

To: Representative Takumi, Chair, Representative Berg, Vice-Chair, and EDN committee
Hearing on April 8, 2009

RE: HR214 REQUESTING THE HAWAII STATE COALITION AGAINST
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE TO DEVELOP, AND IMPLIMENT A POLICY AGAINST
TEEN DATING VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

From: Emily Makahi, University of Hawaii, Masters of Social Work Student

Aloha, my name is Emily Makahi, a current MSW student at the University of Hawaii. First of all I would like to thank the committee for the opportunity to speak regarding the influence of teen domestic abuse and this upcoming bill, HR 214.

I am in full support of HR 214.

In 2009, Break the Cycle; the nation's leading non-profit teen dating violence prevention organization reported the "State-by-State Teen Dating Violence Report Card." Hawaii received a "C" grade. This grade indicates that Hawaii's teen lack resources that will help ensure safety from abusive behaviors from domestic partners, which are given to individuals over the age of eighteen.

Current state regulation allows individuals over the age of eighteen to obtain protection orders without another consenting adult whereas those most affected, (primarily girls between 16-19) are forced to confide in an adult to obtain such orders. Also, the type of abuse that Hawaii protects individuals from is scarce. These protection orders protect from any physical harm, bodily injury or assault, threatened imminent physical harm, sexual abuse, extreme psychological abuse, and malicious property damage. Important forms of abuse that are not covered and are most experienced with teens are verbal abuse and emotional neglect. The latter abuses are prevalent and have long term affects on teens and their *na'auao*, or their inner selves.

It is important that these issues be looked into for the sake of teen children and those in relations. The task force will better educate individuals and organizations the necessary steps to find outreach help so that punishment ensues on various types of abusers. The growing number of domestic violence cases with female adults has been steadily increasing over the years and has become a disturbing trend. These numbers will continue to rise without any prevention services that enables young individuals know that there is help for both victim and abuser and actions can be done to stop abuse with teens now, to prevent domestic violence crimes with adults.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Emily K. Makahi

HCR 246, HDI (HSCR1474), HR 214, HDI (HSCR1473)
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES TO ESTABLISH A
TASK FORCE TO DEVELOP A POLICY AGAINST TEEN DATING VIOLENCE

Wednesday, April 8, 2009 2:00pm Conference Room 309

Aloha Chair Roy M. Takumi and the members of the Committee on Education:

My name is Kristen Cleary and I am a master's student at The University of Hawaii Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work. Upon my own investigation I have come to the conclusion that **I strongly support HCR 246, HDI (HSCR1474), HR 214, HDI (HSCR1473)**. According to the National Youth Violence Prevention Center, approximately 10% to 20% of high school students in the United States experience physical or sexual dating violence. A recent study found that 9.8% of females and 9.1% of males reported that they have been slapped, hit, or hurt by a boyfriend or girlfriend. In March 2009 Hawaii received a grade of "C" by Break the Cycle in regard to teen dating violence. It is evident that teen dating violence is an issue which should be addressed especially since research has found that females who experience dating violence can lead to higher rates of alcohol/tobacco/cocaine use, unhealthy weight gain, risky sexual behavior; intercourse before the age of 15 with multiple partners, pregnancy, and suicidal ideation. There is hope, prevention programs have shown promise, these programs typically have teachers implement a violence and sexual assault curriculum into the classroom. I believe that this task force will allow us to properly investigate the problem in Hawaii and it will enable us to develop a plan which is unique to Hawaiian youth concerns. Mahalo for your time and mahalo for the opportunity to submit my testimony.

Sincerely,
Kristen Cleary

Anna M. Burke
Christopher F. Burke
27 Sylvan Court
Saunderstown, RI 02874

April 8, 2009

Education Committee
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: HCR 246

Dear Chairman Takumi, Vice-Chair Berg, and Members of the House Education Committee:

We are the parents of Lindsay Ann Burke, a college graduate with a degree in elementary and special education, who was murdered by her ex-boyfriend at the age of 23. Chris is a culinary arts teacher at our state's vocational high school and Ann is a health teacher in South Kingstown, Rhode Island. **We ask you to consider the following and we urge you to pass HCR 246 which requires teen dating violence education in your schools**, although we do so with a heavy heart.

Like most people, we knew little of abusive relationships, and Lindsay was never educated about this major health issue in school either. Despite support from family and friends, she was murdered after leaving the relationship for the third time. After her death we began to research the what, how, and why this happened to her and we were outraged by what we learned. We were sickened to learn how much control one romantic partner could have over the other and how much psychological devastation takes place within the victim, regardless of their prior self-esteem or confidence. Most importantly, it was the alarming statistics for teen dating violence that caught our attention (please see attached) along with the fact that the federal government had previously urged states to encourage public schools to take the issue of dating violence education upon themselves.

Domestic violence was declared to be an epidemic in our country twenty years ago by Surgeon General Dr. Koop. The American Journal of Preventive Medicine wrote "Domestic abuse is an epidemic. But it flies under the radar, because of the stigma and shame associated with it". Twenty years ago we recognized HIV to be a serious health problem and our government made sure that we educated a nation, starting with our children in school. Our children continue to be educated about HIV through our health classes as this has been mandated. The teen dating violence statistics are alarming (please see attached stats). Dating violence destroys people and kills people too. Why aren't we educated about this health topic as well? This has to end.

Health teachers teach about many other important health topics, like drugs and family life education. We teach these topics through our comprehensive health education curriculum, all in

an age-appropriate manner. We believe teaching about teen dating violence and the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships is just as important, if not more important than any of these topics. It also leads to other health problems such as teen pregnancy, eating disorders, depression, and drug abuse. And as such, teen dating violence needs to be taught through our comprehensive health curriculum. Teen dating violence, just like domestic violence, cuts across all lines of race, socio-economic status, educational background, etc. That is why EVERYONE needs to know ALL the facts about this topic. Teens have a right to know this information and parents have a right to know this information. Lindsay had a right to know this information too. It's too late to help her, but not too late to help others.

HCR 246 will do just that. It will provide our youth, school staff, and parents with the knowledge and skills to help themselves and others. And it will lift the surrounding stigma allowing victims to come forward more easily, and abusers to recognize their behaviors and seek help.

How many more daughters must we lose at the hands of an abusive partner? How many more teens have to suffer silently in an abusive relationship, fearing for their lives, yet afraid to tell anyone? Most people know little about the dynamics of teen dating violence; most people don't know how to help or respond properly to a victim. This has to end. We have school policies and provide education for bullying and harassment. The same needs to be done for dating violence. In fact, dating violence is the third piece of a comprehensive violence prevention package.

Passage of HCR 246 will be a giant step forward in providing the necessary and proper education for teens, school staff, and parents. We cannot protect ourselves against that of which we do not know. Education is prevention. We urge you to pass HCR 246. It is the right thing to do. It is long overdue.

Sincerely,



Ann Burke



Chris Burke

Enclosure: Teen Dating Violence Statistics

TEEN DATING VIOLENCE STATISTICS

- Girls and women between the ages of 16 and 24 experience the highest rates of intimate partner violence.
- Teen girls face relationship violence 3 times more than adult women.
- 1 in 5 high school girls is physically or sexually hurt by a dating partner.
- 1 in 3 teens experience some kind of abuse in their romantic relationships.
- 1 in 3 teens report knowing a friend or peer who has been hit, punched, kicked, slapped, or physically hurt by a partner.
- 45% of teen girls know someone who has been pressured or forced into having intercourse or oral sex.
- Nearly 1.5 million high school students report physical dating violence each year.
- Only 33 % of teens who have been in or known about an abusive dating relationship report having told anyone about it.
- 25% of victims say they have been isolated from family and friends.
- More than half of victims say they have compromised their own beliefs to please a partner.
- A third of teens worry about their physical safety.
- Many teens think this is normal.
- Teens report dating abuse via cell phones is a serious problem.
- Cell phone calls and texting mean constant control: 1 in 3 teens say they are text messaged 10, 20, and 30 times an hour by a partner keeping tabs on them.
- 82% of parents whose teens were emailed or text messaged 30 times an hour were not aware of this.
- The majority of parents of teen victims are unaware of the abuse.

Statistics are from the US Dept. of Justice, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Liz Claiborne Inc. teen dating violence survey. They have been compiled by Lindsay Ann Burke Memorial Fund for www.labmf.org.