

Date: January 26, 2008

To: SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & PUBLIC HOUSING
Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Jr, Vice-Chair

From: Aubrey Hillman, TAONF client & BTH student

LATE

Re: SB 2210 relating to Human Services
Thurs, Jan. 31, 2008 1:30 p.m.
Conference Room 016 1 copy to Committee Clerk, room 226

I am Aubrey Hillman and I **strongly support SB 2210** funding educational opportunities for all First-to-Work clients. I am a Bridge-to-Hope (BTH) participant in the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program at UH. Without BTH and First-to-Work (FTW) Education option I would not have been able to get into the Nursing Program at UH Manoa.

Last spring's rule changes re-instating the reduced work requirement for full-time enrolled students made such a difference. Last Fall the rules requiring 20-32 hours of work in addition to school nearly convinced me to quit school. I felt like my world had turned upside down. How was I going to meet the minimum requirements of twenty hours of work per week and go to school full time?

Now that I have been allowed to continue my education, I know that I will achieve my Nursing degree. The purpose of TANF is to help people become financially independent, that cannot happen without school or training. There's no point in offering TANF for five years without the opportunity to go to school.

As a parent my desire to build a future for my daughter and I gave me no choice but to go back to school. Being on welfare without getting an education or some type of training for a career which could support my daughter and I is a total waste of resources. All welfare does is put off the inevitable dependence on someone else. Please support access to post-secondary education for ALL First-to-Work clients.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Aubrey Hillman
537 B Kipuka Pl.
Kailua, HI 96734



For Thurs, Jan 31, 2008
Senate HSP
1:30 pm

National Association of Social Workers

Hawaii Chapter

LATE

January 28, 2008

TO: Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
And members of the Senate Human Services and Public Housing Committee

FROM: Debbie Shimizu, LSW
National Association of Social Workers, Hawaii

RE: SB 2210 Relating to Human Services- **SUPPORT intent**

Chair Chun Oakland and members of the Senate Human Services and Public Housing Committee, I am Debbie Shimizu, Executive Director of the National Association of Social Workers, Hawaii Chapter (NASW) and a member of the Welfare and Employment Rights Coalition (WERC). I am testifying in **SUPPORT** the intent of SB 2210 relating to the Bridge-to-Hope program but **prefer SB 2214** as the vehicle to clarify the eligibility requirements for the program.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Date: January 31, 2008

To: SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & PUBLIC HOUSING
Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Jr, Vice-Chair

From: Teresa Bill, Univ. Hawai'i Bridge to Hope Coordinator

Re: SB2210 relating to Human Services
Thursday Jan 31, 2008 1:30 p.m.
Conference Room 016 1 copy to Committee Clerk, room 226

LATE

My name is Teresa Bill and. I am the Coordinator of the 10-campus University of Hawai'i Bridge to Hope program which works with the Dept. of Human Services. **I prefer the language in SB 2210** amending the statute that created the Bridge to Hope program to enable all First-to-Work participants to pursue post-secondary education as part of their work activities. This language has been agreed to by both the Dept. of Human Services and UH Bridge to Hope to accomplish both agencies' goals of post-secondary access for welfare participants. However, the limited title of SB2214 (next on the agenda) makes it a better vehicle.

I respectfully request that the content of SB2210 be placed in SB2214, titled "Relating to Bridge to Hope." SB 2210's purpose more accurately reflects the intent of the bill and the limited title of SB2214 will help the bill move smoothly through the legislative process.

The Dept. of Human Services has implemented a temporary policy that allows post-secondary education activities, but the statute needs to be amended to ensure a full range of educational options for all First-to-Work participants, all categories of TANF & TAONF families. That was why we were here last session; to argue for the need to allow post-secondary education activities for welfare participants. While the federal government limits educational activities to vocational programs less than 12 months, the State of Hawai'i has committed to continuing access to college as a means for welfare participants to gain the skills and education necessary for life-long economic self-sufficiency. Last session DHS indicated that additional funding was not needed to expand program eligibility, it could be offered within current budgets. That is how we achieved the current policy to accommodate education activities. However, this statutory change is necessary for DHS to maintain the policy and to fund on-campus student employment for state-funded clients. Currently, TAONF clients are not eligible for subsidized on-campus student employment through First-to Work.

SB 2210 needs to be passed for many reasons, primarily because the current statute limits participation to only federally-funded TANF recipients and the federal government specifically prohibits baccalaureate education activities and limits vocational education to 1 year education directly leading into specific employment. While a certificate in cosmetology is acceptable, a pre-nursing Associate of Arts degree is not. If the State is interested in maximizing clients' use of their TANF benefits, allowing a full range of educational activities as a countable work activity is key.

The testimony of others will offer detailed and personal information about the long-term economic and community benefits of supporting post-secondary education as the most effective

means by which women can achieve life-long economic self-sufficiency and leave poverty, not just welfare.

The State of Hawai'i acknowledged the importance of access to post-secondary education as an avenue to economic self-sufficiency when it created the Bridge to Hope program within DHS seven years ago. This bill providing for a state-funded education program within First-to-Work is absolutely necessary.

I urge the legislature to stand behind its decision to include post-secondary education as part of First-to-Work activities as a strategy for self-sufficiency. This decision is a smart long-term investment as these participants gain education, pursue economically viable careers and eventually pay more taxes than were ever spent on their families.

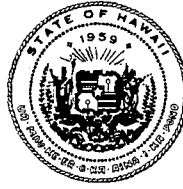
The motto of the U.H. Bridge to Hope program is "Education to leave poverty, not just welfare." It serves us well to remember that many welfare "leavers" nationwide are working fulltime yet remain in poverty unable to fully support their families.

A recent survey of Bridge to Hope graduates working 33+ hours per week are earning median annual salaries of \$34,899 which translates to \$16.77 per hour vs. \$7.15 per hour for welfare "leavers" nationally. We're still crunching numbers but wanted to share that preliminary, positive finding. The Bridge to Hope program has been a success with over 600 participants and 265 students earning degrees.

Please support SB2210 to give all First-to-Work participants access to education. I know Bridge to Hope students and former students have submitted testimony supporting this bill but could not be here in person. For these parents to take time to learn about the legislative process and submit testimony is a reflection of how strongly they feel.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR



LILLIAN B. KOLLER
DIRECTOR

HENRY OLIVA
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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

January 31, 2008

LATE

MEMORANDUM

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

FROM: Lillian B. Koller, Director

SUBJECT: **S.B. 2210 - RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES**

Hearing: Thursday, January 31, 2008; 1:30 p.m.
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

PURPOSE: The purpose of S.B. 2210 is to clarify eligibility requirements of and expand the Bridge to Hope Program to enable all head of households receiving financial assistance and participating in the First-To-Work program to pursue a full range of educational activities as part of their work activities.

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) is in support of this bill with a recommendation to incorporate the proposed statutory language amendments cited in S.B. 2214.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this bill.

LATE

George J. Zweibel, Esq.
President, Board of Directors

Charles K. Greenfield, Esq.
Executive Director

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF
SB2210 - RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES

January 31, 2008 at 1:30 p.m.

The Legal Aid Society of Hawaii hereby provides testimony to the Senate Committees on Education and Human Services & Public Housing on SB2210 – Relating to Human Services, in strong support of the bill.

Founded in 1950, the Legal Aid Society of Hawaii is the oldest provider of legal services in the state. We provided civil legal assistance to those in need through nine offices located in Lihue, Waianae, Honolulu, Kaneohe, Kaunakakai, Lanai City, Wailuku, Kona and Hilo. Over the years we have provided leadership around public benefits issues and on an annual basis update our public benefits manual and provide a two-day training on public benefits. Our staff has also participated in national trainings on TANF and understands the complexity of this program.

The Bridge to Hope program is one of the most successful local models in moving families in poverty to self-sufficiency through higher education. Unfortunately, recent changes to TANF work requirements have significantly limited the higher education activities which may count for a families continued eligibility for public assistance.

Under these recent changes, a single parent must participate in a work activity for 32 hours per week with 20 hours in core activities. A two-parent household must participate in work activities totally 35 hours per week with 30 hours in core activities if they do not have federally funded child care. These hours increase to 55 hours per week, 50 in core activities if they do receive federally funded child care.

The only education allowed as a core activity are “organized educational programs that are directly related to the preparation of individuals for employment in current or emerging occupations requiring training other than a baccalaureate or advanced degree. Vocational educational training must be supervised on an ongoing basis no less frequently than daily.” Further, a parent only has 12 months in their lifetime to participate. Other education activities directly related to employment may count as non-core activities.

Because of these changes Bridge to Hope participants will not be able to meet the work requirements set by federal rules and participate in baccalaureate education programs. To ensure the on-going success of the Bridge to Hope program, the law must be amended to allow single and two-parent households eligible for first to work to participate in educational programs that include baccalaureate education.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Nalani Fujimori
Deputy Director
527-8014

LATE TESTIMONY

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I SYSTEM LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY



SB 2210 RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Human Services and Public Housing

January 31, 2008 at 1:30 p.m.

by
Francisco Hernandez
Vice Chancellor for Students
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

**Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Human Services and Public Housing**

Thursday, January 31, 2008
1:30 p.m.

by
Francisco Hernandez
Vice Chancellor for Students
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB2210 Relating to Human Services

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

The University of Hawai'i **strongly endorses SB2210** amending the state statute to ensure that all First-to-Work clients have continued access to a full range of post-secondary education opportunities. The University of Hawai'i **prefers SB2210** as the language the Department of Human Services and the UH Bridge to Hope Coordinator have agreed will accomplish both agencies' goals of post-secondary access for welfare participants.

The University has actively supported access to post-secondary education for welfare recipients since 2000 when legislation created the Bridge to Hope education program within the Dept. of Human Services. We now urge the legislature to make appropriate amendments to ensure that a full range of post-secondary education options are available, especially baccalaureate programs.

In addition to the support of President McClain and the system-wide UH Commission on the Status of Women, faculty and staff at every campus have given their time and full support to its implementation on our campuses.

Since Fall 2000, the University and the Department of Human Service have successfully partnered to maintain education as a work activity; reduce work requirements for full-time students, provide on-campus employment, and student support services for the needs specific to student parents.

This partnership has resulted in over 600 First-to-Work clients participating in on-campus Bridge to Hope employment and student services. With students in the educational pipeline moving from community colleges to baccalaureate campuses, over 150 students have earned Associate of Arts degrees at the community colleges and nearly 100 have earned Bachelor of Arts degrees. Popular and highly employable degrees include: Social Work, Nursing, Dental Hygiene, Teaching, Accounting, Software Technology, Counseling, Business Administration, Paralegal, Office Management, various Health Sciences, etc. These graduates are now fully employed and no longer receive cash assistance.

While the Dept. of Human Services has modified their education policy to accommodate both federal and state-funded participants, the statutory change is necessary to ensure that a full range of educational opportunities are always available. We are particularly disturbed with the federal restriction to baccalaureate education, which is particularly necessary for women to earn a wage sufficient to support a family.

The federal restriction to 1 year of vocational education does not take into account the reality of pre-requisites for many 2-year vocational programs, including the economically viable health sciences careers (e.g. Dental Hygiene, Licensed Practical Nursing, Respiratory

Therapist). For example, a two-year medical lab technician program has nearly 1 full year of pre-requisites before the student can even apply to the program. Limiting education activities to 2 years effectively limits students' participation in educational programs that can provide lifelong economic security.

The University strongly supports this program and believes that its passage will be a significant help for Hawai'i families seeking to move from welfare to self-reliance. We believe that providing educational opportunities to students on welfare is consistent with the University's Strategic Plan goals of access, service to the State and diversity.

Jeanne Y. Ohta

1016 A Hind Iuka Drive
Honolulu, HI 96821

January 31, 2008

To: Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair
And Members of the Committee on Human Services & Public Housing

From: Jeanne Ohta

Re: SB 2210 Relating to Human Services
Hearing: Thursday, January 31, 2008, 1:30 p.m., Room 016

Position: STRONG SUPPORT

Good afternoon, I am testifying today in strong support of SB 2210 Relating to Human Services. This bill is also supported by the Hawaii Women's Coalition and is included in the coalition's 2008 Legislative Package.

This bill requests a change to the statute establishing the post-secondary education program called Bridge to Hope within the Department of Human Services. The change will allow all heads of households receiving financial assistance and participating in First-to-Work to participate in a full range of educational activities as part of their work activities.

The current statute is limited to TANF or federally funded clients. The statute needs to be amended to include all families; to ensure that while federal rules may change, the State of Hawaii can remain committed to providing a full range of post secondary activities.

It is important to provide access to Bridge to Hope to all families. The Institute of Women's Policy Research published a study in 2006, "Resilient and Reaching for More, Challenges and Benefits of Higher Education for Welfare Participants and their Children." The study found that higher education had a host of positive financial, social, and emotional effects on low-income women and their children.

Besides the obvious improvement in earnings, participants said that education helped them overcome substance abuse, leave destructive relationships, and develop self-confidence and hope in a positive future. Many survey participants indicated that their children benefited as well, with improved study habits and better grades.

The study also indicates that communities benefit when low-income women complete higher education. Nearly two-thirds of degree holders in the study chose to stay in their communities after completing their degree and most indicated an increased level of community involvement since their exposure to higher education. As a result, the

benefits of higher education spilled beyond the confines of individuals and their families, and ultimately impacted larger communities.

This is a worthwhile measure that in the long-run would benefit the mothers, their children, and our state. Please pass this measure. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.



For Thurs, Jan 31, 2008
Senate HSP
1:30 pm

National Association of Social Workers

Hawaii Chapter

January 28, 2008

1/31

TO: Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
And members of the Senate Human Services and Public Housing Committee

FROM: Debbie Shimizu, LSW
National Association of Social Workers, Hawaii

RE: ~~SB 2210 Relating to Human Services - SUPPORT intent but prefer SB 2214~~

Chair Chun Oakland and members of the Senate Human Services and Public Housing Committee, I am Debbie Shimizu, Executive Director of the National Association of Social Workers, Hawaii Chapter (NASW) and a member of the Welfare and Employment Rights Coalition (WERC). I am testifying in **SUPPORT** the intent of SB 2210 relating to the Bridge-to-Hope program but **prefer SB 2214** as the vehicle to clarify the eligibility requirements for the program.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.