

SR 34



Email to: HMSTestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov

Hearing on: February 25, 2010 @ 1:15 p.m.

Conference Room 016

DATE: February 23, 2010

TO: Senate Committee on Human Services
Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair

FROM: Dennis Arakaki, Executive Director

RE: SUPPORT FOR SCR 79 / SR 34 Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Honorable Chairs and members of the Senate Committee on Human Services, I am Dennis Arakaki, **representing both the Hawaii Family Forum and the Roman Catholic Church in the State of Hawaii.**

Hawaii Family Forum is a non-profit, pro-family education organization committed to preserving and strengthening families in Hawaii, representing a network of over 250 Christian churches. The Hawaii Catholic Conference is the public policy voice for the Roman Catholic Church in Hawaii, which under the leadership of Bishop Larry Silva, represents over 220,000 Catholics in Hawaii. We support both of these resolutions that urge the provision of orientation and additional training to increase the ability of state agency case workers to address the issues faced by grandparents raising grandchildren.

We know statistically and anecdotally that more and more grandparents are raising their grandchildren due to a variety of factors such as homelessness, divorce, substance abuse, and domestic violence. In most cases, grandparents provide a safer, more stable and more nurturing home environment. This has created a new family dynamic and a new paradigm on how services are provided to families. It is then incumbent on service providers to make adjustments accordingly.

It is important that grandparents who are burdened, often unexpectedly, with the responsibilities of child rearing to feel supported and encouraged, for the sake of the children. The communities of faith stand ready to help provide support, facilities and volunteers to help with this very important training for professionals and for the grandparents.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.