



**Testimony to the Twenty -Fourth State Legislature, 2008 Session**

House Committee on Human Services & Housing

The Honorable Maile S. L. Shimabukuro, Chair

The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair

Thursday, January 31, 2008, 8:40 a.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 329

by

Frances Q.F. Wong

Senior Judge / Deputy Chief Judge

Family Court, First Circuit

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY**

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**Bill No. and Title:** House Bill No. 3321, Relating to Chapter 580, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

**Purpose:** Provides that venue for divorce proceedings in circuits with a population of greater than 500,000 shall be at the circuit court located at 777 Punchbowl Street, unless the parties agree to a different venue.

**Judiciary's Position:**

The Judiciary respectfully OPPOSES this bill for the following reasons:

- 1) The bill represents a misunderstanding of the term "venue." Statutory references to "venue" uniformly refer to "circuits" and "counties" rather than a street address.
- 2) It will not promote efficient court operations. At the present time, it is envisioned that all family court operations, except for the bulk of adult criminal matters, will be headquartered in the new Kapolei Judiciary Complex. It is also envisioned that certain dockets will be heard in non-jury courtrooms at Kaahumanu Hale, 777 Punchbowl Street. This determination will be made as we approach the year 2010 and it is also a determination that will be flexible, *i.e.*, all future docket decisions will be responsive to changing laws and changing community needs, and, in private divorce cases, to the preferences of the parties.



House Bill No. 3321, Relating to Chapter 580, Hawaii Revised Statutes  
House Committee on Human Services & Housing  
January 31, 2008  
Page 2

- 3) This bill will also open the door to possible misuse since it could be used by parties for the sole purpose of being an obstruction.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this matter.