
SENATE RESOLUTION

URGING FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS TO NETWORK AND COOPERATE TO
SUPPORT FOSTER FAMILIES IN HAWAII.

1 WHEREAS, children are our State's most precious resource,
2 which makes it in our greatest interest to nurture and provide
3 them with the opportunities and resources they need to reach
4 their highest potential; and
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6 WHEREAS, according to the State of Hawaii Department of
7 Human Services, more than four thousand children entered foster
8 care in Hawaii in 2006, which constitutes a significant decrease
9 from past years due to new and innovative programs that have
10 been developed to better protect and serve our children and
11 families; and
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13 WHEREAS, foster children come from all backgrounds and from
14 birth to age eighteen, and forty-five per cent of foster
15 children are of Hawaiian or part Hawaiian descent; and
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17 WHEREAS, children enter foster care for various reasons,
18 the most common of which are physical abuse, sexual abuse,
19 domestic violence, and parental drug use; and
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21 WHEREAS, we have a shared responsibility to serve the needs
22 of foster children and to support the foster families that
23 strive to provide these children with safe, healthy, and loving
24 homes; and
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26 WHEREAS, as of 2006, there were fewer than two thousand
27 foster homes, representing only a portion of homes that are
28 needed; and
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30 WHEREAS, Kokua Ohana, a foster care program that was the
31 result of a collaborative effort between the Partners in
32 Development Foundation and the Department of Human Services,
33 works with churches and community organizations in the Native
34 Hawaiian community to recruit, train, and support foster
35 families through the general licensing process, with the goal of
36 striving for cultural harmony within Hawaii's child welfare

1 system by uniting churches, community organizations, and
2 families to care for and nurture Hawaii's foster keiki; and
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4 WHEREAS, Kokua Ohana offers to help churches build a foster
5 family ministry, members of which recruit others to become
6 foster families, encourage others to become members of the
7 ministry, support other foster families, accept and distribute
8 donations, enjoy fellowship activities, mentor new foster
9 families, help with household projects, and provide childcare;
10 and
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12 WHEREAS, Kokua Ohana will train foster family ministry
13 members about foster care and develop an action plan to reach
14 the hearts of congregations, funnel community donations to
15 foster families in the church, help build relationships with
16 local social workers to improve communication and services
17 provided by the State, and provide support for prospective
18 foster parents throughout the general licensing process; and
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20 WHEREAS, Kokua Ohana sets a laudable example of what a
21 faith-based organization can do to promote and assist foster
22 families in Hawaii, and the collaboration of faith-based
23 organizations to help our children in foster care in this way
24 would have far-reaching benefits for society; now, therefore,
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26 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-fifth
27 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2009,
28 that faith-based organizations in the State are urged to network
29 and cooperate to support foster families in Hawaii, such as by
30 forming foster family ministries; and
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32 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
33 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Director of Human
34 Services, Director of Kokua Ohana, Executive Director of Hawaii
35 Youth Services Network, and President of Family Programs Hawaii.