



HB 718
RELATING TO FOSTER CHILDREN
House Committee on Human Services

February 10, 2011

9:00 a.m.

Room 329

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** HB718, which would require Department of Human Services to develop and administer a program assisting former foster youth with housing options.

Approximately 52 percent of the children placed in foster care in Hawai'i are of Native Hawaiian ancestry. When these youth exit the foster care system, they are often unprepared with the realities of making a living on their own. They struggle with the transition to support themselves with the basic necessities like food, clothing, and housing. The difficulty in this transition has resulted in a high number of former foster youth who are unemployed, homeless, or often times incarcerated. Providing former foster youth with the transitional support and foundation to locate affordable housing options would empower them to become productive and self-sufficient adults.

Therefore, OHA urges the Committee to PASS HB718. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

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Aloha House

American Civil Liberties Union of Hawaii

Assistive Technology Resource Ctrs. 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

College Connections

Community Assistance Center

Domestic Violence Action Center

EPIC, Inc.

Family Support Services of West Hawaii

Friends of the Missing Child Center of HI

Hale Kipa, Inc.

Hale 'Opio Kauai, Inc.

Hawaii Behavioral Health

Hawaii Student Television

Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition

Hina Mauka Teen Care

Hui Malama Learning Center

Kahi Mohala Behavioral Health

Kama'aina Kids, Inc.

KEY (Kualoa-Heeia Ecumenical Youth)
Project

Kids Behavioral Health

Kids Hurt Too

Kokua Kalihi Valley

Kula No Na Poe Hawaii

Lanai Community Health Center

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 (PACT)

Planned Parenthood of Hawaii

Queen Liliuokalani Children's Center
Kona Unit

REAL

Salvation Army Family Intervention Svcs.

Salvation Army Family Treatment Svcs.

Sex Abuse Treatment Center

Susannah Wesley Community Center

The Catalyst Group

The Children's Alliance of Hawaii

Waikiki Health Center

Women Helping Women

YouthVision

YWCA of Kauai

February 9, 2011

LATE Testimony

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

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 718 RELATING TO FOSTER YOUTH

Hawaii Youth Services Network (HYSN), a statewide coalition of more than 50 youth serving organizations, supports HB 718 Relating to Foster Youth.

Thirty percent (30%) of youth who age out of foster care at age 18 become homeless before 21.

Some of these youth have not graduated from high school by the time they leave care. They lack the skills to obtain employment that pays enough to cover the high cost of Hawaii's housing. They need assistance in locating affordable housing, negotiating with landlords, and managing their budgets. Many landlords are reluctant to rent to young people without a credit history.

A program that assists youth ages 18-21 to find and retain housing would reduce homelessness in this vulnerable population and help youth to learn and practice key skills of adult independent living.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Judith F. Clark
Executive Director