



SB2178 SD1
RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

February 29, 2012

9:15 a.m.

Room 211

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** SB2178 SD1, which would require the department of human services to conduct a study on asset limits for public assistance programs and to report to the legislature. OHA supports this bill, as it fits within our strategic priority of improving the economic self-sufficiency of Native Hawaiians.

Hawai'i's high cost of living significantly affects the most vulnerable members of our population, including single parents and hardworking families who cannot make ends meet. As a last resort, these parents and families end up relying on public assistance to sustain their basic needs. Currently, public assistance programs limit eligibility to those who have few or no assets. Unfortunately, such asset limits provide an incentive for individuals to divest themselves of assets and a disincentive to accumulate assets. This is problematic, as families need assets to avoid and escape poverty and become self-sufficient.

While we would prefer to see the current asset limit increased to \$15,000 or completely eliminated, we still support any mechanism to improve the status quo. Thus, we support the amended language requirement that the Department of Human Services conduct a study on asset limits and submit its findings and recommendations to the 2013 Legislature. We encourage the Department of Human Services to work with the Asset Building and Financial Education Task Force - Asset Limit subcommittee on these recommendations.

OHA urges the committee to PASS SB2178 SD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [WAM Testimony](#)
Cc: hspoehr@papaolalokahi.org
Subject: Testimony for SB2178 on 2/29/2012 9:15:00 AM
Date: Wednesday, February 29, 2012 9:06:34 AM

Testimony for WAM 2/29/2012 9:15:00 AM SB2178

Conference room: 211
Testifier position: Support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Hardy Spoehr
Organization: Papa Ola Lokahi
E-mail: hspoehr@papaolalokahi.org
Submitted on: 2/29/2012

Comments:
Aloha. Papa Ola Lokahi supports this measure. Mahalo



February 9, 2012

To: Senator David Ige, Chair
Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair and
Members of the Committee on Ways and Means

From: Jeanne Ohta, Co-Chair

RE: SB 2178 SD1 Relating to Human Services
Hearing: Wednesday, February 29, 2012, 9:15 a.m., Room 016

Position: Support

The Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus writes in support of SB 2178 SD1 Relating to Human Services which requires the Department of Human Services to conduct a study on asset limits for public assistance programs and report to the legislature.

The Caucus supports increases in the asset limit for TANF eligibility from \$5,000 to \$15,000, but recognizes that a study may be necessary to help determine how changes in asset limits will affect eligibility for different programs.

Currently public assistance programs limit eligibility to those who have few or no assets. These asset limits encourage families to divest themselves of assets and are disincentives to accumulating assets, which they need to escape poverty and become self-sufficient.

Reducing the asset limits would encourage families to save and to build their own safety net as they work their way out of public assistance.

The Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus is a catalyst for progressive, social, economic, and political change through action on critical issues facing Hawai'i's women and girls. It is because of this mission, the Women's Caucus supports this measure. We respectfully ask the committee to pass it out.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [WAM Testimony](#)
Cc: babyjean@hotmail.com
Subject: Testimony for SB2178 on 2/29/2012 9:15:00 AM
Date: Tuesday, February 28, 2012 3:45:51 PM

Testimony for WAM 2/29/2012 9:15:00 AM SB2178

Conference room: 211
Testifier position: Support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Ronnie Perry
Organization: Individual
E-mail: babyjean@hotmail.com
Submitted on: 2/28/2012

Comments:

The asset limits that are imposed on programs such as SNAP, TANF, Medicaid need to be eliminated or severely expanded. The asset limits are very low. These types of asset limits creates more poverty for those that seek the essential, basic needs such as medical, food and other basics.