



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
STATE COUNCIL  
ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES  
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March 15, 2010

The Honorable John M. Mizuno, Chair  
House Committee on Human Services  
Twenty-Fifth Legislature  
State Capitol  
State of Hawaii  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Representative Mizuno and Members of the Committee:

**SUBJECT: HR 148 and HCR 219 - 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.**

The position and views expressed in this testimony do not represent nor reflect the position and views of the Department of Health or Department of Human Services (DHS).

The State Council on Developmental Disabilities (DD) **SUPPORTS HR 148 and HCR 219** to direct DHS to stop its proposed reorganization of the Benefits, Employment, Support Services and Med Quest Divisions until a Legislative Task Force evaluates the proposal.

As indicated in the resolution, the reorganization would create a new Eligibility Division to save money and streamline operations. We are greatly concerned that rather than save money and streamline operations, the result would be more costly to the State, and create chaos and mass confusion for recipients. People with DD will be directly impacted by this proposed reorganization. Due to their disability (intellectual and/or physical), they may not be able to use a computer or fax machine, or have access to the equipment. And if they do have a computer, their limited resources may not allow them to afford and access internet services to get online to complete an application and/or provide updated information to assure they maintain their eligibility status for continued benefits and services.

The Council agrees that a policy change of this complexity and magnitude should be carefully evaluated before implementation. Establishing a task force to engage in discussion and complete a thorough evaluation of the proposal seems reasonable especially since there will be far reaching effects for recipients as well as DHS employees from the Benefits, Employment, Support Services Division (BESSD), Social Services Division (SSD) and Med Quest Divisions (MQD).

With respect to the task force, we are concerned with how an eligibility worker from BESSD, SSD and MQD will be selected. The Council offers the following recommendations regarding the task force:

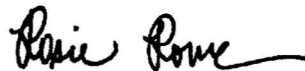
1. Establish a process to assurance that those workers are able to provide input without compromising their position with DHS and without any repercussions from their respective Divisions.
2. Include recipients of services from BESSD and MQD to participate on the task force.

Thank you for your consideration of the above recommendations and for the opportunity to submit testimony in **support of HR 148 and HCR 219**.

Sincerely,



Waynette K.Y. Cabral  
Executive Administrator



Rosie Rowe  
Chair



National Association of Social Workers

Hawaii Chapter

March 13, 2010

TO: Representative John Mizuno, Chair  
Members of the House Human Services Committee

FROM: Debbie Shimizu, LSW  
National Association of Social Workers, Hawaii Chapter

RE: HR 148/HCR 219 Directing the Dept of Human Services to Stop its Proposed Reorganization of the Benefits, Employment, Support Services and MedQuest Divisions Until a Legislative Task Force Evaluates the Proposal- **SUPPORT with amendments**

Chair Mizuno and members of the House Human Services Committee, I am Debbie Shimizu, Executive Director of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), Hawaii Chapter. I am also a member of the Financial Assistance Advisory Council (FAAC) of DHS. NASW is the largest professional organization for social workers in Hawaii.

**NASW supports HR 148/HCR 219 and would like to offer two amendments.**

The reorganization proposed by DHS to close 31 eligibility offices and lay off 232 staff needs to be carefully re-evaluated. DHS is basing their proposal on Florida's ACCESS program, however, this program was incrementally phased in and took over 2 years of planning before it was implemented. DHS is proposing to implement their program by July 2010. Additionally, Florida's recommendation to other states was to institute policy and procedural changes first, followed by technological changes and then to scale back positions once the technological glitches have been worked out. We should follow that recommendation.

Of greater concern is the elimination of personal contact with clients. DHS's proposal intends to have clients apply online, by fax, phone or mail. Many individuals who apply for financial assistance need someone to explain the application form to them and assist them in completing the form. DHS states that community agencies are already helping the department with applications, however, these agencies are not prepared to handle any increase in applicants, nor are they being offered any compensation to take over this function for the department.

NASW would like to offer two additions to this resolution:

- 1) Add a community agency (ie. PHOCUSED) to the task force. If community agencies are expected to help with the implementation of this reorganization, they should be represented on the task force. PHOCUSED is a coalition of health, human services and housing agencies and would be an appropriate member on the task force.
- 2) Add an entity to staff the task force (eg. LRB, UH Social Policy Center, or Majority Staff office). It is very difficult for a task force to complete its work without a designated staff assigned to help the task force so identifying staffing assistance would help.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO HR 148/ HCR 219** Directing the Department of Human Services to Stop its Proposed Reorganization of the Benefits, Employment, Support Services and MedQuest Divisions Until a Legislative Task Force Evaluates the Proposal

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1 Med-Quest Division; a representative from the Fraud  
2 Investigation Unit of DHS; a representative from HGEA; the House  
3 Chair of the Committee on Human Services; the Senate Chair of  
4 the Committee on Human Services; a representative from the  
5 United States Department of Agriculture; **a representative from Protecting Hawaii's Ohana, Children, Under Served, Elderly and Disabled (PHOCUSED)**; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Reference Bureau, University of Hawaii Social Policy Center or the Legislature's Majority Staff office provide staffing to the Legislative Task Force; and**

March 15, 2010

To: Honorable John M. Mizuno, Chair  
House Committee on Human Services

From: Mrs. Reyna Tasi, Eligibility Worker

Aloha Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Brower and members,

First and foremost my concern with House Concurrent Resolution NO. 219 would be on page 1 line 26 in reference to the amount of DHS employees being laid off. On March 4, 2010 I submitted a detailed listing of current DHS employees statewide along with the total variance of employees that would be staffed in the proposed EPOD. I would like to reiterate that there will be 334 employees lost NOT 232. This number has been thrown around since the inception of this idea and I would like that to be corrected. I submit to you a meticulous listing once again to corroborate my findings.

Secondly, I would like to be considered as the eligibility worker from the island of Oahu in reference to the task force and if for any reason I am not considered for such a position, I would like to request that I be chosen as an alternative to that position. Again, please keep my name in mind, Mrs. Reyna Tasi

Lastly, I am a concerned citizen & employee for the State of Hawaii and I work very hard in all that I do. For the past 7 months I have become somewhat of a political advocate, and boy I tell you, it's a full time job. I have learned so much about our government, how it works and how it should be working. I am truly disappointed with the current administration of the State of Hawaii, especially my director. Her lack of leadership and integrity astounds me. We need changes and I am looking to you to revolutionize this administration.

Thank you for your time and attention.

