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**THE SENATE
THE TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2011**

**Committee on Human Services
Committee on Health
Testimony in Support of S.B.125
Relating to Persons With Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities**

**Thursday, February 10, 2011, 1:15 P.M.
Conference Room 016**

Chair Chun –Oakland, Chair Green and Members of the Committees:

I am Louis Erteschik, Staff Attorney at the Hawaii Disability Rights Center, and am testifying in support of this bill.

The purpose of this bill is to establish an employment and training program within DHS for individuals with intellectual disabilities and to mandate the Department to establish a waiver to provide funding for the services.

We support this bill because we believe that greater employment of individuals with disabilities represents the next step of their greater integration into the life of the community. In the wake of the Olmstead decision of the US Supreme Court, some progress has been made in terms of building capacity in the community to provide residential placement. However, very little has occurred in terms of developing employment opportunities.

This represents an area of untapped potential. While day programs and things of that nature have filled a void in the lives of many such individuals, we believe that if they

were more gainfully employed at reasonable rates of pay it would maximize their sense of self satisfaction as well as their potential to lead a more fulfilled life and reduce the demand for public services that would otherwise be required. Additionally, we note that transitional services from youth to adulthood have been very scarce and our hope is that this program would increase opportunities for individuals in that age group. There is no reason for an individual with an intellectual disability to be limited to a sheltered workshop or a menial job or a day program. Their untapped potential needs to be realized for the benefit of the individual and society as a whole, and this bill will help to accomplish that.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

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ChunOakland2 - Tyrell

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 10, 2011 12:24 PM
To: HMS Testimony
Cc: millers@hawaii.edu
Subject: Testimony for SB125 on 2/10/2011 1:15:00 PM
Attachments: APSE_Employment_First_Statement].pdf

Categories: Blue Category

Testimony for HMS/HTH 2/10/2011 1:15:00 PM SB125

Conference room: 016
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Susan B. Miller
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Submitted on: 2/10/2011

Comments:

This document is background information for the committee.



APSE Statement on Employment First

Employment in the general workforce is the first and preferred outcome in the provision of publicly funded services for all working age citizens with disabilities, regardless of level of disability.

Underlying Principles

- The current low participation rate of citizens with disabilities in the workforce is unacceptable.
- Access to “real jobs with real wages” is essential if citizens with disabilities are to avoid lives of poverty, dependence, and isolation.
- It is presumed that all working age adults and youths with disabilities can work in jobs fully integrated within the general workforce, working side-by-side with co-workers without disabilities, earning minimum wage or higher.
- As with all other individuals, employees with disabilities require assistance and support to ensure job success and should have access to those supports necessary to succeed in the workplace.
- All citizens, regardless of disability, have the right to pursue the full range of available employment opportunities, and to earn a living wage in a job of their choosing, based on their talents, skills, and interests.
- Implementation of Employment First principles must be based on clear public policies and practices that ensure employment of citizens with disabilities within the general workforce is the priority for public funding and service delivery.
- Inclusion or exclusion of the specific term “Employment First” does not determine whether a public system or agency has adopted Employment First principles. Such a determination can only be made in examining whether the underlying policies, procedures and infrastructure are designed for and ultimately result in increased integrated employment in the general workforce for citizens with disabilities.

Characteristics of Successful Implementation of Employment First

- There are measurable increases in employment of citizens with disabilities within the general workforce, earning minimum wage or higher with benefits.
- Greater opportunities exist for citizens with disabilities to pursue self-employment and the development of microenterprises.
- Employment is the first and preferred option when exploring goals and a life path for citizens with disabilities.
- Citizens with disabilities are employed within the general workforce, regardless of the severity of disability and assistance required.

- Young people with disabilities have work experiences that are typical of other teenagers and young adults.
- Employers universally value individuals with disabilities as an integral part of their workforce, and include people with disabilities within general recruitment and hiring efforts as standard practice.
- Individuals with disabilities have increased incomes, financial assets, and economic wealth.
- Citizens with disabilities have greater opportunities to advance in their careers, by taking full advantage of their individual strengths and talents.
- Funding is sufficient so that quality services and supports are available as needed for long-term employment success.
- A decision not to consider employment in the community for an individual is re-evaluated on a regular basis; the reasons and rationale for this decision are fully documented and addressed in service provision.

Adopted by the APSE Executive Board on October 11, 2010.