
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES TO STOP ITS PROPOSED REORGANIZATION OF THE BENEFITS, EMPLOYMENT, SUPPORT SERVICES AND MED QUEST DIVISIONS UNTIL A LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE EVALUATES THE PROPOSAL.

1 WHEREAS, the Department of Human Services (DHS) oversees a
2 variety of important social service programs, including
3 Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, food stamps, general
4 assistance and Medicaid, that serve thousands of people in
5 Hawaii; and
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7 WHEREAS, DHS proposes to reorganize its Benefits,
8 Employment Support Services Division (BESSD), Med-Quest
9 Division, Social Services Division, including but not limited to
10 the intake and eligibility determination functions for public
11 assistance, SNAP, Medicaid and Foster Care Income Maintenance,
12 and create a new Eligibility Division to save money and
13 streamline operations; and
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15 WHEREAS, the proposed reorganization would close 31
16 eligibility offices which equate to 50 units statewide and
17 replace them with two processing centers in Honolulu and Hilo to
18 handle all applications and the work previously done in local
19 offices; and
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21 WHEREAS, under the proposed reorganization BESSD and Med-
22 Quest employees would have no direct contact with clients
23 because all communication would be by phone, fax, and e-mail;
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26 WHEREAS, at least 232 DHS employees would be laid off as a
27 result of this proposal, and the proposed changes come as more
28 residents are struggling in the recession and people are turning
29 to social welfare for help; and
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1 WHEREAS, there have been increases in the number of people
2 on welfare, food stamps, Medicaid, and child care subsidies
3 during the current recession; and

4 WHEREAS, this reorganization will likely result in fewer
5 people receiving benefits and hurt those greatest in need
6 because they are the elderly, disabled or mentally ill, or do
7 not have access to computers or fax machines; and

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9 WHEREAS, clients may not be able to reach an eligibility
10 worker by phone because of short staffing caused by the massive
11 reduction-in-force last year; and

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13 WHEREAS, it is doubtful that non-profit social service
14 organizations can assist if there are problems with this policy
15 proposal since they are already struggling to serve their
16 existing clients; and

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18 WHEREAS, a reduction in force to the DHS Office of
19 Investigations will increase the rate of unreported cases of
20 welfare fraud; and

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22 WHEREAS, it is urged DHS be prohibited from hiring private
23 contractors and vendors for intake and eligibility of welfare
24 services; and

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26 WHEREAS, DHS claims that the reorganization is based on
27 successful models in other states such as Florida; yet we find
28 troubling reports about service provision from these states
29 including Florida; and

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31 WHEREAS, a policy change of this complexity and magnitude
32 should be carefully evaluated before implementation, especially
33 in the last several months of the administration; now,
34 therefore,

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36 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
37 Twenty-fifth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
38 of 2010, the Senate concurring, that before the implementation
39 of the proposed reorganization of DHS, a Task Force be
40 established consisting of the following; DHS Director or
41 designee; an eligibility worker from each island from the BESSD,
42 Social Services Division, and Med-Quest Division; a
43 representative from the Fraud Investigation Unit of DHS; a
44 representative from HGEA; the House Chair of the Human Services



1 Committee; the Senate Chair of the Committee on Human Services;
2 a representative from the United States Department of
3 Agriculture;

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5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Task Force conduct a
6 thorough evaluation of the proposed reorganization that include
7 but are not limited to the following issues:

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9 1. What the effect this proposal will have on current
10 clients considering Hawaii's unique geography and multi-
11 cultural society; and
12 2. Whether benefit payments will be wrongly denied or
13 delayed under this proposal; and
14 3. What specific information technology will be used to
15 implement this proposal and how much it will cost; and
16 4. When will DHS staff be trained in the technology; and
17 5. Any and all other matters that the United States
18 Department of Agriculture normally undertake as necessary
19 or appropriate to evaluate a major policy proposal; and

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21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DHS, its staff, and other
22 relevant persons or agencies are requested to cooperate with and
23 assist the Legislative Task Force, and to provide information
24 requested by the Legislative Task Force; and

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26 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that no funds shall be expended
27 towards any reorganization until the Task Force submit the
28 findings and recommendations of the reorganization proposal to
29 the Legislature no later than 20 days prior to the convening of
30 the Regular Session of 2011; and

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32 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the findings and
33 recommendations of the Task Force be submitted to the United
34 States Department of Agriculture to determine possible concerns
35 or potential violations with federal regulations or policy; and

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37 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
38 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, the
39 Director of Human Services, the Speaker of the House of
40 Representatives, the President of the Senate, and members of
41 Hawaii's congressional delegation.

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43 OFFERED BY:

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John W. Mizuno
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