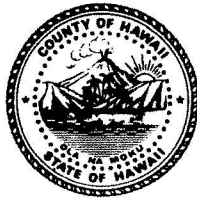


William P. Kenoi
Mayor



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March 23, 2009

The Honorable John M. Mizuno, Chair
And Members of the House Committee on Human Services,
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Re: House Concurrent Resolution 135, STRONGLY SUPPORTING THE CONCEPT OF ESTABLISHING A SYSTEM OF JUVENILE INTAKE AND ASSESSMENT CENTERS, AS EMBODIED BY THE PROPOSED PILOT BIG ISLAND JUVENILE INTAKE AND ASSESSMENT CENTER, THROUGHOUT THE STATE

Dear Chair Mizuno and Committee Members:

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in support of HCR 135, which expresses support for a system of juvenile intake and assessment centers. Such a system would address a longstanding problem in the juvenile justice system in Hawai'i County.

A survey of Big Island police in 2006 found that officers often have no good options when dealing with arrested juveniles who need supervision, but cannot go home, and who do not need secure custody. Existing programs are fragmented, and may not accept youth who are disruptive or are under the influence of alcohol or drugs. The Big Island Juvenile Intake and Assessment Center would help law enforcement by providing a safe holding place for youth so that officers can return to patrol duty.

Beyond assisting police, this program would provide a center where agencies can reach out to at-risk youth, and our young people can get effective help. Police, prosecutors, the Public Defender, the Third Circuit Court and the state Departments of Education, Health and Human Services have all signed agreements to participate in BIJAC and centralize services.

This year we requested start-up funding for a pilot project in Pahoehoe to provide a single point of entry for intake, assessment and case management of delinquent and at-risk youth, and we plan to pursue this important effort in the future. Effectively intervening and providing services to these at-risk youth can keep them from graduating into the adult correctional system, and will save the state money in the long run.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Aloha,

Billy Kenoi
MAYOR