

State Commission on Fatherhood

MISSION: *To promote healthy family relationships between parents and children by emphasizing the important role fathers play in the lives of their children.*

c/o Hawai'i Dept. of Human Services; 1390 Miller Street, Room 209; Honolulu, HI 96813

March 12, 2008

LATE TESTIMONY

TO: Rep. Maile S. L. Shimabukuro, Chair; Rep. Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair
House Committee Human Services & Housing (c/o fax: 586-6189)

FROM: Myrna B. Murdoch, State Commission on Fatherhood and Children's Right's Council

SUBJECT: **Testimony IN STRONG SUPPORT of SB2226 SD1 (with an amendment) which makes an Appropriation for staffing the State Commission on Fatherhood**

HEARING: Thursday, March 13, 2008; 9:30 a.m.; Room 329, State Capitol

Chair Rep. Shimabukuro and Members of the Human Services & Housing Committee.

The State Commission on Fatherhood (SCF) **strongly supports SB2226 SD1 with an amendment changing "appropriated out of temporary assistance for needy families funds..." (p. 3, l. 6-7) to "appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii..."** (from the original SB2226).

The Department of Human Services (where SCF is placed for administrative purposes) continues to declare that TANF funds cannot be used for staffing the State Commission on Fatherhood.

Appropriating \$150,000 (FY 2008-09) would support the State Commission on Fatherhood's implementation of its strategic plan by providing travel expenses of Neighbor Island Commissioners, establishing an office, and hiring a Director and a clerical staff person. These staff would support the Fatherhood Commission's efforts to implement its goals and objectives as described in SB2226 SD1.

The Legislature "in recognition of the important and unique role fathers play in the lives of their children, families, and communities..." established the State Commission on Fatherhood in 2003. Its mission is "to promote healthy family relationships between parents and children by emphasizing the important role fathers play in the lives of their children" (<http://hawaii.gov/dhs/fatherhood/fatherhood/>)

However, the State Commission on Fatherhood has received no State funding for staffing and consequently has functioned with no staff in the 5 years since it was established in 2003. During these same 5 years the State Commission on the Status of Women has received over \$500,000 for staffing its work. Although the State Commission on Fatherhood's mission is narrower than the State Commission on the Status of Women (which needs additional support for its important work), the Fatherhood Commission cannot effectively carry out its mission without staffing.

The State Commission on Fatherhood supports passage of SB2226 SD1 (with the above amendment).

Myrna B. Murdoch

State Commission on Fatherhood: Greg Farstrup, Chair (*Hawai'i Coalition for Dads*); Marika Ripke, Secretary/Treasurer (*Hawaii Kids Count, UH Manoa*); Barrett Awai (*Kawaiah'o Church*); Bernard Carvalho (*Office of Community Assistance, Kaua'i County*); Merton Chinen (*Office of Youth Services*); Mike Dias (*Alu Like-Hilo*); Dennis Kajikawa (*Dept. of Education*); Loretta Fuddy (*Dept. of Health*); Myrna Murdoch (*Children's Rights Council of*)

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Representative Maile S. L. Shimabukuro, Chair
Representative Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair
Committee on Human Services and Housing

Hearing Date: Thursday, March 13, 2008

Support of SB 2226. S.D. 1, Making an Appropriation for the State Commission on Fatherhood

Chairs Shimabukuro and Members of the Committee on HSH:

I am Sheryl Mita and I am a student at the University of Hawaii at Manoa in the School of Social Work pursuing a Bachelor's Degree. I am testifying in support of SB No. 2226. S.D. 1, Making an Appropriation for the State Commission on Fatherhood, which would appropriate funds to support the operations of the state commission on fatherhood. The bill also gives recognition of the important roles fathers play in the lives of children, families, and communities. I am an only child who has been raised most of my life by my father and this type of recognition would be significant.

When it comes to familial relationships, I believe that the father-daughter relationship has become less influential than the mother-daughter relationship. However, in my life, my father and I have maintained a healthy, close relationship. He took on the role as not only my father, but as a best friend. Throughout my life, my father's support and involvement helped me to succeed in my endeavors, such as graduating from high school and being accepted into the University of Hawaii.

The funds appropriated to support the operations of the state commission on fatherhood will recognize a key figure I have looked up to in my life. I support the committee in the measure of S.B. No. 2226. S.D. 1. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.