

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 16 2011

RE: S.B. No. 954
S.D. 1

Honorable Shan S. Tsutsui
President of the Senate
Twenty-Sixth State Legislature
Regular Session of 2011
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Human Services, to which was referred S.B. No. 954 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO FOSTER CHILDREN,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to:

- (1) Give foster children the option to remain under the jurisdiction of the family court system until they reach the age of twenty-one; and
- (2) Require a transition plan for foster care children once they reach the age of fourteen.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of the Attorney General; Hawaii Youth Services Network; Epic 'Ohana, Inc.; Family Programs Hawai'i, and two individuals. Your Committee received testimony in opposition to this measure from the Department of Human Services.

Your Committee finds that the transition from foster care to adulthood is a very difficult path for many former foster care individuals. Many youth who age out of foster care at age eighteen are not fully prepared for the responsibilities of adult living. Some may still be in high school, and most lack the employment skills and experience to earn a living wage.



Your Committee further finds that, without the continuation of support services that foster youth receive from foster parents and state programs under foster care, many former foster youth face low odds for a successful life as an adult. Extending foster care benefits on a voluntary basis can be an effective way to increase educational attainment, develop independent living skills, and reduce homelessness among former foster youth.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Deleting section 2 of the measure, which would have extended the jurisdiction of the Family Court until a child reaches twenty-one years of age;
- (2) Deleting section 3 of the measure, which would have amended the definition of "child";
- (3) Adding a requirement that a court may retain jurisdiction under chapter 587A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, until a child reaches twenty-one years of age;
- (4) Making conforming amendments to accurately reflect the purpose of the amended measure; and
- (5) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Human Services that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 954, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 954, S.D. 1, and be referred to the Committee on Judiciary and Labor.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Human Services,


SUZANNE CHUN OAKLAND, Chair



The Senate
 Twenty-Sixth Legislature
 State of Hawai'i

Record of Votes
Committee on Human Services
HMS

Bill / Resolution No.:* <i>SB 954</i>	Committee Referral: <i>HMS, JOL</i>	Date: <i>2/11/11</i>		
<input type="checkbox"/> The committee is reconsidering its previous decision on this measure. If so, then the previous decision was to: _____				
The Recommendation is: <input type="checkbox"/> Pass, unamended 2312 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pass, with amendments 2311 <input type="checkbox"/> Hold 2310 <input type="checkbox"/> Recommit 2313				
Members	Aye	Aye (WR)	Nay	Excused
CHUN OAKLAND, Suzanne (C)	✓			
IHARA, Jr., Les (VC)				✓
GREEN, M.D., Josh	✓			
SLOM, Sam	✓			
TOTAL	<i>3</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>1</i>
Recommendation: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Not Adopted				
Chair's or Designee's Signature: <i>JOL</i>				
Distribution: Original Yellow Pink Goldenrod File with Committee Report Clerk's Office Drafting Agency Committee File Copy				

*Only one measure per Record of Votes