

SB 2045
RELATING TO
CAREGIVING

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

January 24, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services and Public Housing

FROM: Lillian B. Koller, Director

SUBJECT: S.B. 2045, RELATING TO CAREGIVING

Hearing: Thursday, January 24, 2008, 1:30 p.m.
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

PURPOSE: The purpose of S.B. 2045 is to establish a task force to focus on the needs of and issues facing grandparents raising grandchildren.

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services supports the intent of this bill and would willingly participate in a task force to examine the needs and issues of grandparents raising grandchildren.

The Department is committed to ensuring that children needing out-of-home care are placed with appropriate family members in safe and loving homes. Our Child Welfare Services Branch provides foster board payment and other services in situations where a child or children is/are removed from the family home due to confirmed child abuse or neglect pursuant to HRS 587 and placed with grandparents who meet foster home licensing requirements.

Grandparents who are caring for grandchildren not under the jurisdiction of the Department pursuant to a Chapter 587 proceeding may be eligible for needy or non-needy caregiver subsidies under our TANF program.

Grandparents are a part of the natural support system for children. Placement with a grandparent or grandparents is less traumatic and disruptive and can help ensure that the child can stay within the family system and maintain relationships that support the child's safety, permanence, and well-being.

In addition to being family, grandparents can often bring other strengths and resources, including additional life experience, maturity, and continuity of family relationships. Placement with grandparents supports better family connections with siblings and other family members - uncles, aunts, and cousins. The knowledge and wisdom of a child's grandparents are important to the growth and development within the child's culture and community. Grandparent placement will continue to support the children's identify, family values, history and traditions.

We would suggest amending Section 2 to afford the task force the option of including representatives of additional agencies that work closely with the Kupunas who will contribute to the work of the task force.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

LATE TESTIMONY

January 23, 2008

The Honorable Suzanne Chun-Oakland
Senator
Senate Committee on Human Services and Public Housing

SUBJECT: S.B. 2045, RELATING TO CAREGIVING

Hearing: Thursday, January 24, 2008, 1:30 p.m.
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

Dear Chairman Chun-Oakland,

Partners in Development Foundation strongly supports the intent of SB 2045. We work extensively with elderly caregivers through our Tutu and Me traveling preschool, our Family Education programs, our preschool programs for the homeless, and also with elderly mentors in our mentoring programs on Hawai'i island. We see how important the Tutu are to our `ohana and we believe it is important for our community to understand and support their needs. If the bill is amended to allow other participants, our foundation would gladly serve to support a task force focused on helping our kupuna in their work with the children of Hawai'i. Mahalo for the opportunity of testifying in support of this bill.

Jan E. Hanohano Dill
President
Partners in Development Foundation
2040 Bachelot Street
Honolulu, HI 96817

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII

CHIYOME L. FUKINO, M.D.
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LATE TESTIMONY

Committee on Human Services and Public Housing

SB 2045, RELATING TO CAREGIVING

Testimony of Noemi Pendleton
Director of Executive Office on Aging
Attached Agency to Department of Health

Thursday, January 24, 2008

1:30 p.m.

- 1 **Department's Position:** The Executive Office on Aging (EOA) supports this measure to
2 establish a task force to focus on the needs of and issues facing grandparents raising
3 grandchildren.
- 4 **Fiscal Implications:** Unknown.
- 5 **Purpose and Justification:** EOA recognizes that many public and private sector
6 departments and agencies are involved in providing services to the group known as "Grandparents
7 Raising Grandchildren." Some of these entities include the Department of Health, Department of
8 Education, Department of Human Services, Department of Public Safety, Queen Liliuokalani
9 Trust, Na Tutu Coalition, Legal Aid society, Judiciary, Department of Attorney General.
- 10 The task force will bring together all major stakeholders for information sharing and solution
11 seeking. The bill outlines the various tasks and problem areas to be investigated as well as the
12 report to be presented to the Joint Legislative Committee on Family Caregiving.
- 13 Pursuant to Act 204, SLH 2007, the Executive Office on Aging had contracted with the University
14 of Hawaii Family and Consumer Sciences Department to conduct an assessment of the issues

1 facing, and the needs of grandparents raising grandchildren in Hawaii. According to the report,
2 which was authored by Dr. Lori Yancura, there are over 14,000 grandparents that are primary
3 caregivers for over 33,000 grandchildren in the state of Hawaii. These grandparents raising
4 grandchildren (GRG) are playing an important part in ensuring the well-being of Hawaii's
5 children. They are also saving the state approximately 17 million dollars per month by caring for
6 their grandchildren outside of the foster care system.

7 The services most needed by GRG are children's programs, financial assistance, respite, and
8 grandparent rights. Many of these services are already in place, but GRG don't know that they are
9 eligible for them and/or they don't know how to access them. There is a need for coordination of
10 services for GRG. The service needs of GRG vary by county and island. GRG are more likely to
11 use services that come from a trusted source, many said that they would use a call-in or walk-in
12 resource center.

13 EOA is pleased to be named as a member of the Task Force, and we will participate to our full
14 extent.

15 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

The Twenty-Fourth Legislature
Regular Session of 2008

THE SENATE

Committee on Human Services and Public Housing
Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair

State Capitol, Conference Room 016
Thursday, January 24, 2008; 1:30 p.m.

**STATEMENT OF THE ILWU LOCAL 142 ON S.B. 2045
RELATING TO CAREGIVING**

The ILWU Local 142 supports S.B. 2045, which establishes a task force to focus on the needs and issues facing grandparents raising grandchildren.

More and more of Hawaii's grandparents are being forced to raise their grandchildren because of either the absence or incapacity of the parents. Having raised their own children, these grandparents have to become parents all over again, often in middle age or older, sometimes forced to give up their own employment. While the grandchildren are cherished, raising them often poses hardships for grandparents who expected to take life easy in their older years.

These grandparents need help--and they are providing a valuable service to the community. If they did not assume the role of parent again, the State would have to bear the burden of care for these children. And, worse yet, the children would be separated from relatives and the bonds of "ohana."

One of our members is an example of a grandparent forced into parenthood again. Her daughter's three children, two approaching teen years, were left in her care because both parents were unable to take care of the children. Our member was a very active leader in the union, but was forced to cut back on her involvement because of her caregiving responsibilities. Her retired husband has allowed her to remain on the job, but dealing with generational issues and governmental restrictions has taken a toll on her.

The task force being proposed by S.B. 2045 would build on the work of the 2007 Needs Assessment of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren by bringing experts together to identify barriers that prevent grandparents from accessing services and to offer recommendations to remove those barriers.

The ILWU urges passage of S.B. 2045. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

Hawaii Aging Advocates Coalition

Testimony to the House Committee on Human Services and Public Housing
Thursday, January 24, 2008
Conference Room 016; 1:30pm

RE: S.B. No. 2045, RELATING TO CAREGIVING.

Chair Chun Oakland, Vice Chair Ihara, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Wes Lum and I am testifying on behalf of the Hawaii Aging Advocates Coalition (HAAC). **HAAC supports this measure but recommends that these provisions be added as another part to S.B. No. 2042.**

This bill establishes a Task Force to focus on the needs of and issues facing grandparents raising grandchildren.

This measure is a recommendation by the Joint Legislative Committee on Family Caregiving (Committee). During this past legislative interim, the Committee held a public hearing to hear testimony from the various state departments, the University of Hawaii, and the Area Agencies on Aging as to how they address the issues facing grandparents and other relatives caring for children. This bill is necessary to determine how these various government stakeholders can individually and collectively build a support system for grandparents and other relatives who are parenting for a second time.

We recommend that this measure be added as another part to S.B. No. 2042, Relating to Caregiving, as both of these measures are recommendations of the Committee. Additionally, integrating this bill into the Family Caregiver Omnibus bill would make it easier for the public to track.

HAAC supports this measure and asks for your favorable consideration. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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Organizations

City & County
of Honolulu
Elderly Affairs
Karen Miyaki
Craig Yamaguchi

City & County
of Honolulu
Service Providers
Tony Wong

FACE
Stan Bain
Jim Howell

Hawaii Caregiver
Coalition
Tony Lenzer

HARA
Al Hamai
Bruce McCullough

Hawaii County
Office on Aging
Alan Parker
Lito Asuncion

Hawaii County
Service Providers
ra Nakaji

JACOSA
Lyn McNeff

Kauai Agency on
Elderly Affairs
Kealoha Takahashi

KoKua Council
Larry Geller

Maui County
Office on Aging
John Tomoso

Maui County
Service Providers
Kathy Louis

Maui Long Term
Care Partnership
Rita Barreras

PABEA
Gary Simon
Eldon Wegner

Co-Conveners
Wes Lum
Hawaii Caregiver
Coalition

ry Mattson
Kua Council

TO: COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES AND PUBLIC HOUSING
Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Sr., Vice-Chair

FROM: Sandy Rongitsch, Medical Social Worker
Wailuku, Maui

SUBJECT: **SB 2045, RELATING TO CAREGIVING**

Hearing: Thursday, January 24, 2008 1:30 p.m., Conference Room 016

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony. I support the establishment a task force to focus on the needs and issues facing grandparents raising grandchildren.

As a practicing social worker in the field of gerontology for over 15 years, grandparents raising grandchildren has been, until recently, a hidden segment of Hawaii's older care giving population. The needs and barriers outlined briefly in SB 2045 have been too long overlooked. The creation of a task force representing a broad spectrum of service entities is an excellent beginning in identifying and addressing issues in a comprehensive way.



OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Legislative Testimony
SB 2045 RELATING TO CAREGIVING

Senate Committee on Human Services and Public Housing

January 24, 2008
016

1:30 p.m.

Room

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs is providing testimony in strong support of SB 2045. Our interest in this issue is primarily based on our concerns that 52% of the children placed in foster care in Hawai'i are of Native Hawaiian ancestry, and that Hawaiian grandparents are assuming more responsibility as the primary caregivers for their grandchildren.

In Hawaii, more than fourteen thousand Hawaiian grandparents have assumed this caregiving role. It is a cultural practice of Native Hawaiians to care for their family members, especially when it involves minor children. It is an endearing custom in Hawaii for grandparents or "Kupuna" to raise or "hanai" their grandchildren or "mo'opuna." Such a practice can start as early as the birth of the child and may continue well through young adulthood. Stability, security, nurturing, and cultural identity all occur within the context of an extended family by blood or marriage that knows and is connected to the child. This practice is accepted as responsibility or "kuleana" by the grandparent and is undertaken with genuine love and commitment to the child's well-being.

Native Hawaiian grandparents will provide protection and guidance. In addition, they will pour their knowledge and wisdom of life into the hanai process with their grandchildren. As such, the basic necessities of the child are met but deeper qualities of living are passed on and preserved for generations. These intrinsic Hawaiian values make for stronger Native Hawaiian families and by extension, stronger communities.

However, in today's society, these new responsibilities place great emotional and financial stresses on many grandparents. Yet, these grandparents go unacknowledged and worse, unsupported by government policies and services that are conducive to maintaining these familial relationships. For example, the Hawaii Statutes currently relating to elderly housing penalize grandparents who choose to raise their minor grandchildren. These adults are usually on a fixed income and may have one or more health conditions. They live in elderly housing in order to survive and make ends meet. Elderly relative caregivers to minor children need assurance of knowing their housing is secure so that they can focus on tending to the needs of children entrusted to their care.

Because of these concerns, OHA has addressed these issues in several ways. Over the past three years, OHA has participated on the Governor's Advisory Board on Native Hawaiian Foster Parents as a means to advocate for policy changes that will support the efforts of these grandparents to keep their families intact.

We also provide community grants to the following: Kokua Ohana, a program of the non-profit organization, Partners in Development (PID), that is actively recruiting and providing support services to Native Hawaiian foster parents; Hawai'i Family Services, Inc., an organization that provides support services to Native Hawaiian grandparents who are caring for grandchildren on the Leeward Coast of O'ahu; ALU LIKE, Inc.'s E Ola Pono No Na Kupuna Program that provides transportation, social/cultural activities, and meals to kupuna statewide; and PID's Tutu and Me Program, which also provides transportation and support services to kupuna.

OHA has also been in contact with Native Hawaiian families of incarcerated individuals or "Pa'ahao." When a parent is incarcerated, it often impacts families with minor children. These families experience a wide range of stresses that include

emotional, financial, mental and medical challenges. We are aware that many of these families move in with grandparents or bring them into their homes to assist with the care of the children. In extreme cases where the biological parent or adoptive parents are unwilling or unable to serve as the primary caregiver for the child, grandparents become the next, and sometimes only, option for care-giving.

From our experiences, we believe stable housing, financial support, and respite services are the greatest needs of the grandparents, with affordable, stable housing being of the utmost priority. Several years ago, OHA addressed the housing problem of elderly Hawaiians by contributing \$3.75 million towards the development of the Kulanakauhale Maluhia O Na Kupuna, also known as Waimanalo Kupuna Housing, a project developed by the Department of Hawaiian Homelands. Unfortunately, in 2005, OHA's Human Services staff had to provide advocacy support to an elderly household with a minor child that was confronted with an eviction from the housing because of the child's presence in the apartment. Response to unmet family needs brought this grandchild and grandparent together into the grandmother's home. Sadly, though we were able to stave off the eviction of the grandparent, she had to be separated from her grandchild. This kind of outcome only inflicts unnecessary suffering for all involved and may eliminate viable options for kinship foster placement.

OHA considers solutions to these problems faced by grandparents to be of utmost importance and would welcome the opportunity to participate and work closely with a task force that would be established by this bill.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to present
testimony.

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Human Services and Public Housing
Tuesday, January 24, 2008
Conference Room 16, 1:30 p.m.
SB No. 2045, RELATING TO CAREGIVING

Dear. Chairperson Chun-Oakland and Vice Chair Ihara,

My name is Barbara Yee, a Professor at UH Manoa. I am testifying to urge the Hawaii State Legislature to support **SB No. 2045 , RELATING TO CAREGIVING** to expand the mandate of the joint legislative committee on family caregiving to include grandparents caring for grandchildren. As indicated by the EOA 2007 study "Needs assessment of grandparents raising grandchildren in Hawaii" conducted by the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences, at UHM, a wide range of child services, caregiving respite, financial assistance are needed by grandparents, but these grandparents find numerous access and other barriers.

Grandparents often provide a significant amount of family support, however, we don't know much about how grandparents fare while caring for their grandchildren. Parenting is a stressor at any age, but being the sole source of care or a major source of care for their grandchildren during the elderly years, may exacerbate preexisting health conditions, stretch already limited physical, financial, or housing resources to the breaking point.

As important we need to examine how grandchildren fare, especially those with physical and cognitive limitations or mental health challenges in the sole custody of grandparents who may be ill prepared to handle these grandchildren. One of the saddest letters I've seen written to Santa by a grandchild said " Dear Santa, the only Christmas present I want is for Granny to be well. Please help my Granny because if she dies, there'll be no one to take care of me and my baby sister. "

A task force is needed to specifically address the challenges faced by grandparents raising grandchildren in the custodial and parent role so that comprehensive and coordinated efforts can be developed to address this issue. I ask that you vote in favor of this measure. Thank-you for the opportunity to testify.

Barbara Yee, Ph.D.
dragonboomer@aol.com

H.I.C.C.O.

HAWAII INDEPENDENT CONDOMINIUM & COOPERATIVE OWNERS
1600 ALA MOANA BLVD. - APT. 3100 - HONOLULU - HAWAII 96815

January 24, 2008

Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Jr. Vice Chair
Committee on Human Services
and Housing

Testimony on SB2046 Relating to Multi-Unit Residential Buildings

Dear Senators:

Our organization supports SB2046 which requires regular surveys of residents of multi-unit residential buildings who have special needs and issues relating to medical needs, accommodations for the disabled and other special needs for emergency preparation purposes. This bill would also require multi-unit residential buildings to have and inform their residents of emergency evacuation plans.

There is one additional issue that should be included in this bill. Currently, multi-unit residential buildings with elevators are required to have a key box for use by emergency police and fire personnel so that elevators can be brought down for emergency use. It would make sense to include the names and apartment numbers required by this bill to be kept in a lock box separate from, but near to, the key lock box. This is important because managers and other staff may not be available in times of emergency to provide this information to the appropriate emergency personnel.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB2046.

Mahalo,

Richard Port

Richard Port, Chair
Legislative Committee