



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

OFFICE OF YOUTH SERVICES
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March 20, 2008

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

FROM: Martha T. Torney, Executive Director

SUBJECT: **SCR 106, REQUESTING THAT THE OFFICE OF YOUTH SERVICES AND CHILD WELFARE SERVICES CONDUCT A STUDY INTO SAFE SHELTER OPTIONS FOR YOUTH.**

Hearing: Thursday, March 20, 2008, 1:15 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 016

The Office of Youth Service (OYS) supports the passage of SCR 106 which requests the Office of Youth Services and Child Welfare Services of the Department of Human Services (DHS) to conduct a collaborative study on safe shelter options for youth. OYS recognizes that the lack of parents or guardians providing consent before a minor may be admitted into an emergency shelter is an ongoing problem and OYS wants to be part of the solution.

OYS recommends that a working study group, including OYS, DHS, the Judiciary, youth services providers, and youth advocacy groups, be established for the purposes of this resolution.

OYS does suggest the following changes to the resolution:

1. Child Welfare Services (line 13 and 25 on page 1) should be changed to the Department of Human Services,
2. Child Welfare Services (line 8 on page 2) should be changed to the Office of Youth Services and the Department of Human Services,

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3. Part of the final paragraph (lines 21, 22, 23 on page 2) should be changed to the Executive Director of the Office of Youth Services and the Director of the Department of Human Services.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.

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

FROM: Maelynn Paz

DATE: March 18, 2008

RE: SCR106; Relating to requesting that the Office of Youth Services and Child Welfare Services conduct a study into safe shelter options for youth.

Hearing: Thursday, March 20, 2008, 1:15 p.m.
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

Chair Chun Oakland and members of the Human Services and Public Housing Committee, my name is Maelynn Paz and I am a concerned citizen. I am testifying in support of SCR106 relating to requesting that the Office of Youth Services and Child Welfare Services conduct a study into safe shelter options for youth.

I feel that the Office of Youth Services and Child Welfare Services should conduct a collaborative study on safe shelter options for youth. In Hawaii, there are many runaways and homeless youth. Many of these youths have nowhere to turn, except to the streets. Our streets are full of drugs, alcohol, and crime. This is no environment for a youth to have to live in. Currently, the Hawaii law requires parents or guardians to provide consent before a minor may be admitted into an emergency shelter. If parents cannot be reached or if they will refuse to sign, what option will the youth have? I also think it would be important to find what kinds of resources will be available for these youths. There is a problem because if there was no problem, there would be no runaways or homeless youths out there. There is so much information that could be used as pro's and con's in this case. It is important to gather all information about a particular issue before pursuing such a thing.

I know this is just a study; however, it is one-step closer to having this type of service. It is a way to find out if this such service is even something that is possible here in Hawaii. Children are humans too. They should not be sleeping under a bridge, in a box, in the park, or at a bus stop. An emergency shelter would be in best interest for youths in these types of cases, such as, runaways and homeless. I am a mother of four children and I would not want them or even any other child to have to sleep on the streets. I know many would not want their child stranded on the streets. No children should have to sleep on the streets; however, some are forced to. This is a problem in Hawaii and we all have to face it someday or another. I understand there are many legal liability concerns; however, this is a way to obtain the information on these concerns and issues. The information they would get from this study would be very beneficial.

I urge you to support SCR106. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony in support of SCR106.

March 19, 2008

To: Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair and Members of the Human Services and Public Housing Committee

From: Summer Ui Ka'ai'ai *SUK*

RE: SCR 106 Relating to Youth Services and Child Welfare Services.

Aloha, Chairman Chun Oakland and members of the Senate Committee on Human Services and Public Housing, my name is Summer Ui Ka'ai'ai and I am a non-traditional student at Honolulu Community College working towards my Associates Degree in Human Services. This semester I am enrolled as a part time student carrying six credits and work full time as a Family Advocate at HCAP, Oahu Head Start. In my SW200 Introduction to Social Work class one of our assignments is to find a Bill, track the process of it and give a testimony as to why I support it or not. Working in the helping profession it was very difficult to narrow down all the worthy bills on the floor during this session. However, I have selected and I would like to respectfully submit a testimony of behalf and support of SCR 106 Relating to Youth Services and Child Welfare Services.

After research and much consideration to a few Early Education Bills I came across SCR 106. It touched a place in my heart since it hit so close to home. It reminded me of being a teenager running away from home but having a friend's house to go to. Then watching my niece walk down the same path I did. Making all sorts of bad choices but not really having anywhere to go to figure life out. She stayed with me for awhile but didn't want to cause any problems with me and her mother so she hit the road. For a month or she wandered around sleeping in parks and occasionally finding a warm bed somewhere.

My support for the Bill comes from first hand experience and the knowledge that the streets are not a safe place for our children. I understand that parents have the responsibility to care for their children but there is incidence where it isn't possible to either reach the parents or get them agree on what the child needs at the time. If this Bill is set in motion there will be hope that there is a safe place where youth can rest for the night and get something to eat.

I urge this Committee to support SCR106.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify on this important measure.

Aloha.