

NEIL ABERCROMBIE  
GOVERNOR



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**LATE  
Testimony**

February 3, 2011

TO: The Honorable John M. Mizuno, Chair  
House Committee on Human Services

FROM: Patricia McManaman, Interim Director

SUBJECT: **H.B. 721 - RELATING TO FOSTER YOUTH**

Hearing: Thursday, February 3, 2011; 9:00 a.m.  
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of H.B. 721 is to establish the Hawaii foster youth mentorship program to promote the well-being of foster youth within the Department of Human Services.

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services appreciates the intent of this measure; however, we must respectfully oppose the bill. Given the State's current fiscal difficulties, it would not be prudent to pursue the additional general fund appropriations that would be required for this bill.

DHS believes that a mentorship program is a better fit with private agencies, the business community and other community partners due to their existing connections with resources and contacts with potential mentors beyond what is accessible to the Department. The Department is aware of a grant application by a private non-profit agency to establish a demonstration project for mentoring transitioning youth. We would be very willing to cooperate with

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demonstration projects, and then reconsider incorporating mentoring into our services array for children and youth in foster care when the State's economic climate improves.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



**HB 721**  
**RELATING TO FOSTER YOUTH**  
House Committee on Human Services

February 3, 2011

9:00 a.m.

Room 329

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) offers the following comments on HB721, which would establish a Hawai'i foster youth mentorship program in the Department of Human Services.

The OHA Administration will recommend that the OHA Board of Trustees support HB721. Approximately 52 percent of the children placed in foster care in Hawai'i are of Native Hawaiian ancestry, and often times these children are not provided with a foundation to succeed before they exit the system. Establishing a youth mentoring program would significantly benefit these children and society as a whole.

A mentorship program would provide these foster youth with support, stability, and enriched social experiences to help them through life issues. Additional benefits to foster youth would also include development of positive interpersonal and social skills, confidence, and most importantly, offering a positive role model. This measure would provide these children with the foundation they need to become productive and self-sufficient adults.

The OHA Administration will make this recommendation to our Board of Trustees at its meeting on February 3, 2011. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

**LATE  
Testimony**

TO: Rep. John Mizuno, Chair  
Rep. Jo Jordan, Vice Chair  
Committee on Human Services

HEARING: Thursday, February 3, 2011, 9:00 am  
Conference Room 329

FROM: Linda Santos  
Family Programs Hawai'i

RE: HB 721

As the President and CEO for Family Programs Hawai'i, I thank you this opportunity to testify on House Bill 721.

As an organization that has many years of experience working with youth involved in the foster care system, we recognize the need for a mentoring program. Relationships and connections are extremely important and often lacking for these youth. We recently applied to a local foundation for funds to pilot a mentoring program for current and former foster youth. After evaluating the start up program and its potential successes, we intend to share the results with the Department of Human Services Child Protective Services for future program support.

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