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February 22, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Lillian B. Koller, Director

SUBJECT: **S.B. 2226, S.D. 1.-. MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE
STATE COMMISSION ON FATHERHOOD**

Hearing: Friday, February 22, 2008; 11:00 a.m.
Conference Room 211, State Capitol

PURPOSE: Appropriates TANF funds for the State Commission on Fatherhood.

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department recognizes the important role that fathers play in the family and in the lives of their children and has included \$50,000 in Federal funds in the Department's budget to provide contracts and grants to established agencies for programs for fatherhood initiatives.

The Hawaii Commission on Fatherhood was established by Act 156, SLH 2003, and directs the Commission to serve in an advisory capacity to State agencies to promote healthy family relationships between parents and children. The Commission is authorized to make recommendations on programs, services, and contracts relating to children and families.

Across the nation, there is a renewed understanding of the unique importance of fathers in the lives of their children, families, and communities. It is widely recognized

that children are more likely to thrive with support, guidance, and nurturing from both parents. The presence of fathers has a positive impact on the lives of their children, as reflected in better school performance, fewer high-risk behaviors, higher self-esteem, and less substance abuse. Healthy families mean less impact on our child protective services and at-risk youth and youth offender programs and the Judiciary. However, many young men today are themselves fatherless, lack appropriate role models, and are in need of information and education regarding the appropriate roles and responsibilities of fathers.

The Commission on Fatherhood plays an important role in promoting healthy family relationships between parents and children and promotes involved, nurturing, and responsible fatherhood.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on this bill.