

JAN 22 2008

S.B. NO. 2873

A BILL FOR AN ACT

MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE HAWAII COUNTY ECONOMIC
OPPORTUNITY COUNCIL.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that recently immigrated
2 Marshallese to the district of Ka'u on the Big Island of Hawaii
3 are in dire need of help. The majority of the Marshallese
4 residents are low-income and living in poverty. The lack of
5 adequate services and facilities for this impoverished, rural
6 population keeps them economically, educationally, and socially
7 stagnant.

8 Most, if not all, of the Marshallese speak very little
9 English. As English is the dominant language prerequisite for
10 nearly every available job in the community, finding employment
11 becomes very difficult and therefore, many Marshallese adults
12 are unemployed and subsist on minimal income they receive from
13 reparation payments for the Bikini Atoll nuclear tests conducted
14 in the past by the United States. Language barriers also
15 prevent the Marshallese from access to social services,
16 including welfare and medical benefits for which they may be
17 eligible.



1 The Marshallese families live in Hawaiian Ocean View
2 Estates. Multiple families pool their limited resources to
3 purchase a single lot and build several houses upon this single
4 lot. The homes are basic shelters made of plywood nailed
5 together and are without toilets and water lines. Electricity
6 hook up is made with extension cords that run from one unit to
7 the next. The Marshallese dwell in crowded quarters with
8 relatives, to such an extent that some children sleep on carpets
9 placed on the lava fields that serve as the floor or bed.

10 The Hawaiian Ocean View Estates has no water line. Water
11 must be fetched from public spigots, and most families lacking
12 resources are only able to haul water to their homes by
13 carpooling, thus hauling the water in quantities barely adequate
14 for drinking and cooking, and only seldom for bathing and
15 washing.

16 An estimated one hundred fifty pre-school aged Marshallese
17 children reside in the Hawaiian Ocean View Estates. A recent
18 county community assessment has found that the Hawaii Ocean View
19 Estate area needs additional early child care and education
20 services with its high concentration of the Marshallese
21 population. Most Marshallese students are underachievers in
22 schoolwork due to their limited English proficiency. The school



1 enrollment of Marshallese students for the 2007-2008 school year
2 in the English as a second language program for the two public
3 schools are seventy per cent in Naalehu elementary and middle
4 school and seventy-seven per cent in Pahala elementary and Ka'u
5 high school.

6 Marshallese children are placed at a tremendous
7 disadvantage in receiving an adequate education due to language
8 barriers, as English is the standard language used in the
9 classrooms. Furthermore, because of a lack of adequate time
10 allotted for socializing in the tight after school
11 transportation schedule, there are increased cultural barriers
12 for Marshallese children to assimilate and intermingle after
13 school with children of other ethnicities.

14 Hawaii county economic opportunity council proposes to
15 prevent, alleviate, and eliminate the health, social, cultural,
16 and economic conditions faced by the Marshallese.

17 The purpose of this Act is to make an appropriation to the
18 department of labor and industrial relations, office of
19 community services, for the Hawaii county economic opportunity
20 council to implement new programs and to expand existing
21 programs to aid the Marshallese.



1 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
 2 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$540,000 or so much
 3 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2008-2009 for the
 4 Hawaii county economic opportunity council to assist the
 5 Marshallese in the county of Hawaii, for:

- 6 (1) A head start home-based program for preschool
 7 children;
- 8 (2) A language arts multicultural program for
 9 underachieving elementary school students to raise
 10 their academic achievement to a new higher level;
- 11 (3) A dropout prevention ("right track program") for
 12 at-risk students to graduate from high school;
- 13 (4) Employment core services program for low-income person
 14 to obtain employment; and
- 15 (5) One fourteen passenger van.

16 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
 17 labor and industrial relations, office of community services,
 18 for the purposes of this Act.

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

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INTRODUCED BY: Bruno Kohli

Jim
 G. Kei Oki



Report Title:

Appropriation; Hawaii County Economic Opportunity Council

Description:

Makes an appropriation to the office of community services for the Hawaii county economic opportunity council to implement new programs and expend existing programs to aid the Marshallese in the county of Hawaii.

