



Hawaii First Federal Credit Union

P.O. Box 446 • Kamuela, Hawaii 96743 • www.hawaiiirstfcu.com

KAMUELA BRANCH

Parker Ranch Shopping Center

Tel. (808) 885-7349

Fax (808) 885-2098

WAIKOLOA BRANCH

Highlands Shopping Center

Tel. (808) 883-2055

Fax (808) 883-2098

HILO BRANCH

Hilo Shopping Center

Tel. (808) 933-7349

Fax (808) 933-1401

Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair

Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES AND PUBLIC HOUSING

Laura Aguirre, President/CEO

Hawaii First Federal Credit Union

PO Box 446 Kamuela, HI 96743

Tuesday, February 5, 2008

Support of SB2839 Relating to Financial Education and Asset Building Task Force

My name is Laura Aguirre. I am the President/CEO of Hawaii First Federal Credit Union (HFFCU) on the Big Island of Hawaii.

HFFCU is a non-profit, community based, low income designated CDFI (Community Development Financial Institution) Federal Credit Union which was developed in 1956.

After becoming a CDFI in 2007, our primary mission is to promote economic development in struggling areas, both urban and rural, that are underserved. CDFI's are playing a critical role in building a healthier economy by providing these communities with the access to capital that they so sorely need.

During the last 15 years spent with HFFCU, I have witnessed first hand what not having asset building strategies has done to destroy families, causing many of our youth to give up on their future at a very young age.

A very recent example is a 12 year old Hawaiian boy who comes into our credit union with his father on payday. With five siblings in the home, and very minimal family income, this boy's day consists of going to school, then going straight to work with his father after school to make ends meet. When asked what he wants to be and what college he plans on attending in the future, he responded to us with a perplexed face and clearly stated "college is not an option for me".

We haven taken many steps allowing us to offer no cost Financial Education in our public schools as well as to our communities. The demand and lack of knowledge is far greater than expected. We will continue our efforts to educate our community in basic financial skills including but not limited to home buying, education, and small business start up.

HFFCU was recently awarded a grant to implement the first Federal Credit Union Individual Development Account program in the State of Hawaii. This program allows us to take low income individuals, and make self sustainability a realistic and reachable goal.

While Financial Education and Asset Building are critical tools one needs to overcome poverty, there is a lot of work that needs to be done to sustain funds and development for these programs for years to come to dramatically change the future.

I would also like to declare that I am willing to offer my commitment, 30 years of knowledge and resources to serve on the public financial education and asset building task force.

I am strongly in support of SB 2839 as many would agree this bill will drastically impact our economy, our communities and our quality of life.

This taskforce will be instrumental in changing the future of all Hawaii residents. Thank you very much for this opportunity to testify.



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

February 5, 2008

MEMORANDUM

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

FROM: Lillian B. Koller, Director

SUBJECT: **S.B. 2839 - RELATING TO FINANCIAL EDUCATION**
Hearing: Tuesday, February 5, 2008; 1:15 p.m.
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

PURPOSE: The purpose of S.B. 2839 is to establish the public financial education and asset building task force to develop policy recommendations related to achieving financial goals for Hawaii families and makes an appropriation for task force operation.

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the intent of this bill, provided it does not adversely impact nor replace the priorities in the Executive Supplemental Budget.

DHS currently provides some financial education to applicants and recipients through an orientation that all TANF applicants and recipients who participate in the work programs must attend, as well as through other supportive service contracts. The financial education for all TANF work program participants, including the basic concept of budgeting and savings, is necessary to ensure self-sufficiency. This helps TANF participants make decisions about employment opportunities and how it impacts their family's income in order to remain self-sufficient.

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