

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR



LILLIAN B. KOLLER, ESQ.
DIRECTOR

HENRY OLIVA
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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

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. 205/H.R. 173 – REQUESTING THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK TO STUDY THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF
THE WORK REQUIREMENTS OF THE TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE
FOR NEEDY FAMILIES PROGRAM.

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

PURPOSE: The purpose of these resolutions is to request the University of Hawaii School of Social Work to study the negative effects of the work requirements of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) cannot support these resolutions as written. The proposed study on only the negative impacts of the TANF work requirements would be an incomplete study and not objective. However, any study should be cognizant of the fact that the work requirements for the TANF program are Federal requirements.

The Department already collects data on the impact of the TANF work program. Additionally, the Department is planning to do a "leaver" study soon, in-house, to follow-up on individuals who have left the TANF program.

DHS will be using all this information to identify what additional types of support programs could be provided to better help individuals successfully transition to employment. DHS will gladly share this information with the Legislature.

Therefore, these resolutions are not necessary and the Department respectfully requests that they be deferred.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on these resolutions.

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I AT MĀNOA

School of Social Work

March 18, 2008

To: Representative Maile Shimabukuro, Chairperson
And members of the Committee on Human Services and Housing

From: Dr. Jon Matsuoka, Dean

For: Committee on Human Services and Housing
March 20, 2008, 9:30 am
Conference Room 329

Re: HCR 205 and HR 173
Requesting the University of Hawaii School of Social Work to study the negative effects of the work requirements of the temporary assistance for needy families program.

Representative Shimabukuro and members of the House Committee on Human Services and Housing:

My name is Jon Matsuoka, I am the Dean of the University of Hawaii School of Social Work and I am testifying today in relation to HCR 205 and HR 173, which requests that the University of Hawai'i, School of Social Work study the negative effects of the work requirements of the temporary assistance for needy families program.

The resolutions raise many good questions in regard to the possible negative effects of the policy changes that have occurred as a result of the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 by the U.S. Congress. Much research has been done across the nation in relation to the specified issues, resulting in varying conclusions – depending upon such variables as when the studies were done, the specific area of the country being surveyed, and who conducted the research. But no comprehensive research on these issues appears to have been done in relation to the State of Hawai'i. The requested research is therefore both timely and relevant for this state. It would also be an enormous undertaking, involving numerous researchers and requiring tremendous expenditures of time and effort.

While the UHM School of Social Work has the required expertise and experience to do the requested research, we do not have the necessary manpower or resources to accomplish the proposed task at this point in time. In order to accomplish the task being requested in HCR 205 and HR 173, the UHM School of Social Work would need to employ or buy out the services of at least two full-time researchers over a period of a year just to gather and do the preliminary analysis of basic data. A more sophisticated analysis leading to recommendations for legislative action would require more time.

Therefore, while the UHM School of Social Work strongly endorses the intent of HCR 205 and HR 173 and stands ready to engage in the research necessary to answer the questions being raised, we respectfully request that adequate funding be provided to support the effort.

Thank you for this opportunity to offer my thoughts on this matter.

TESTIMONY

REQUESTING THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK TO STUDY THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF THE WORK REQUIREMENTS OF THE TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES PROGRAM.

BY: Hamilton I. McCubbin Ph.D., Director of Research and Director of Research and Evaluation, Center for Training, Evaluation and Research of the Pacific, School of Social Work, University of Hawaii at Manoa

- **TO: COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & HOUSING**

Rep. Maile S. L. Shimabukuro, Chair

Rep. Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair

**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.

- **March 20, 2008 at 9:30 am**
- **HCR 205 AND HR173**

I am Hamilton I. McCubbin, the Director of Research and Evaluation for the Center for Training, Evaluation and Research of the Pacific, within the School of Social Work, University of Hawaii at Manoa. I join the Dean of the School of Social Work, Jon Matsuoka in affirming importance of the study set forth in the resolutions to examine the negative effects of the work requirements of the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program. I further affirm the identification of the School of Social Work, University of Hawaii at Manoa to undertake this significant investigation.

It is clear that the expectation set forth in this resolution is comprehensive and focused on work requirements under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families with an emphasis on the impact of this policy upon the families and children particularly the impact of work requirements on (a) increases in the cost of child welfare services for recipients as well as for all clients of such services; Health care services for recipients as

well as for all clients of such services and other services needed by these families ; (b) on homelessness among those subject to work requirements; (c) on family and individual dysfunction in terms of arrests or convictions and child abuse or neglect; and the work requirements impact on (d) on recipient participation or discontinue participation in the program.

The resolution calls for a survey of the program participants in an effort to obtain their views and experiences which they may formulate into TANF program design regarding work requirements and any additional services deemed necessary.

It is also clear that the resolution anticipates that the Social Work research team may desire to pursue other critical issues which may shed light on the complex influence of TANF upon families and children.

The charge to the School of Social work includes an implicit if not explicit responsibility to place the spotlight on the consequences of this well intended program to move families off of welfare through a program calling for work requirements and with a five year time frame to achieve financial independence. Underlying this charge is the expectation that this study will reveal what additional services and initiatives may improve upon the effectiveness of TANF.

While clearly of critical importance to both the wellbeing of families and children involved in this program and the Federal and State programs designed to serve them, it is equally clear that this project constitutes a major undertaking calling for expertise in the study of families and children, social work practice and interventions, a holistic view of the relationship of family life to social policy. The Center and the School have the expertise and experience and competencies to address this challenge. It is reasonable to assert at first glance without a full discussion, however, and a message communicated by Dean Jon Matsuoka in a separate testimony, this project will call for more resources than the School and the University can redirect within the framework of existing University/School resources.

This issue raised should not be construed about funding per se. It is about the cost to obtain the depth and quality of data the legislature will need to shape present and future policies affecting these families and children. By depth, I mean the information the legislature will need best be complemented by penetrating inquiries about culture, ethnicity, the meaning of work, employment, and motivation, as well as the informal and formal supports families turn to, the problem solving and coping strategies families use, -- all needed to answer the question of who among those served are beneficiaries and who struggle under the weight of the work force responsibilities and why? Taking poverty statistics and prior data on AFDC recipients, it is likely that some ethnic groups, inclusive of Native Hawaiians will be disproportionately represented among those served. It would be prudent to recognize culture base influences that shape the

outcomes the legislature may be looking at. Some of these families resort to problem behaviors which have negative consequence for children and the next generation, not to mention their health and mental health. Who and why are important issues to address. What is it about some families who seize the opportunity to recover and do well and about those who falter and stumble? Which families are resilient and which are not and why?

The quality of the data also refers to how they are collected. Some methods such as paper and pencil surveys are cheap and can be done at low cost and efficiently. The insights the legislature seeks will in all likelihood call for meaningful indepth interviews, maybe supplemented by self report surveys, to provide a more insightful look into the lives of these families to uncover the experiences they engage, their self-created solutions, the barriers and opportunities to achieve independence, and the role of the community and agencies to increase their likelihood of success. This interview methodology is within our scope of work and commitment, but the expansiveness of the population served under TANF involves more than even the most well endowed research laboratories are capable of. Our sights are set on quality and the policies under review by this legislature call for this level of inquiry and understanding.

Furthermore cooperation among other service agencies which may critical data will call for collaboration and trust in the management of sensitive data. We accept and affirm the sensitivity and confidentiality of the data associated with this project.

The Center for Training, Evaluation and Research of the Pacific of the School of Social Work welcomes the opportunity to support this legislative resolution and look forward, if acted upon, to addressing the challenges put forth.