



LATE

Kualoa-He'eia Ecumenical Youth Project (KEY)

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January 26, 2008

Sen. Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair, Committee on Human Services & Public Housing
Sen. Norman Sakamoto, Chair, Education Committee
(via email: testimony@capitol.hawaii.gov)

Subject: Testimony in support of Senate Bill No. 2241 "Relating To Non-School Hours";
HSP/EDU Committee(s) hearing of 1/28/08, Rm. 225

Aloha Chair(s) Chun Oakland and Sakamoto/Committee Members:

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of SB2241, currently before your joint committees. I am unable to provide testimony in person as I am out-of-state. SB2242 and a similar House measure (HB2030 – "Relating to School-Aged Children") both aim to provide crucial, continued support for programming for youth. Both prescribe a process involving coordinated leadership/dissemination of funds via the State Dept. of Education, County Parks & Recreation departments, and the State Office of Youth Services. This represents a smart inter-governmental approach that effectively replicates the multi-layered jurisdictions within which communities operate state-wide.

Launched last year, this legislature-driven initiative provides essential focus on the importance of programs that are "online" during critical hours when schools are "offline" – hours when youth are least likely to be engaged by primary institutions. The lack of same along with obstacles such as transportation (an allowable line item, identified by n the associated RFPs), are acknowledged as "risk factors" for youth. Continued legislative support, on the other hand, will tilt the equation in favor of positive alternatives needed for this vulnerable age bracket.

Our non-profit organization serves youth in the context of family and community in northern Ko'olaupoko. As such, we are one of two entities whose missions have been supported by such Legislative direction (via the Office of Youth Services) during the past year. The timing of legislative support is much appreciated, especially as our own strategic program planning has resulted in the recognition that our "best" work is likely to be focused on evening, after-school and intersession hours. We know that our "drop-in" activities are already making a real difference, engaging both male and female/pre-teen and teen participants in our neighborhood(s). We sincerely hope that you will consider approval of this measure and the importance of continuing support for this kind of positive intervention.

Mahalo,
John L. Reppun, Executive Director

LATE

Kids hurt too

HEALING YOUNG HEARTS

January 28, 2008

To: COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Norman Sakamoto, Chair
Senator Jill N. Tokuda, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES AND PUBLIC HOUSING

Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair

From: Cynthia White, Executive Director of Kids hurt too

Re: Support for SB 2242 & SB 2241, Relating to school-age children and non-school hour programs

Kids hurt too is a non-profit organization providing peer support and mentoring services to children in low income single-parent and foster parent families, which includes orphans, foster children, children of divorce, and other children separated from one or both parents. We define our service population as grieving children; therefore our services focus children on learning to cope with the loss of parents through positive and healthy choices.

Kids hurt too received a non-school hour programs grant in 2007. In September of that year, we started an after school mentoring program, providing services at the Beretania Community Park on Aala Street in the downtown area that is across the street where we will open a permanent facility for after school mentoring services and peer support programs. Our goal was to establish a presence with the youth in the community, get their input and involvement in activities we will offer in the permanent center in the Kukui building. We provided activities after school in a rented classroom at the district park. In order to encourage participation in our activities, staff and HFYC youth mentors walked around the grounds of the park where children gathered. Our first involvement with the local youth was to interrupt the bullying and teasing of younger youth while offering them safer things to do. A few youth attended, participating in social skills training activities, music lessons, learning healthy eating habits and having healthy snacks, and learning guidelines for safe conduct during our hours of operation. To our amazement, within a few weeks, the youth did not walk to our program, they ran. Soon we had up to 40 youth running to our classroom to join in the activities. We conducted evaluations, getting input and feedback from the youth on their learning and interests.

We believe our after school program was a tremendous success and please ask for your support in continuing funding for SB 2242 and SB 2241.

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