

Senate Bill 1109

Submitted by: Alex J. Logan, Hawaii Foster Youth Coalition

P.O. Box 390-302 Keauhou, HI 96739

Hearing Date: February 10, 2011

Testimony in Support:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 1109 requiring the Department of Human Services to establish a program for the medical insurance coverage of former foster youth. This bill requires the department to automatically enroll foster youth who transition to adulthood into a medical assistance program and automatically re-enroll them until they reach the age of twenty-one. There is also a requirement to have the department develop a program that will assist youth in maintaining medical care coverage after the age of twenty-one.

As a professional in the field of human services and a former foster youth myself I recognize the importance of a program such as this one. I fully support the implementation of this program and would recommend that the department work with the community based service providers for the Independent Living Skills program to assist the youth on maintaining medical coverage after they reach the age of majority. A youth may remain in the Independent Living Skills program until the age of twenty-six. From the age of twenty-one to twenty-six IL program service providers can work with former foster youth at developing life skills important towards survival and success. Maintaining appropriate medical coverage should be a component aligned with the overall program services of Independent Living Skills.

Respectfully Submitted,

Alex J. Logan, Hawaii Foster Youth Coalition

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

HEARING: Thursday, February 10, 2011, 1:45 pm
Conference Room 016

FROM: Linda Santos
Family Programs Hawai'i

RE: SB 1109

As the President and CEO for Family Programs Hawai'i, I thank you this opportunity to testify.

We strongly support Senate Bill 1109 which directs the Department of Human Services to automatically enroll foster youth who age out of the Hawai'i CPS system into an appropriate medical assistance program and automatically re-enroll these foster youth until they reach age twenty-one. Currently, DHS and contracted agencies who work with these youth are able to do the initial enrollment. However, after the youths are out of care, re-enrollment often does not occur as the youths are not always in stable living situations. Further assistance by DHS will help smooth our foster youths' transition to adulthood while allowing them to maintain their health coverage.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak on this important issue.



Email to: HMSTestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov
Hearing on: February 10, 2011 @1:45 p.m.
Conference Room # 016

DATE: February 1, 2011

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

FROM: Allen Cardines, Jr., Executive Director

RE: Support for SB 1109 Relating to Former Foster Youth
Support for SB 1110 Relating to Foster Youth

Honorable Chairs and members of the Senate Committee on Human Services, I am Allen Cardines, representing the Hawaii Family Forum. Hawaii Family Forum is a non-profit, pro-family education organization committed to preserving and strengthening families in Hawaii, representing a network of various Christian Churches and denominations.

Hawaii Family Forum has worked very closely with HOPE In the Name of Christ (INC) foster care and adoption agency which has a contract with the Department of Human Services to recruit, train, and support adoptive parents for Hawaii's 'difficult to place' foster children.

This bill addresses children that have been abused, neglected and/or abandoned by their birth parents, the very people who are supposed to protect them. Their birth parents parental rights had to be terminated so they would have a chance at a safe and happy life and some of them have been in more foster homes than anyone cares to count for more years than any child should ever endure. Currently they live in temporary foster homes, waking up every day knowing that one day they will age out of the system and be left without benefits, including healthcare.

These children are usually older and have special needs and challenging behaviors because of the trauma they have been through in their short lives. Because of this, we agree that increasing support for those who are older than 21 is vital. Given the start these kids have had in life, many need a little extra time to get their lives together.

Please support these changes and eliminate this inequity, promoting adoption parity by extending these benefits to foster kids blessed to find forever adoptive families.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

From: Judith Clark [jclark@hysn.org]
Sent: Tuesday, February 08, 2011 3:38 PM
To: HUS testimony
Cc: Judith Clark
Subject: FW: SB1109 foster youth medical testimony

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair

DATE: Thursday, February 10, 2011

TIME: 1:45 p.m.

PLACE: Conference Room 016

February 8, 2011

To: Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
And members of the Committee on Human Services

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 1109 RELATING TO FORMER FOSTER YOUTH

Hawaii Youth Services Network (HYSN), a statewide coalition of more than 50 youth serving organizations, supports SB 1109 Relating to Former Foster Youth.

Many youth who age out of foster care lack medical insurance coverage and find it difficult to meet their health care needs. they often work in part-time, low wage jobs and do not qualify for employer-provided coverage. They do not know if they are eligible for state-funded medical coverage or how to apply for it. Like most 18 to 21 year olds, they have not attained all of the skills needed for successful independent living and would benefit from adult guidance in managing their health care needs.\

A program that ensures that former foster youth ages 18-21 have medical assistance would improve the health of this vulnerable population.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Judith F. Clark
Executive Director

February 7, 2011

I Jocelyn Galase wish to submit testimony on Senate bill 1109. I feel that former foster youth should be automatically enrolled in the medical assistance program. Being a former foster youth I was never informed that I had to enroll myself in the medical assistance program before I aged out. I now work with current and former foster youth at The Hawaii Foster Youth Coalition. I have noticed that most youth I encounter also do not know they need to enroll themselves in the medical assistance program. The transitioning stage for foster youth is a very stressful and vulnerable time for them. Many end up homeless upon aging-out or end up back in other unsafe environments. Automatic enrollment into the medical assistance program would be ideal for all former foster youth and would somewhat ease their transition into adulthood.

Thank You,

Jocelyn L.Y Galase