Hawaii;
- 7 5. Na Loio Immigrant Rights and Public Interest Legal  
8 Center; and
- 9 6. Volunteer Legal Services Hawaii.

10 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the judiciary for  
11 the purposes of this Act.

12 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2008.

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INTRODUCED BY: Erzanne Chun Oalland



**Report Title:**

Civil Legal Services; Appropriation

**Description:**

Makes an appropriation for civil legal service organizations that provide free or low-cost direct legal services to indigent and low-income residents.

