



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

January 29, 2008

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

FROM: Joy Lacanienta, Program Director II
Catholic Charities Hawai'i

SUBJECT: S.B. 2731 Relating to Child Protection

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

PURPOSE: The purpose of S.B.2731 is to permit a child's grandparent to participate as a party at certain child protective hearings.

POSITION:

Catholic Charities Hawai'i (CCH), is a tax exempt, non-profit agency that has been providing social services in Hawai'i for over 60 years. CCH is also one of the partner agencies representing Hui Ho'omalua, which is a statewide collaboration composed of various community and faith-based agencies working together in partnership to address the needs of Hawaii's children in foster care.

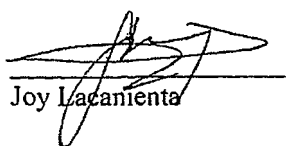
Catholic Charities Hawai'i works closely with the Department of Human Services - Child Welfare Services focusing on Child Specific foster/resource families including Special Licensed Relatives (SLR). A great majority of the foster/resource families we serve are grandparents. This is also a reflection of our State, which has a higher percentage of grandparents raising children compared to the national average.

For our community, it's vital for grandparents to be able to participate and support their grand children who are under the foster care system throughout the child protective hearings process. This is a culturally sensitive and sound idea that can only bring a stronger support system for Hawaii's foster children.

Again, Catholic Charities Hawai'i strongly supports Senate Bill 2731 to permit a child's grandparents to participate as a party at certain child protective hearings.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,


Joy Lacanienta

Susan J. Moss
J. William Sanborn

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TO: Senate Sergeant-At-Arms Office

DATE: January 28, 2008

ATTN: Committee on Human Services and
Public Housing: Hearing on:
January 31, 2008; 1:30 PM
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

Fax: 800-586-6659

FROM: Susan J. Moss & J. William Sanborn

PAGES: Two

If there are any questions or problems regarding this fax, please call.

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

FROM: Susan J. Moss and J. William Sanborn;
grandparents to Joshua and Kewona

SUBJECT: S.B. 2731 Relating to Child Protection

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

PURPOSE: The purpose of S.B.2731 is to permit a child's grandparent to participate as a party at certain child protective hearings.

POSITION: ~~We strongly support Senate Bill 2731~~ to permit a child's grandparents to participate as a party at certain child protective hearings.

Our grandchildren: Joshua age 5 and Kewona age 7 were taken into child protective custody in 2002. For one and a half years we attended every court hearing regarding this case but were relegated to sitting in the waiting room of the court house as we had NO standing with the courts as a grandparent.

S.B. 2731 Relating to Child Protection

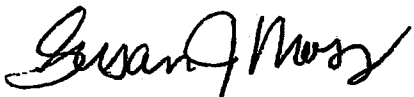
Moss/Sanborn Testimony

It wasn't until we were finally allowed to have our youngest grandson live with us after a year and half of begging and jumping through every hoop sent our way: i.e.: taking foster parent training classes, being fingerprinted two times, drove 50 miles from Waimea to meet with DHS foster parent approval person in Kealahou, etc.... that we were allowed into the court with our own attorney. Foster parents can attend court hearings currently, but grandparents cannot!

It was shortly after this that the case was dropped and our son was granted custody of our grandchildren. If we had been allowed into the courtroom earlier, this may not have been drawn out as long as it was (two years), and our grandchildren wouldn't have been forced to live in strangers homes away from their family.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,



Susan J. Moss



J. William Sanborn

TESIMONY

To the Committee on Human Services and Public Housing, Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair, and Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair, for Hearing on Thursday, January 31, 2008, in Conference Room 016, at the State Capitol.

From Patricia Urieff, MSW, ACSW, LSW, with twenty-four years of experience providing social work services to children and families.

SB 2731 RELATING TO CHILD PROTECTION.

Permits a child's grandparent to participate as a party at certain child protective hearings.

Regarding *What Should Happen When Children Are Taken into DHS-CPS Custody.*

When Child Protective Services Investigations show child (ren) at risk of harm to the degree that the child must be removed the child's grandparents have the right to be invited to be a party at certain protective hearings.

Regarding *Assessment*

Heavy responsibility lies with the DHS Worker and Supervisor to assess for clarity about which grandparent(s) [biological and hanai], the degree to which each has participated in the child (ren)'s life, safety, bonding, ability and capacity to provide fulltime care to each child.

The DHS Report to the Court should include those aspects of the assessment including which grandparent the child (ren) feels bonded to in a strong relationship.

Therefore the DHS Assessment Report to the Court should determine who should be permitted to participate as a party at certain protective hearings.