



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809

**LATE TESTIMONY**

January 24, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Maile Shimabukuro, Chair  
House Committee on Human Services and Housing

FROM: Lillian B. Koller, Director

SUBJECT: H.B. 2198, RELATING TO CAREGIVING

Hearing: Thursday, January 24, 2008, 8:30 p.m.  
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of H.B. 2198 is to establish a task force to focus on the needs of and issues facing grandparents raising grandchildren.

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services supports the intent of this bill and would willingly participate in a task force to examine the needs and issues of grandparents raising grandchildren.

The Department is committed to ensuring that children needing out-of-home care are placed with appropriate family members in safe and loving homes. Our Child Welfare Services Branch provides foster board payment and other services in situations where a child or children is/are removed from the family home due to confirmed child abuse or neglect pursuant to chapter 587 and placed with grandparents who meet foster home licensing requirements.

Grandparents who are caring for grandchildren not under the jurisdiction of the Department pursuant to a chapter 587 proceeding may be eligible for needy or non-needy caregiver subsidies under our TANF program.

Grandparents are a part of the natural support system for children. Placement with a grandparent or grandparents is less traumatic and disruptive and can help ensure that the child can stay within the family system and maintain relationships that support the child's safety, permanence, and well-being.

In addition to being family, grandparents can often bring other strengths and resources, including additional life experience, maturity, and continuity of family relationships. Placement with grandparents supports better family connections with siblings and other family members - uncles, aunts, and cousins. The knowledge and wisdom of a child's grandparents are important to the growth and development within the child's culture and community. Grandparent placement will continue to support the children's identify, family values, history and traditions.

We would suggest amending Section 2 to afford the task force the option of including representatives of additional agencies that work closely with the Kupunas who will contribute to the work of the task force.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.