



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

April 3, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Cindy Evans Chair
House Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs

FROM: Lillian B. Koller, Director

SUBJECT: H. C. R. 188 / H. R. 158 – CALLING ON THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES TO CONVENE A TASK FORCE TO ESTABLISH A PROTOCOL AND TRAINING PROGRAM FOR FIRST RESPONDERS IN CHILD PROTECTIVE AWARENESS SKILLS.

Hearing: Thursday, April 3, 2008, 11:20 a.m.
Conference Room 309, State Capitol

PURPOSE: The purpose of this resolution is to request the Department of Human Services to convene a task force to establish protocols and training programs for first responders, including the county police departments, the sheriffs and other law enforcement agencies, the fire department, and emergency medical personnel, to use when coming into contact with children who may be victims of or who are at risk for child abuse.

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the intent of this resolution to enhance the current protocols and training for first responders to reports of children who have been harmed or are at risk of abuse or neglect.

We respectfully request that the proposal to convene a separate task force for the development and implementation of protocols and training for first responders be incorporated into the task force required by the revised H. B 2596, H.D. 2, S.D. 1. The task force will

examine situations that have resulted in a child fatality or serious injury to develop a plan to prevent children from being injured or exposed to unreasonable risk of injury or neglect, which will necessitate an assessment of our first responder system and the development of resources, protocols and training to ensure a coordinated and consistent response to reports of abuse or neglect.

For clarification we would recommend the following revisions to the resolution:

1. Paragraph 5 - BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Twenty-fourth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2008, the Senate concurring, that the Department of Human Services shall convene a task force to establish protocols and training programs for first responders, including but not limited to, the county police departments, the sheriffs and other law enforcement agencies, the fire department, and emergency medical personnel, to use when coming into contact with children who may be victims of or who are at risk for child abuse; and
2. Paragraph 8 - BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Human Services shall report back to the Legislature on the status of development and implementation of the protocols and training programs, including cost implications, no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2009, and each year thereafter for three years; and
3. New paragraph 9 - BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that if H.B. 2596, H.D. 2, S. D. 1, is enacted into statute, to avoid unnecessary duplication and ensure coordination, the establishment of protocols and training programs for first responders shall be included in the work of the task force required by H.B. 2596, H.D.2, S.D.1. and not in a separate task force.

We would also suggest that the timeframe for completion of the task force is insufficient for such a significant and potentially far-reaching issue. We would recommend a two-year task force with a progress report due prior to the convening of the 2009 Legislative session and a final report due prior to the convening of the 2010 Legislature.

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

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HCR188 & HR158

I support HCR188 & HR158, CALLING ON THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES TO CONVENE A TASK FORCE TO ESTABLISH A PROTOCOL AND TRAINING PROGRAM FOR FIRST RESPONDERS IN CHILD PROTECTIVE AWARENESS SKILLS.

The resolutions are to ensure that all first responders, such as our police, firefighters, emergency medical services personnel, are able to identify children who may be victims or may be at risk for abuse.

Further, these resolutions to set the proper protective protocols in motion by calling the Department of Human Services to convene a task force to establish such a protocol and training program for first responders in child protective skills.

At the hearing before the Health and Human Services Committees, DHS supported the intent but indicated that this measure may not be needed because they are willing to place the contents of this resolution in a bill which is moving on the senate to have a task force work on such a protocol. I respectfully ask that your committee nevertheless pass HCR188 & HR158, in case the bill dies in conference. Also, if the bill is passed, the resolutions will certainly provided a guide for the "task force" in the bill to follow.

I therefore respectfully ask that your committee, Public Safety and Military Affairs passed HCR188 & HR158.

Josephine Besario
Private citizen and a resident of Hawaii