

LINDA LINGLE  
GOVERNOR



LILLIAN B. KOLLER, ESQ.  
DIRECTOR

HENRY OLIVA  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809

March 16, 2009

MEMORANDUM

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

FROM: Lillian B. Koller, Director

SUBJECT: S.B. 186, S.D. 1 RELATING TO FOSTER CARE SERVICES

Hearing: March 16, 2009, Monday, 8:00 a.m.  
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of S.B. 186, S.D.1 is to increase the foster board rate distributed by the Department of Human Services for foster care services for children.

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services appreciates the intent of this measure; however, given the current fiscal difficulties, we must respectfully oppose this bill because it would not be prudent to pursue enactment at this time.

Based on our current data, the cost of increasing the foster board rate \$100 from \$529 to \$629 would require an additional \$19,200,000 in general funds for the biennium (\$9,600,000 general funds each year). The foster board rate established in section 17-828 Hawaii Administrative Rules (HAR) is also the base rate for adoption assistance payments (17-944.1 HAR) and permanency

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assistance payments (17-835 HAR). An increase to the rate established in section 17-828 HAR would require an increase to other benefits based on the foster care board rate.

In addition to the monthly the foster board payment, we provide the resource foster parents the following payments and benefits on behalf of foster children:

- Clothing allowances for each child
- Mileage reimbursement
- Medical coverage for the foster child
- Difficulty of care payments up to \$570 per month for children who have special needs
- Access to supportive services
- Training opportunities

We truly appreciate the commitment of Hawaii's resource foster parents.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

# HAWAII YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

677 Ala Moana Boulevard, Suite 702 Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Phone: (808) 531-2198 Fax: (808) 534-1199

Web site: <http://www.hysn.org> E-mail: [info@hysn.org](mailto:info@hysn.org)

Alan Shinn, President  
Judith F. Clark, Executive Director  
Acadia Hawaii Residential Treatment Center (Formerly Children's Comprehensive Services)  
Adolescent Services Program, Kaiser Permanente Medical Care System  
Aloha Pride Center  
American Civil Liberties Union of Hawaii  
Assistive Technology Resource Ctr. of HI  
Bay Clinic, Inc.  
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Honolulu  
Big Island Substance Abuse Council  
Blueprint for Change  
Bobby Benson Center  
Catholic Charities Hawaii  
Central Oahu Youth Services Assn.  
Child and Family Service  
Coalition for a Drug Free Hawaii  
Community Assistance Center  
Domestic Violence Action Center  
EPIC, Inc.  
Family Support Services of West Hawaii  
Foster Family Programs of Hawaii  
Friends of the Missing Child Center of HI  
Hale Kipa, Inc.  
Hale 'Opio Kauni, Inc.  
Hawaii Behavioral Health  
Hawaii Foster Parent Association  
Hawaii Student Television  
Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition  
Hina Mauka Teen Care  
Kahi Mohala Behavioral Health  
Kama'aina Kids, Inc.  
KEY (Kualoa-Hecia Ecumenical Youth) Project  
Kids Behavioral Health  
Kids Hurt Too  
Kokua Kalihi Valley  
Life Foundation  
Marimed Foundation  
The Maui Farm, Inc.  
Maui Youth and Family Services  
Palama Settlement  
P.A.R.E.N.T.S., Inc.  
Parents and Children Together (FACT)  
Planned Parenthood of Hawaii  
Salvation Army Family Intervention Svcs.  
Salvation Army Family Treatment Svcs.  
Sex Abuse Treatment Center  
Susannah Wesley Community Center  
Turning Point for Families  
Waikiki Health Center  
Women Helping Women  
YouthVision  
YWCA of Kauai

March 13, 2009

To: Representative John Mizuno, Chair  
And members of the Committee on Human Services

## Testimony in Support of SB 186 SBD 1 Relating to Foster Care Services

Hawaii Youth Services Network (HYSN), a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, supports SB 186 Relating to Foster Care Services.

The board rate for children in foster care has not increased since 1990 while the cost of providing food, clothing and other needs of foster children has greatly increased since that time.

Inadequate reimbursement to foster families discourages people from becoming foster parents as it does not cover the cost of providing care.

Increasing foster care board rates would aid Hawaii's efforts to meet federal standards for child welfare services and help the state avoid the financial penalties that would accrue if the State does not make adequate progress toward meeting the standards.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Judith F. Clark  
Executive Director

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Fred Mateo [REDACTED]@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 12, 2009 10:11 PM  
**To:** HUS testimony  
**Cc:** Rep. John Mizuno; Rep. Tom Brower; Rep. Della Belatti; Rep. Maile Shimabukuro; Rep. Joe Bertram III; Rep. Ryan Yamane; Rep. Mele Carroll; Rep. Gene Ward; Rep. Scott Nishimoto; info@ittakesanoahana.org  
**Subject:** SB 186, Human Services Committee, March 16, 2009 at 8:00 AM

I am strongly supporting SB186. This bill proposes to increase the monthly board rate distributed by the department of human services for foster care services for children for the first time since 1990.

Coming from a family that took in foster children as well as a friend that became a foster brother, I realize now after thirty some years how my parents and our entire family sacrifice our own resources to allow our foster brothers/sisters feel comfortable and part of our family.

Having the courage of becoming foster parents has been one of our highlights in recent years. I can honestly say, "We can make a difference". Board payments definitely help but always fall short as we provide for these children equally as our own.

As the Committee of Human Services, I trust you will continue to support the children of Hawaii and the families that share their family, their love, their resources. Please support and move forward SB186.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Fred & Malia Mateo - Foster Parents/Pastor  
The Salvation Army-Waianae Outpost

[REDACTED]

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**From:** kealoha07 [REDACTED]@hawaii.rr.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 13, 2009 8:56 AM  
**To:** HUS testimony  
**Subject:** SB186

Aloha mai,

The answer to this bill is simple, just ask yourselves when was the last time you had a pay increase in your job? Or when was the last time state employees had a pay increase? Or when was the last time there was an increase in electricity, water, gas or property tax. I understand that we will soon need to pay for our garbage to be picked up. It goes on and on and on and on.

Now ask yourselves, when was the last time the Foster Families of Hawaii had a pay increase in caring for foster children that are wards of the state or in the state system? Let me answer it for you, 1990, almost 20 years ago. My father was one of the biggest union leaders in the State of Hawaii. I don't think this would have sat well with him!

It is time for the State of Hawaii to Honor and Respect the Foster Families in Hawaii by increasing foster childrens room and board. You can say how much you need us and appreciate us BUT there needs to be an action behind these words. You need us! The youth of Hawaii need our love and encouragement so that they will be successful. The State of Hawaii needs our homes, our wisdom and our longevity. The Foster Parents of Hawaii will know how much you appreciate us through the outcome of this bill.

My name is Kealoha Benavente and I am a Therapeutic Foster Parent with Caatholic Charities Hawaii, Na Ohana Pulama. I have been a foster parent with NOP for approximatly 13 years.

We are in desperate need of a room and board increase. As you and the committee well know, the cost of living has sky rocketted in the last 2 years and I do not see it getting better, any time soon. Electricity, Gas, Water, (soon to be) Trash Pick Up, Property Tax, are all utilities that affect our youth while living in our homes. As a foster parent I do get a tax break that I am grateful for HOWEVER I do not recieve any medical or dental plan. Thank you Jesus, my husband has a full time job and I am covered by his plan.

We not only pay for the basic needs of our youth but if you have children yourself, you know that it takes a lot of extra finances to celebrate birthdays, Christmas, school functions, sport activities and general activities. This doesn't include insentives that support the youth to continue to make right choices so that our community doesn't pay for their mistakes when they get older. We have many foster children in the system and the foster children are comming in with more mental health issues then ever before.

THE STATE OF HAWAII NEEDS OUR HELP! SUPPORT US BY GIVING US AN INCREASE THAT WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN OUR FOSTER FAMILIES! AND PLEASE REMEMBER, WE HAVEN'T HAD AN INCREASE FOR 19 YEARS!

Me ka ha'aha'a  
kealoha benavente  
therapeutic foster parent &  
associate family teacher  
CC NOP Group Home

No virus found in this outgoing message.  
Checked by AVG.

**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 15, 2009 12:37 AM  
**To:** HUS testimony  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]@AOL.COM  
**Subject:** Testimony for SB186 on 3/16/2009 8:00:00 AM

Testimony for HUS 3/16/2009 8:00:00 AM SB186

Conference room: 329  
Testifier position: support  
Testifier will be present: Yes  
Submitted by: JAMES WATARU  
Organization: Individual  
Address:  
Phone: [REDACTED]  
E-mail: [REDACTED]@AOL.COM  
Submitted on: 3/15/2009

Comments:

*Patrick M. Walsh*

MARCH 14TH, 2009

TO: HONORABLE SUZANNE CHUN OAKLAND , CHAIR

FROM: PATRICK M. WALSH

SUBJECT: PERSONAL TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF S.B.186, RELATING TO FOSTER CARE SERVICES  
HEARING: MONDAY, MARCH 16, 2009 CONFERENCE ROOM 329, STATE CAPITOL

PURPOSE: THE PURPOSE OF S. B. 186 IS TO INCREASE THE FOSTER BOARD RATE DISTRIBUTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES FOR FOSTER CARE SERVICES FOR CHILDREN BY \$100.00 PER MONTH.

TESTIMONY: S.B.186 ENSURES THAT THE BASIC NEEDS OF HAWAII'S FOSTER YOUTH POPULATION WILL BE MET. THE CURRENT RATE HAS NOT BEEN INCREASED IN 19 YEARS. THIS INCREASE WILL COST \$1200.00 PER FOSTER YOUTH PER YEAR. ON THE SURFACE SB186 WILL COST LESS THAN \$2MILLION DOLLARS. (1500 FOSTER YOUTH @ \$1200.00 IS \$1.8MILLION.)

THANK YOU FOR ALLOWING ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE MY TESTIMONY.

SINCERELY,

PATRICK M. WALSH