

From: Linda Elento, Member of The Hawaii Down Syndrome Congress

To: House Higher Education Committee
Rep. Jerry L. Chang, Chair
Rep. Joe Bertram, III, Vice Chair

Re: HED February 12, 2008, 2:15pm

HB2881 Support with Comments

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB2881. This bill would contribute to the ability of our moms and their unborn and newborn babies with Trisomy 21/Down syndrome to receive the extra care and support they need to ensure their health and well-being during this time in their lives.

Please consider the following reasons, as published in the *Honolulu Advertiser* on Friday, January 5, 2007 (my son's sixth birthday).

Letters to the Editor

PREGNANCY

AMNIO WOULD HELP WITH DECISIONS ON CARE

As a mom with a young child with Down syndrome, I am often approached by pregnant women who ask me if I knew my son had Down syndrome before he was born.

I did not. Six years ago when I was 34, I chose not to have the invasive test amniocentesis because of a risk due to my RH factor in addition to the small risk of a miscarriage. Nor did I have the other tests available at that time that would have shown I might have a child with Down syndrome. Only an amnio would have confirmed that likelihood.

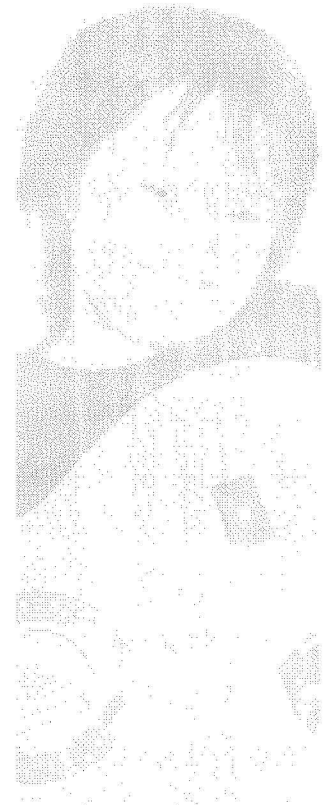
The Sunday Advertiser article (Dec. 31) about a recommendation that all pregnant women get a Down syndrome test describes the new "first-trimester screening that combines blood tests with a simple ultrasound exam, called a 'nuchal translucency test.'"

I now know that a baby with Down syndrome might need specialized care at birth and that knowing ahead of time would have been beneficial. My son had to be transferred to another hospital for intensive care the day he was born.

That is the reason for all women to opt for prenatal tests but not for deciding to have an abortion.

Each life is precious.

Linda Elento
Kane'ohe





the
**Drug Policy
Forum**
o f h a w a i ' i

February 12, 2008

Board of Directors

Pamela Lichty, M.P.H.
President

Kat Brady
Vice President

Heather Lusk
Treasurer

Katherine Irwin, Ph.D.
Secretary

Michael Kelley, D.Phil.

Richard S. Miller, Prof. of
Law Emer.

Robert Perkinson, Ph.D.

Donald Topping, Ph.D.
Founder 1929-2003

P.O. Box 61233
Honolulu, HI 96839

Phone: (808)-988-4386
Fax: (808) 373-7064

Email: info@dpfhi.org
Website: www.dpfhi.org

To: Representative Jerry Chang, Chair
Representative Joe Bertram III, Vice Chair
And Members of the Committee on Higher Education

From: Jeanne Ohta, Executive Director

Re: HB 2881 HD1 Relating to Perinatal Care
Hearing: Tuesday, February 12, 2008, 2:15 p.m., Room 309

Position: Strong Support

The Drug Policy Forum of Hawaii supports this critical funding measure which requests funds to extend the program for the perinatal clinic which provides prenatal care and other services for pregnant, substance-using women; and takes no position on whether the clinic should continue under the John A Burns School of Medicine rather than the Department of Human Services.

Without the clinic, services that provide appropriate health care to substance using pregnant women to ensure the birth of a healthy baby are either extremely limited or unavailable.

The clinic's programs provide both substance abuse treatment, prenatal care, and follow up services in a supportive environment rather than a punitive one. One of the barriers to women seeking perinatal care is fear of prosecution. This type of program recognizes the importance of a public health approach to the issue of pregnant drug-using women.

The clinic would be cost-effective as it would help prevent low-birth weight babies and premature births. It would also encourage mothers to become the nurturing mothers that their children need.

Please pass this bill and extend funding for the clinic. It is a good investment for the state and would in the long run save the state money. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.