

# HAWAII STATE COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

TO: Representative Mizuno, Chair, Representative Brower, Vice Chair and members of the Committee on Human Services March 30, 2009 at 8:30a.m.

RE: HR214/ HCR246 REQUESTING THE HAWAII STATE COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE TO DEVELOP, AND IMPLIMENT A POLICY AGAINST TEEN DATING VIOLENCE AND ABUSE.

FROM: Ana Maring, Hawaii State Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Aloha, my name is Ana Maring and I represent the Hawaii State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (HSCADV). HSCADV is a private non-profit agency which serves as a touchstone agency for the majority of domestic violence programs throughout the state. For many years HSCADV has worked with the Hawaii Legislature by serving as an educational resource and representing the many voices of domestic violence programs and survivors of domestic violence.

HSCADV supports HR214/ HCR246.

Intimate partner violence (IPV) does not begin at 18 or 20 years old. Many adult victims state they have been involved with their batterer since they were teenagers. The violence that traps adult victims in dangerous relationships also traps our youth.

Research shows:

- 62% of tweens (age 11-14) who have been in a relationship say they know friends who have been verbally abused (called stupid, worthless, ugly, etc) by a boyfriend/girlfriend. (Liz Claiborne Inc. study on teen dating abuse conducted by Teenage Research Unlimited, February 2008.)
- 1 in 3 teenagers report knowing a friend or peer who has been hit, punched, kicked, slapped, choked or physically hurt by their partner. (Liz Claiborne Inc. study on teen dating abuse conducted by Teenage Research Unlimited, February 2008.)
- 1 in 4 teenage girls who have been in relationships reveal they have been pressured to perform oral sex or engage in intercourse. (Liz Claiborne Inc. study on teen dating abuse conducted by Teenage Research Unlimited, February 2008.)
- Less than 25% of teens say they have discussed dating violence with their parents. (Liz Claiborne Inc. study on teen dating abuse conducted by Applied Research and Consulting LLC, Spring 2008)

HSCADV supports Hawaii's schools in adopting model policy regarding dating violence. The Coalition will work with local and national teen dating violence experts to craft an appropriate and useful policy for the Board of Education.

While HSCADV specializes in training and education we only have a staff of three trainers and would not be able to meet the extensive volume of trainings required to provide, on an annual basis, training to teach all administrators, teachers, nurses, and counselors at the middle and high schools. Funding to hire additional staff would be required in the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



We are providing testimony in support of the House Concurrent Resolution No. 246 requesting the Hawaii State Coalition Against Domestic Violence to develop and for the Department of Education to implement a policy against teen dating violence and abuse. My name is Cindy Iannce Spencer and I'm the Vice President for the Domestic Violence Action Center's Community and Capacity Building department. The Domestic Violence Action Center has been addressing the issue of healthy Teen dating relationships and Teen dating violence for the last nine (9) years through the Teen Alert Program (TAP). Our program is funded by the Department of Human Services and the stated goals of the Teen Alert Program are to facilitate a youth led movement to create healthy relationships and address teen dating violence in our island schools, homes and communities. We began this program when it came to our attention that the 15-24 age group experiences the most lethal forms of intimate partner violence and those services for this specific group with their explicit needs and barriers were not being addressed by our community.

Our TAP team consists of three, one full-time manager/educator, one part-time educator and one part-time advocate. We collaborate with numerous other institutions to create a safe place for teens to ask questions, get help and education. Our Teen Alert services also include classroom and community presentations statewide, specialized single gender multi-session group work, trainings for teachers and school counselors, supervision of student volunteers, trainings to the friends of both the victims and the perpetrators and to bystanders in general and specialized crisis intervention and case management for teens who are being victimized by their dating partners. This year to date the Teen Alert Program staff has educated 5,713 teens regarding dating violence.

Our Love-N-Courage campaign appeals to Hawaii youth to summon the necessary love and courage in themselves to change generational family violence and transform community patterns that tolerate or foster intimate partner abuse. The team's annual outreach contest this year has asked teens across the state to develop an anti-dating violence poster relating to the TAP campaign of love and courage. We received over 400 entries and the winning poster will be displayed in our city buses. Our public awareness campaigns have also focused on addressing both boys and men as part of the solution in ending gender violence.

Dating violence among youth in Hawaii is a silent epidemic. While working with Teens, we have found that by the time Hawaii students reach their senior year in high school, half of them will have known someone who has been in an abusive relationship. However we are often told by principals and teachers that "we don't have dating violence in our school". Myths about intimate partner abuse such as it only

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happens to certain ethnic groups or socio-economic groups hold strong in our society. When dating violence happens to teens, adults in the school environment often react with a variation of this thinking with statements such as "they're just teenagers", "it's just a phase", "teens are so dramatic", or "they make a big deal about nothing". This type of thinking becomes a barrier to the implementation of our TAP message and goals. Education regarding teen dating violence for both adults and teens is imperative as an intervention as well as a preventative method for honestly addressing the issue of violence in intimate relationships.

Another barrier to program implementation is that the Hawaii State Department of Education has cut the number of classroom hours for health education. Currently, health teachers have only one quarter to teach about a wide range of health issues, including sex education, tobacco use, teen pregnancy, and STDs. In this context, there is simply not enough time to devote multiple sessions to dating violence. Lack of available classroom hours is a challenge for the TAP program moving forward, particularly for implementation in public schools.

Preventative methods, such as our Teen Alert Program, are key to eradicating intimate partner violence in our state's communities and families. Our community has consistently underinvested in prevention and until we begin to recognize the importance of engaging and educating our youth population in healthy relationship building we will continue to see families destroyed and communities faced with growing financial liabilities. If we want to see a world without domestic violence we must invest in partnerships with schools and experts.

We strongly support and would welcome any collaboration with the Hawaii State Coalition Against Domestic Violence and the Department of Education in addressing the issue of teen dating violence. Since the work on the ground has been done by our agency we offer that we would be more than willing to assist in the development of Policies and Procedures addressing this issue in collaboration with the Hawaii State Coalition.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this testimony.