
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 fifteen thousand matters statewide involving family
10 law, public entitlements, housing, immigration, domestic
11 violence, civil rights, health, consumer issues, estate
12 planning, employment, and education. As great as these needs
13 are, the resources to meet these needs can fall short. The
14 Access to Justice Hui's November 2007 report, *Achieving Access*
15 *to Justice for Hawaii's People*, revealed that despite the
16 dedicated efforts of Hawaii's civil legal service organizations,



1 over seventy-seven per cent of Hawaii's low-income community was
2 without 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 provide funds for the purchase of civil legal
14 services that will allow civil legal service organizations to
15 continue to provide essential legal services for indigent and
16 low-income Hawaii residents at current levels of operation, and
17 to increase their capacities wherever possible to meet the needs
18 of Hawaii's 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 be
22 expended by the department of human services for the purchase of



1 service contracts with civil legal service organizations to
2 provide free or low-cost civil legal services to indigent and
3 low-income residents of the State; provided that:

4 (1) The funds shall not be expended for any other purpose;

5 (2) The funds shall be expended in a manner consistent
6 with chapter 103F, Hawaii Revised Statutes;

7 (3) Any unexpended funds shall lapse to the general fund;

8 (4) The department shall prepare a report that shall
9 include but not be limited to a detailed breakout of
10 organizations that were contracted, services provided,
11 and costs incurred; and

12 (5) The department shall submit the report to the
13 legislature no later than twenty days prior to the
14 convening of the 2009 regular sessions.

15 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
16 human services for the purposes of this Act.

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



Report Title:

Civil Legal Services; Appropriation

Description:

Makes an appropriation for the purchase of civil legal services from organizations that provide free or low-cost direct legal services to indigent and low-income residents. (SB2819 SD1)

