

SB 905

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 96809-0339

February 26, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Lillian B. Koller, Director

SUBJECT: **S.B. 905, S.D. 1 – RELATING TO THE OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SERVICES**

Hearing: Thursday, February 26, 2009; 9:00 a.m.
Conference Room 211, State Capitol

PURPOSE: This bill transfers the Office of Community Services from the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to the Department of Human Services.

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this Administration-sponsored bill. The transfer of the Office of Community Services (OCS) from the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) to the Department of Human Services (DHS) will strengthen and improve the delivery of human services programs.

We believe that the primary functions of OCS more readily correspond to the mission, objectives and responsibilities of DHS, which is to provide timely, efficient and effective programs, services, and benefits, for the purpose of achieving the outcome of empowering those who are the most vulnerable in our State to expand their capacity for self-sufficiency, self-determination, independence, healthy choices, quality of life and personal dignity.

DHS is the appropriate placement for OCS and since they offer programs that give low-income persons, disadvantage persons, refugees, immigrants, and homeless individuals the tools to attain self-sufficiency, such as employment and job training, child care, and general assistance. This realignment will improve the Department of Human Services' coordination and delivery of services to both singles and families.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this bill.



HAWAII COUNTY ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY COUNCIL

47 Rainbow Drive
Hilo, Hawaii 96720-2013
Tel: (808) 961-2681 / Fax: (808) 935-9213

To: Committee on Ways and Means
Date: Thursday, February 26, 2009
Time: 9:00 a.m.
Place: Conference Room 211 – State Capitol

Re: TESTIMONY OF GEORGE YOKOYAMA IN SUPPORT OF SB 905

Honorable Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Hawaii County Economic Opportunity Council (HCEOC), a community action agency, I testify in support of Senate Bill 905 which transfers the Office of Community Services (OCS) from the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) to the Department of Human Services (DHS). States Offices of Community Services work together with local CSBG providers to prepare annual State Plans that address employment, education, income management, housing, nutrition, emergency services, and health, services that are more aligned with the function and purpose of the DHS than the DLIR.

Since the establishment of OCS, state general funds for OCS activities has been significantly reduced from \$8.5 million to \$3.5 million, a cut of \$5 million due to non-federal general revenue shortfall and discretionary budget restrictions imposed upon State departments. OCS budget restrictions are passed down to agency providers and the disadvantaged population served.

The transfer of OCS to DHS increases the overall effectiveness of federal and state funds, creates an opportunity for one-stop services to enable the public to access social services programs, and enhances coordination and efficiencies between human services programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

George Yokoyama
Executive Director
Hawaii County Economic Opportunity Council



A Non-Profit Human Service Agency

Main Office Location

33 South King Street, Suite 300 * Honolulu, HI 96813-4323
Telephone (808) 521-4531 * Fax (808) 521-4538

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Chamber of Commerce
Sylvia Yuen, Ph.D.
Center on the Family
University of Hawaii

Joy Barua
Interim Executive Director

HEAD START OFFICES:

- KAPALAMA
Tel: (808) 847-2400
- KUNIA
Tel: (808) 621-5099

DISTRICT CENTERS

February 25, 2009

TO: The Honorable Dwight Y. Takamine, Chair Senate Committee on Labor
The Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair Senate Committee on Human Services

FROM: Joy Barua, Interim Executive Director

DATE: Thursday, Feb. 26, 3 p.m., Room 211

RE: **Testimony Supporting S.B. 905, Relating to the Office of Community Services**

On behalf of the Honolulu Community Action Program (HCAP) Board, staff, and clients, I strongly urge the Committees to support the transfer of the Office of Community Services (OCS) from the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) to the Department of Human Services (DHS).

Transferring OCS from DLIR to DHS will improve the delivery of services to vulnerable low-income individuals and families. The move will also allow OCS to better coordinate human services among the service-provider community.

In working with OCS for forty years, we have witnessed the expediency and effectiveness with which OCS has mobilized to deliver critically-needed human services in Hawaii. Over the decades, OCS' operating mission has historically transformed from providing only employment-based services to include other avenues of emerging community needs. To name a few – meeting the needs of Micronesians, advocacy and facilitation among service providers, meeting the needs of the homeless, introducing energy-based programs to assist low-income families, and many more... Resulting programs have spawned in the areas of early-childhood education, youth-services, job-creation, workforce development, weatherization, energy-conservation, and most importantly – community action.

OCS' has hence evolved and adapted in its function to better meet needs of community urgency, enabling a more effective human service-delivery system in the State. In doing so, OCS' responsiveness has magnified and so has its impact. Therefore, OCS' move to DHS is appropriate as it would enable them to:

- Maintain effectiveness in service delivery to the low-income
- Manage programs more efficiently by harnessing the best return (impact) on public dollars
- Effectively mobilize resources to meet the immediate and emerging needs of the low-income

We are therefore in strong support of SB 905. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Joy Barua
Interim Executive Director
Honolulu Community Action Program (HCAP), Inc.

• CENTRAL O'AHU
Tel: (808) 488-6834

• KALIHI-PALAMA
Tel: (808) 847-0804

• LEAHI
Tel: (808) 732-7755

• LEEWARD
Tel: (808) 696-4261

• WINDWARD
Tel: (808) 239-5754



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

TO: Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senator Shan S. Tsutsui, Vice Chair
Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Diane M. Terada, Division Administrator

DATE: Thursday, February 26, 2009 (9:00 a.m., Room 211)

RE: **SUPPORT for SB 905, SD1, Relating to the Office of Community Services**

Catholic Charities Hawaii (CCH) is a tax exempt, non-profit agency that has been providing social services in Hawaii for over 60 years. The Agency has two contracts with the Office of Community Services (OCS) to provide Employment Core Services for immigrants on the islands of Oahu and Hawai'i.

CCH is also a member of the Inter Agency Council, which has representation from: United States Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS), Department of Health, Kalihi-Palama Health Center, Office of Language Access, Office on Equality and Access to the Courts, Kokua Kalihi Valley, Na Loio, Office of Community Services, Parents and Children Together, Social Security Administration, Domestic Violence Action Center, U.H. Family Services Center, and Catholic Charities Hawai'i. The purpose of the Inter Agency Council is to work together to advocate for the needs of immigrants.

In accordance with the recommendation of the Inter Agency Council, Catholic Charities Hawai'i is **in support** of the transfer of the Office of Community Services (OCS) from the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) to the Department of Human Services (DHS) and respectfully requests that the **following concerns be noted:**

- 1) That the transfer not affect the ability of OCS to maintain their pattern of **efficient and timely payment to services providers;**
- 2) That the transfer **not result in any cuts to immigrant program funding nor attempts to have services for immigrants absorbed into low income persons programs.**
- 3) That the **concept of self-sufficiency will continue to include job creation** as well as regular employment programs; and
- 4) That the OCS milestone payment system will be operated on **realistic milestone objectives.**

If additional information is needed, please feel free to contact me via phone at 595-5901 or via email at diane.terada@catholiccharitieshawaii.org. **Thank you.**