

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
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LATE
Testimony

January 27, 2011

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

FROM: Patricia McManaman, Interim Director

SUBJECT: **H.B. 740 - RELATING TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

Hearing: Thursday, January 27, 2011; 9:00 a.m.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

PURPOSE: The purpose of H.B. 740 is to establish a domestic violence task force within the Department of Human Services to address domestic violence and then report to the Legislature.

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department does not support the intent of the bill to the extent it duplicates the work already being performed by the Department of Health and its established domestic violence task force.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, January 27, 2011 2:14 AM
To: HUSstestimony
Cc: adamtm@lava.net
Subject: Testimony for HB740 on 1/27/2011 9:00:00 AM

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Testimony for HUS 1/27/2011 9:00:00 AM HB740

Conference room: 329
Testifier position: comments only
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Tom Marzec
Organization: Individual
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Submitted on: 1/27/2011

Comments:

As a long-time advocate for family court reform, familiar with local and national domestic violence issues, I offer the following amendments and comments on HB740.

1. Amend the bill to expand membership on the task force, to include more grassroots citizens, victims of domestic violence, persons knowledgeable about abuses of the domestic violence systems and procedures, military experts, and persons with a domestic violence academic and research-based knowledge or background. New ideas and fresh perspectives require a varied and diverse mix of task force members. Such a task force is a learning opportunity for the community and requires broader community participation.
2. Amend the bill to *delete subsection (d) re the Chapter 92 Sunshine Law exemption*. Rather than exempting the entire task force from sunshine, procedures already exist for holding closed meetings and such a closed executive meeting is a much better way of handling potential safety and privacy issues related to domestic violence testimony. Removing the public from all meetings prevents a learning opportunity for the community and perpetuates the myth that domestic violence is something that only happens behind closed doors and should stay hidden. Also, the task force report can be very easily dismissed because the task force operated in total and unnecessary secrecy and such blanket secrecy is generally poor public policy. An inability to verify evidence and have a public dialogue makes any subsequent report conclusions and recommendations much less credible.
3. I recommend the task force be specifically charged to determine if a state domestic violence "czar" would be an effective improvement. Such a czar could be in the executive branch to utilize established and coordinated public policy-making procedures and could oversee all state or federal funds for domestic violence programs and services. Funding domestic violence programs and services piecemeal, or from the Judiciary budget, limits the necessary coordination required and prevents comprehensive and integrated public policy-making decisions.

Your consideration of these issues is very appreciated.