

To the Committee on Human Services & Public Housing, Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair, Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair, and to the Committee on Judiciary & Labor, Senator Brian Taniguchi, Chair, and Senator Clayton He, Vice Chair.

From: From Patricia Urieff, MSW, ACSW, LSW, employed with twenty-four years of experience providing social work services to children and families, including grandparents raising grandchildren.

RE: HB 2198, HD2, RELATING TO CAREGIVING.

Establishes a task force to focus on the needs of and issues facing grandparents raising grandchildren.

“Over 14,000 grandparents are primary caregivers for over 33,000 grandchildren in the State of Hawaii. These grandparent raising grandchildren are playing an important part in enduring the wellbeing of children in Hawaii. They are also saving the state approximately 17 million dollars month by caring for their grandchildren outside the foster care system.” *2007 Needs Assessment, Hawaii State Office of Aging, by College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, University of Hawaii, Department of Family & Consumer Services.*

Please support that there be A Task Force to discuss issues related to Grandparents Raising Grandchildren.

Such a Task Force could identify already existing systems that can do better to provide information and support to the senior citizens raising grandchildren and the children growing up in `ohana home situations, dealing with losses and big adjustments.

Examples.

The Department of Education Administration reported the following February 2008.

- “DOE does not know which children live in `ohana homes and information is not in the DOE Central Data System.” That means that the teachers don’t know, so can’t provide resource information to the children and caregivers, such as there exists free Federally Funded tutoring if the caregiver asks for the tutoring. If the system continues to do nothing about knowing students living in grandparent’s care, the system continues to ignore it - versus discuss how to do better: connect, provide resources to support school success.
- “*Consent Waiver’s signed by caregivers* are in 250 Principals’ offices and none of that data is in the DOE Central Data System”, so the data is not available. Result is that DOE is now not willing to do something to make the data available so that appropriate entities can research how many seniors and children in specific geographic areas are struggling with issues of maintaining life in an `ohana home situation, consider kinds of community supports, toward preventing community problems.
- “DOE does not inform caregivers (who provide 24/7 care to a special needs child) about *Individual Education Plan (IEP)*”, that is meetings, plans, what is being done, or what caregivers can do to support success. Federal Law does not allow a caregiver without legal status to make decisions related the child’s IEP.” The law does not prevent DOE from outreach to inform the caregiver about things at home that can help the child develop and have small successes at school.

- If teachers knew their students were children living in `ohana homes, dealing with losses and adjustments, teachers could make referrals for supports before the students were stressed and serious behaviors surfaced.

Another example is that many non-profit agencies and many Grandparents Raising Grandchildren don't know of existing resources so can't connect with those. As result of the federal *Older Americans Act*, persons 55 years and older raising a grandchild 17 years and younger or a handicapped grandchild 18 years and older are eligible for resources available at `Oahu County Elderly Program, and at neighbor island *All Area Agencies on Aging*. Those programs offer free resources: counsel and referral/links to other resources; legal advice, support group, and transportation,

A *Task Force* could identify how to link the information about resources to agents of community services that already exist for the purpose of sharing information and doing public relations.

Then there is a grave concern about the Department of Health not providing mental health services to a child living with a caregiver without legal status. Can you imagine a grandparent struggling to raise a grandchild with disturbing behaviors and can't access mental health services? The grandparent will need to first find an attorney, resources to get to the attorney, and go through process to get legal status – then the system will provide support and services!

It does not cost money to raise awareness of our existing systems (that get paid salaries). A *Task Force* could result in increased awareness of the fact that Grandparents Raising Grandparents need supports and that existing systems can do better to provide supports – versus insist on maintaining the status quo.

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



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Senate Committee on Human Services and Public Housing

Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor

HB 2198 HD 2, RELATING TO CAREGIVING

**Testimony of Noemi Pendleton
Director of Executive Office on Aging
Attached Agency to Department of Health**

Tuesday, March 18, 2008

1:15 p.m.

- 1 **Department's Position:** The Executive Office on Aging (EOA) supports this measure to
2 establish a task force to focus on the needs of and issues facing grandparents raising
3 grandchildren.
- 4 **Fiscal Implications:** Unknown.
- 5 **Purpose and Justification:** EOA recognizes that many public and private sector
6 departments and agencies are involved in providing services to the group known as "Grandparents
7 Raising Grandchildren." Some of these entities include the Department of Health, Department of
8 Education, Department of Human Services, Department of Public Safety, Queen Liliuokalani
9 Trust, Na Tutu Coalition, Legal Aid society, Judiciary, Department of Attorney General.
- 10 The task force will bring together all major stakeholders for information sharing and solution
11 seeking. The bill outlines the various tasks and problem areas to be investigated as well as the
12 report to be presented to the Joint Legislative Committee on Family Caregiving.

1 Pursuant to Act 204, SLH 2007, the Executive Office on Aging had contracted with the
2 University of Hawaii Family and Consumer Sciences Department to conduct an assessment of the
3 issues facing, and the needs of grandparents raising grandchildren in Hawaii. According to the
4 report, which was authored by Dr. Lori Yancura, there are over 14,000 grandparents that are
5 primary caregivers for over 33,000 grandchildren in the state of Hawaii. These grandparents
6 raising grandchildren (GRG) are playing an important part in ensuring the well-being of Hawaii's
7 children. They are also saving the state approximately 17 million dollars per month by caring for
8 their grandchildren outside of the foster care system.

9 The services most needed by GRG are children's programs, financial assistance, respite,
10 and grandparent rights. Many of these services are already in place, but GRG don't know that
11 they are eligible for them and/or they don't know how to access them. There is a need for
12 coordination of services for GRG. The service needs of GRG vary by county and island. GRG
13 are more likely to use services that come from a trusted source, many said that they would use a
14 call-in or walk-in resource center.

15 EOA is pleased to be named as a member of the Task Force, and we will participate to our
16 full extent.

17 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

TO: COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES AND PUBLIC HOUSING
Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Sr., Vice-Chair

LATE

FROM: Sandy Rongitsch, Medical Social Worker
Hale Makua Home Health & Foster Family Programs
Wailuku, Maui

SUBJECT: **HB 2198, HD 2, RELATING TO CAREGIVING**

Hearing: Thursday, March 13, 2008 1:15 p.m., Conference Rom 016

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony. I support the establishment a task force to focus on the needs and issues facing grandparents raising grandchildren.

As a practicing social worker for over 25 years – 15 years in the field of gerontology and 7 years in child welfare - grandparents raising grandchildren has been, until recently, a hidden segment of Hawaii's older care giving population. The needs and barriers outlined briefly in HB 2198, HD2 have been too long overlooked. The creation of a task force representing a broad spectrum of service entities is an excellent beginning in identifying and addressing issues in a comprehensive way.



ho'omōhala *me ka huaka'i* *Preparing communities for success and service*

Partners in Development
Foundation

March 12, 2008

LATE

The Honorable Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senator Les Ihara Jr., Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services & Public Housing

SUBJECT: WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF
H.B. 2198, HD2 RELATING TO CAREGIVING

Hearing: Thursday, March 13, 2008
1:15 a.m.
Conference Room 016, Hawai'i State Capitol

Dear Senator Oakland-Chun,

Partners in Development Foundation, strongly supports the intent of HB 2198, HD2. We work extensively with elderly caregivers through our Tutu and Me traveling preschool, our Family Education programs, our preschool programs for the homeless, and also with elderly mentors in our mentoring programs on Hawai'i island. We see how important the Tutu are to our 'ohana and believe it is important for our community to understand and support their needs.

While this present draft of the Bill has been amended to generally allow other organizational participants, Partners In Development Foundation would gladly serve to support a task force focused on helping our kupuna in their work with the children of Hawai'i.

We also believe that the time for discussion has passed and it is time for action. Therefore, we request that Section 3 of the Bill be amended to reflect that "This Act shall take effect upon its approval".

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this Bill with the above suggested amendment.

Mahalo Nui Loa,

Jan E. Hanohano Dill
President / Partners in Development Foundation
2040 Bachelot Street
Honolulu, HI 96817



ho'omōhala *me ka* huaka'i *Preparing communities for success and service*

Partners in Development
Foundation

March 12, 2008

LATE

The Honorable Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senator Les Ihara Jr., Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services & Public Housing

SUBJECT: WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF
H.B. 2198, HD2 RELATING TO CAREGIVING

Hearing: Thursday, March 13, 2008
1:15 a.m.
Conference Room 016, Hawai'i State Capitol

Dear Senator Oakland-Chun,

I strongly support the intent of HB 2198, HD2.

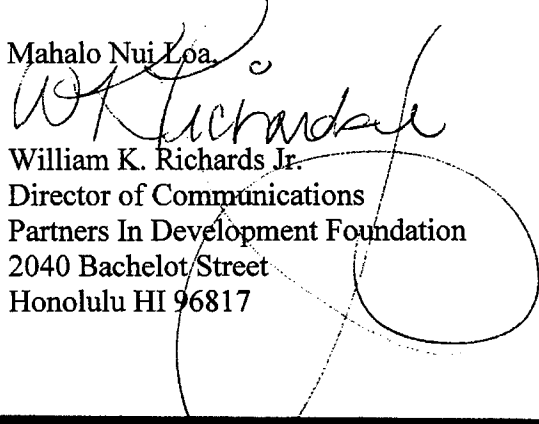
In my capacity as Director of Communications for Partners in Development Foundation (PIDF), I have been closely involved with the programs that work extensively with elderly caregivers, intergenerational preschools, Family Education, the homeless, and intergenerational mentoring programs. PIDF is a service organization that reaches into areas of need within the native-Hawaiian community.

Given the present economy, many of us look to grandparents to care for our children while we work to provide for them. Grandparents serve a valued role in the divergent cultures that makes us unique. Passage of this measure can only demonstrate the Legislature's recognition of those from whom we came, and depend on.

I respectfully ask that Section 3 be amended to allow its effect "upon approval".

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this Bill with the above suggested amendment.

Mahalo Nui Loa.


William K. Richards Jr.
Director of Communications
Partners In Development Foundation
2040 Bachelot Street
Honolulu HI 96817

FAX 586-6659

SUPPORT

LATE

Committee on Human Services & Public Housing

Senator Suzanne Chun-Oakland, Chair

Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair

HB 2198 HD2

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Task Force

March 13, 2008 1:15PM

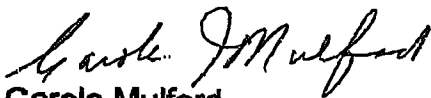
Conference Room 016

As a member of the Na Tutu Coalition I support HB 2198 HD2 that will establish a task force on the needs and issues of grandparents raising grandchildren.

Grandparents raising grandchildren is increasing rapidly in the United States as well as Canada and many other countries. Unfortunately, as they take on this task they are often retired with limited financial resources and unknowing of supporting resources.

Grandparents should be entitled to the same subsidy that foster parents receive.

Na Tutu asks for your support of HB 2198 HD2.



Carole Mulford

Na Tutu Member

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testimony

LATE

From: Tomoso Home [tomoso@hawaiianisp.com]
Sent: Thursday, March 13, 2008 7:16 AM
To: testimony
Subject: Testimony on HB 2198, HD 2 Relating To Caregiving

To the Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services and Public Housing who are having a public hearing on HB 21998, HD 2, a Bill Relating to Caregiving, on Thursday, March 13th, @ 1:15 p.m., in Room 016.

Aloha kakou,

I write this testimony on the eve of the Hawai'i Family Caregivers Coalition's Annual Health and Resource Fair and "Capitol Day". Our office will be accompanying several Grandparents Raising Children or GRG's to the State Capitol. This bill establishes a task force to focus on the needs of and issues facing grandparents raising grandchildren. I know that these "tutu" coming to the Capitol, tomorrow, can share their stories, their realities with many of you. The Older Americans Act, as reauthorized and amended in 2006, mandates our office's services to GRG. I believe that state government must look at how public policy, at its level of jurisdiction, can augment and support, and not sub plant, current federal public policy in this growing reality in our communities. I am sure that you will include in your deliberations, the unique cultural milieu that GRG's in Hawai'i raise their mo'opuna. I look forward to the results of this Task Force with more than a passing interest, due to the growing number of GRG our office assists.

Me ka mahalo pono,

John A. H. Tomoso, MSW, ACSW, LSW
Maui County Executive on Aging
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