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March 20, 2008

MEMORANDUM

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

FROM: Lillian B. Koller, Director

SUBJECT: H.C.R. 174 – REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES TO CONVENE A TASK FORCE AND ESTABLISH A PILOT PROJECT TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF NATIVE HAWAIIAN CHILDREN IN CHILD CUSTODY PROCEEDINGS

Hearing: Thursday, March 20, 2008, 9:30 a.m.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

PURPOSE: The purpose of this resolution is to request the Department convene a task force to examine the possibility of implementing a Native Hawaiian Child Welfare Act and to jointly develop procedures and protocols and conduct a one-year pilot project to collaborate in case managing Native Hawaiian children in child welfare cases under the jurisdiction of the Department.

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the intent of this resolution. We support the need for a task force to examine the feasibility and practicality of enactment of a Native Hawaiian Child Welfare Act. We are willing to participate on the task force, but with their concurrence, recommend that Na Kupuna O Waianae convene the task force and bring the parties together. We are also willing to examine the feasibility of

conducting a pilot project, but recommend that this be a topic discussed in the task force as part of their work.

We would also suggest that the timeframe for completion of the task force is insufficient for such a significant and potentially far-reaching project. We would recommend a two-year task force with a progress report due prior to the convening of the 2009 Legislative Session.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on this concurrent resolution.