

FAX Number 586-6189

LATE TESTIMONY

HB 2708 RELATING TO CHILD PROTECTION.

Permits a child's grandparent to participate as a party at certain child protective hearings.

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & HOUSING

Rep. Maile S. L. Shimabukuro, Chair

Rep. Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair

Committee members:

Rep. Karen Leinani Awana

Rep. Josh Green, M.D.

Rep. Della Au Belatti

Rep. John Mizuno

Rep. Joe Bertram, III

Rep. James Kunane Tokioka

Rep. Rida T.R. Cabanilla

Rep. Gene Ward, Ph.D

As a Na Tutu member I am in support of HB2708, as it relates to giving a child's grandparent an opportunity to participate as a party at certain child protective hearings.

There is a concern since "hanai" is no longer recognized as a legal entity. In this state "Ohana" is extremely important to families and need to be recognized. A child who has been taken care of primarily by a relative other than a grandparent or by family friends have usually developed a bond to that caregiver.

In these cases, Na Tutu would recommend that a provision be made to give a relative or family friend who has been a caregiver for at least 6 continuous months, the opportunity to participate as a party at certain child protective hearings, as well.

I am in support of HB2708

Sincerely,

Carole Mulford, Member

Na Tutu, Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

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CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

February 4, 2008

TO: Rep. Maile S. L. Shimabukuro, Chair
Rep. Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair
Committee on Human Services and Public Housing

FROM: Joy Lacanienta, Program Director II
Catholic Charities Hawai'i

SUBJECT: H.B. 2708 Relating to Child Protection

Hearing: Tuesday, February 5, 2008
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

PURPOSE: The purpose of H.B. 2708 is to permit a child's grandparent to participate as a party at certain child protective hearings.

POSITION:

Catholic Charities Hawai'i (CCH), is a tax exempt, non-profit agency that has been providing social services in Hawai'i for over 60 years. CCH is also one of the partner agencies representing Hui Ho'omaluku, which is a statewide collaboration composed of various community and faith-based agencies working together in partnership to address the needs of Hawai'i's children in foster care.

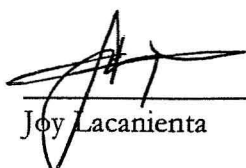
Catholic Charities Hawai'i works closely with the Department of Human Services - Child Welfare Services focusing on Child Specific foster/resource families including Special Licensed Relatives (SLR). A great number of foster/resource families we serve are grandparents. This is also a reflection of our State, which has a higher percentage of grandparents raising their grand children compared to the national average.

For our community, it's vital for grandparents to be able to participate and support their grand children who are under the foster care system throughout the child protective hearings process. This is a culturally sensitive and sound idea that can only bring a stronger support system for Hawai'i's foster children.

Again, Catholic Charities Hawai'i strongly supports H.B. 2708 to permit a child's grandparents to participate as a party at certain child protective hearings.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,


Joy Lacanienta