

SB 2589

Measure Title: RELATING TO FOSTER YOUTH.

Report Title: Former Foster Youth; Medical Assistance; Keiki Caucus

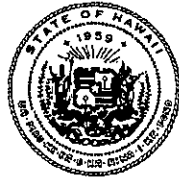
Description: Requires the department of human services to automatically enroll former foster youth in an appropriate medical assistance program and automatically re-enroll former foster youth until they reach age twenty-six.

Companion:

Package: Keiki

Current Referral: HMS, WAM

Introducer(s): CHUN OAKLAND, Fukunaga, Galuteria, Ige, Shimabukuro



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

January 31, 2012

TO: The Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services

FROM: Patricia McManaman, Director

SUBJECT: **S.B.2589 - RELATING TO FOSTER YOUTH**
Hearing: Tuesday, February 7, 2012; 1:30 p.m.
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to require the Department of Human Services to automatically enroll former foster youth in an appropriate medical assistance program and automatically re-enroll former foster youth until they reach age twenty-six.

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of this bill but finds it unnecessary as DHS is already working toward this goal.

Under the federal Affordable Care Act, beginning in 2014, individuals who aged out of foster care and are younger than twenty-six years will be eligible for Medicaid. DHS is already pursuing a phase-in of this by seeking federal approval to cover individuals who aged out of foster care and are younger than twenty-four years in 2012 and those younger than twenty-five years in 2013.

A phased-in approach allows identification of the cohort of individuals to be covered in 2014 and begin their coverage now. It also permits a gradual increase in enrollment that was

budgeted. Expanding immediately to all individuals younger than twenty-six would require an appropriation.

The current language of the bill would also suggest that any individual who was at some point in foster care, even if briefly, would be eligible under its provisions. This would be far more expansive than the Affordable Care Act, which targets individuals who age out of foster care, and would require a significant appropriation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

HAWAII YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

677 Ala Moana Boulevard, Suite 702 Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Phone: (808) 531-2198 Fax: (808) 534-1199

Web site: <http://www.hysn.org> E-mail: info@hysn.org

Daryl Selman, President

Judith F. Clark, Executive Director

Aloha House

American Civil Liberties Union of Hawaii

Assistive Technology Resource Ctrs. of HI

Bay Clinic, Inc.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Honolulu

Big Island Substance Abuse Council

Blueprint for Change

Bobby Benson Center

Catholic Charities Hawaii

Central Oahu Youth Services Assn.

Child and Family Service

Coalition for a Drug Free Hawaii

Domestic Violence Action Center

EPIC, Inc.

Family Support Hawaii

Friends of the Missing Child Center of HI

Hale Kipa, Inc.

Hale 'Opio Kauai, Inc.

Hawaii Behavioral Health

Hawaii Student Television

Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition

Hina Mauka Teen Care

Hui Malama Learning Center

Kahi Mohala Behavioral Health

Kama'aina Kids, Inc.

KEY (Kualoa-Heeia Ecumenical Youth)
Project

Kids Behavioral Health

Kids Hurt Too

Kokua Kalihī Valley

Kula No Na Poe Hawaii

Lanai Community Health Center

Life Foundation

Marimed Foundation

The Maui Farm, Inc.

Maui Youth and Family Services

Palama Settlement

P.A.R.E.N.T.S., Inc.

Parents and Children Together (PACT)

Planned Parenthood of Hawaii

Queen Liliuokalani Children's Center
Kona Unit

REAL

Salvation Army Family Intervention Svcs.

Salvation Army Family Treatment Svcs.

Sex Abuse Treatment Center

Susannah Wesley Community Center

The Catalyst Group

The Children's Alliance of Hawaii

Waikiki Health Center

Women Helping Women

YouthVision

YWCA of Kauai

January 26, 2012

To: Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
And members of the Committee on Human Services

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2589 RELATING TO FOSTER YOUTH

Hawaii Youth Services Network (HYSN), a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, supports SB 2589 Relating to Foster Youth.

When youth age out of foster care at 18, they are suddenly faced with coping with all of the tasks of independent living without adult support or guidance. They must obtain housing, seek employment, manage a budget, and meet many other new and often overwhelming responsibilities. It is not surprising that some fail to meet all of the complex requirements for applying for and renewing their medical assistance benefits.

When youth adults lack medical assistance coverage, it can result in serious harm resulting from untreated illness or injury, inappropriate use of emergency medical services, and unnecessary costs. The stories below illustrate what happens to former foster youth when they lack medical benefits. The stories are true, but names have been changed to protect confidentiality.

Sarah used hospital emergency rooms as her primary source of medical care. When she was sick or injured, she delayed seeking help until the pain and sickness became too much to bear. If Sarah had consistent medical coverage and could establish a relationship with a doctor who knew her history and saw her regularly, the frequency and severity of her asthma attacks could have been greatly reduced. The cost of managing her asthma and other health needs would have been much lower.

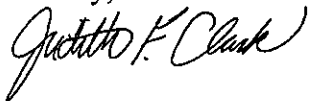
Kalani did not know why he was feeling increasingly tired and weak. When he complained to his friends, they advised him to get more sleep, take some vitamins or stop partying so much. Eventually Kalani lost his job, because he could no longer lift heavy boxes. When Kalani became desperate enough to seek medical

help, he was diagnosed with muscular dystrophy. If he had been able to see a doctor when his symptoms began, he might have been able to retain more mobility and strength as a result of prompt diagnosis and treatment.

Ensuring that former foster youth have access to medical care in their young adult years will improve the health of these young adults while reducing the costs of their medical care and avoiding inappropriate use of emergency facilities.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Judith F. Clark". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Judith F. Clark
Executive Director



1130 N. NIMITZ HWY SUITE C-210 HONOLULU, HI 96817
PHONE: (808) 838-7752 TOLL FREE: (866) 636-1644 FAX: (808) 838-1653

To: **Committee on Human Services, Senator Chun-Oakland, Chair**
Wednesday, February 7, 2012
1:30pm, Conference Room 016, State Capitol

From: **Nellieshy Mamuad, Historian/Public Relations Chair (East Hawaii)**
HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board, Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative, EPIC 'Ohana, Inc.

Re: **In Support of SB 2589, RELATING TO FOSTER YOUTH**

My name is Nellieshy Mamuad and I am 23 years old. I am a member of the Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative HI H.O.P.E.S. Board in East Hawaii as well as a former foster youth. I would like to provide supportive testimony today for SB 2589, which provides extended and automatically re-enrolled Medicare benefits for all foster youth who have reached the age of majority until age 26.

Medical coverage is something that is vital for everyone, but even more so for the former foster youth population. 77% of former foster youth become pregnant by the age of 23. Another 24% have reported being homeless at least once. Of these youth, only 57% have medical coverage compared to 78% of their peers. So how does all of this tie into the need for extension and re-enrollment of Medicare benefits?

If a young person becomes pregnant and does not have medical coverage, they would not be able to receive and may be hesitant to even seek out the appropriate prenatal care, as well as being stuck with a very large bill upon giving birth to their child. Looking at homelessness, many youth who transition out of foster care have transient living situations and may not be able to receive or even retrieve their mail on a regular basis. This could cause them to miss re-enrollment deadlines, which leads to breaks in medical coverage or even losing their medical coverage all together.

My experience with medical coverage after foster care was a positive one. I was fortunate enough to have assistance from my social worker in applying for adult coverage in time to ensure a seamless transition. This is not the case for many of the 100+ foster youth who age out of care in the State of Hawaii each year.

By offering extended Medicare benefits with automatic re-enrollment to these youth, we would honestly just be affording them the equal opportunity already offered to their peers in the general population. A youth who turns 18 under the care of their parents has the option to stay under their medical coverage until they are 26 years old; for a former foster youth, the State of Hawaii is our parent so we should be given that option as well. The opportunity for adequate medical coverage shouldn't be a luxury or a privilege for only the fortunate few, it should be a right.

To conclude my testimony, I humbly ask you to pass SB 2589. Transitioning foster youth already have a world of adversities they are facing. Please aid us in relieving some of that pressure by addressing their need for medical benefits.

Thank you for your time and have a great day.



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To: Committee on Human Services, Senator Chun-Oakland, Chair
Wednesday, February 7, 2012
1:30pm, Conference Room 016, State Capitol

From: Noy Worachit, Vice-President, HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board
Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative, EPIC 'Ohana, Inc.

Re: In Support of SB 2589, RELATING TO FOSTER YOUTH

Good Afternoon Senator Chun-Oakland and Members of the Committee,

My name is Noy Worachit and I am the Vice-President of the HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board of the Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative.

I would like to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 2589 which extends medical coverage to former foster youth by automatic enrollment. The HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board of the Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative supports the extension of Medicaid to former foster youth in Hawaii by automatic enrollment up to age 26. The federal Affordable Health Care Act allows this extension for former foster youth up to age 26, but will not be in effect until 2014. Three years is too long to wait for necessary medical coverage for many former foster youth.

I aged out of care this past year and I did not receive help to apply for medical coverage and didn't have it for several months. It is important for me to have continued medical coverage, especially because I have a young child. Extended medical coverage and automatic enrollment would be one less thing I have to worry about. As a full time student and single parent, I do not have the time to fill out lengthy and complicated forms to be able to receive medical coverage every year. This is a barrier for most foster youth.

Young people in foster care have higher rates of serious emotional and behavioral problems, chronic physical disabilities, birth defects, developmental delays, and poor school achievement when compared to children from the same socioeconomic background, so it is important for them to receive the medical services they need when they age out of care and do not have support.

In closing, I would ask this committee to pass Senate Bill 2589 and to support transitioning foster youth to receive medical coverage up to age 26 by automatic enrollment.

Thank you very much.



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To: **Committee on Human Services, Senator Chun-Oakland, Chair**
Wednesday, February 7, 2012
1:30pm, Conference Room 016, State Capitol

From: **Gernani Yutob, Jr., President, HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board**
Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative, EPIC 'Ohana, Inc.

Re: **In Support of SB 2589, RELATING TO FOSTER YOUTH**

Good Afternoon Senator Chun-Oakland and Members of the Committee,

My name is Gernani Yutob, Jr. and I am the president of the Oahu HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board of the Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative. The Initiative is a national and local effort to create and support successful outcomes for transitioning foster youth.

I would like to submit testimony in support of SB 2589 which seeks to extend medical coverage to former foster youth by automatic enrollment. The HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board of the Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative supports the extension of Medicaid to former foster youth in Hawaii by automatic enrollment up to age 26.

I aged out of foster care in Hawaii and will turn 22 this April. I currently reside with my former foster parents and have been fortunate to have my former foster mother assist me in filling out my applications for Med-Quest in the past. Other former foster youth are not as fortunate. They are not aware of their health care options and coverage status after they age out. The process of filling out these long applications every year can be overwhelming. Transitioning foster youth are also constantly on the move which makes it much difficult to renew application forms each year because they usually mail it to the last address the youth resided in. And to top it off, if the letter was not mailed back by the specified due date then the youth would lose medical coverage. It would be much easier if there was some sort of annual automatic enrollment for transitioning foster youth and to have the age increased to 26 with full coverage in contrast to the general population.

Since I am now 21, my medical benefits have decreased substantially and is now very limited. Last year, Med-Quest claimed they mailed a renewal application to my residence but I have not received it and was unaware of the procedures associated with it. Since I supposedly did not return the form, I was stripped of my medical benefits. Fortunately for me I was able to reapply and be eligible again but not without a four month wait. God-forbid, what if something terrible was to happen to me while I was uninsured during that period? The only way I am receiving full coverage now is through my employer but even that is difficult as well because I have to devote 20 hours weekly and at the same time manage my four classes for benefits. What if I was to lose my job or decide to focus more on school? On the contrary, not many foster youth have jobs or are able to work the 20 hours AND manage school at the same time so the chances of them obtaining coverage are slim. It would be much easier if there was some sort of annual automatic enrollment for transitioning foster youth and to have the age increased to 26 with full coverage in contrast to the general population.

On a national level, only 57% of former foster youth under 24 have health insurance, compared to 78% of their counterparts. A recent poll of former foster youth in Hawaii showed that only 59% of them had coverage compared to 90% of their peers. That means they are not accessing resources that may be available to them, even if they are eligible and need it. Studies show that former foster youth suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder at six times more than the general population and twice as much as returning war veterans. Proper health care is critical for transitioning foster youth because it supports positive physical, psychological and emotional health.

In closing, I would humbly ask this committee to pass SB 2589 and take us one step closer to ensuring that former foster youth up to age 26 are automatically enrolled to receive the medical coverage they need for a healthy future. Thank you very much.



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To: **Committee on Human Services, Senator Chun-Oakland, Chair**
Wednesday, February 7, 2012
1:30pm, Conference Room 016, State Capitol

From: **Delia Ulma, Statewide Initiative Coordinator**
Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative, EPIC 'Ohana, Inc.

Re: **In Support of SB 2589, RELATING TO FOSTER YOUTH**

Good Afternoon Senator Chun-Oakland and Members of the Committee,

My name is Delia Ulma and I am a Statewide Initiative Coordinator for the Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative, the local site for the national Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative. EPIC 'Ohana is the lead agency for this Initiative in Hawaii. The Initiative works with systems, such as the Department of Human Services, other service providers and partners with both the public and private sector to create and support transitioning foster youth to successfully move into adulthood and become a part of the community.

I would like to submit testimony in support of SB 2589 which extends medical coverage to former foster youth by automatic enrollment. Initiative sites across the nation have been and continue to be engaged in work with local and state agencies to extend Medicaid for former foster youth up to age 21 and beyond. To date, over 17 other states have extended Medicaid for this population. The HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board of the Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative supports the extension of Medicaid to former foster youth in Hawaii by automatic enrollment up to age 26.

A young person in the foster care system is at a higher risk for physical and mental health problems. They very often face issues of homelessness, underemployment and become parents at a young age without the support of caring adults. They have social workers to help them navigate health and mental health systems while they are in care, but once they age out, they are expected to continue to do so without adequate life experiences or the support of responsible adults. Many of them are unaware of or find it difficult to fill out an annual renewal application to receive medical coverage. In addition, this population is often transient, moving from home to home and the application will be sent to the last known address. Couple that with the fact that these young adults are not thinking about the importance of health care and why they need medical coverage until something happens and they really need it. Former foster youth who lack adequate health insurance cost states more because they put off preventative care and seek more expensive treatment in hospital emergency rooms.

In Hawaii, the majority of these youth are already eligible for coverage and extending Medicaid to these youth by automatic enrollment will ensure that they have the services they need when they need it. As parents, medical coverage is something we consider a necessity for our children, even as they reach young adulthood and head off to college. Under the current Affordable Health Care Act, parents have the opportunity to include their adult children on their medical plan up to age 26. Foster youth are wards of the state, and as such, should be provided the same parity as any parent who provides this basic necessity for their own children.

In closing, we respectfully ask this committee to pass SB 2589 and support transitioning foster youth in Hawaii by ensuring that they continue to receive medical coverage by automatic enrollment until age 26.

Mahalo nui loa.



FAMILY PROGRAMS HAWAI'I

TO: Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair
Committee on Human Services

HEARING: Tuesday, February 7, 2012, 1:30 pm
Conference Room 016

FROM: Linda Santos
Family Programs Hawai'i

RE: SB 2589

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

We strongly support Senate Bill 2589 which directs the Department of Human Services to automatically enroll foster youth who age out of the Hawai'i CPS system into an appropriate medical assistance program and automatically re-enroll these foster youth until they reach age twenty-six. Currently, DHS and contracted agencies who work with these youth are able to do the initial enrollment. However, after the youth are out of care, re-enrollment often does not occur as the youths are not always in stable living situations. Further assistance by DHS will help smooth our foster youths' transition to adulthood while allowing them to maintain their health coverage.

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

02/02/12

To: **To: Committee on Human Services**
Senator Chun-Oakland, Chair and committee members
Tuesday, February 7, 2012
1:30pm, Conference Room 016, State Capitol

From: **Makana Miranda**

Re: **In Support of SB 2589, RELATING TO FORMER FOSTER YOUTH**

To Whom it may concern,

Having a mental illness is challenging enough, but having multiple issues which is common in many foster youth, is even harder to picture leaving foster care once I turn 18, without medical coverage like many already experienced. For a person with health problems it can be very expensive due to all the doctor visits, blood tests and medications. As a foster youth I feel all foster youth should receive health care insurance, especially youth involved with CPS because these youth come from abusive homes and need extra help and especially medical care when they age out of foster care.

Sincerely,
Makana Miranda
Hawaii Foster Youth Coalition
Kauai Chapter
808-245-2873

January 26, 2012

To: **Committee on Human Services**
Senator Chun-Oakland, Chair and committee members
Tuesday, February 7, 2012
1:30pm, Conference Room 016, State Capitol

From: **Czarina Bermudez**

Re: **In Support of SB 2589, RELATING TO FORMER FOSTER YOUTH**

I, Czarina Bermudez, wish to submit a testimony on Senate bill 2589. I feel that former foster youth should be automatically enrolled in the assistance program. Being a former foster youth, I was never informed nor was told about this program. This is my first time hearing about this program and that I had to enrol myself in the medical assistance program after I aged out. I now work with current and former foster youth at The Hawaii Foster Youth Coalition. I have noticed that most youth I encounter also do not know that they need to enrol themselves in medical assistance program. Since this is my first time, I think that the transitioning stage for foster youth is stressful and is a vulnerable time for us. Many end up homeless upon aging-out or end up back in other unsafe environments. Automatic enrolment into the medical assistance program would be ideal for all former foster youth and would somewhat ease their transition into adulthood.

Sincerely,
Czarina Bermudez
Hawaii Foster Youth Coalition
Kauai Chapter
808-245-2873

January 26, 2012

To: **Committee on Human Services**
Senator Chun-Oakland, Chair and committee members
Tuesday, February 7, 2012
1:30pm, Conference Room 016, State Capitol

From: **Brittany Alpeche**

Re: **In Support of SB 2589, RELATING TO FORMER FOSTER YOUTH**

I, Brittany Alpeche, as a member of the Hawaii Foster Youth Coalition Kauai chapter feel that the S.B. No 2589 Titled Health Care For Foster Youth til 26. I am stuck in between because on one hand i think it will be a good for people who have disabilities and mental health issues but for those individuals who dont have and mental or physical issues they should want to get out and do it them self. I think that not everything should be done for you if you are abled bodied and capable of doing yourself because it might make you feel a sence of independence. Thank you so much for the opportunity to share my opinion and I hope everyone has a nice day.

Always,
Brittany Alpeche
Hawaii Foster Youth Coalition
Kauai Chapter
808-245-2873

January 26, 2012

To: **Committee on Human Services**
Senator Chun-Oakland, Chair and committee members
Tuesday, February 7, 2012
1:30pm, Conference Room 016, State Capitol

From: **Brianne Nagamine**

Re: **In Support of SB 2589, RELATING TO FORMER FOSTER YOUTH**

I, Brianne Nagamine, age 16, speak on behalf of myself and my brother Bryson Nagamine. We are two former foster youth. I have recently been adopted and my brother has just aged out of the system. We both believe that the S.B. No 2589 Titled Health Care For Foster Youth till age 26 Bill should be passed for those who struggle in applying for health care insurance and to those foster youth who have difficult time becoming independent. Many foster youth that I have encountered have told me many stories of their journey's after aging out of the system; not knowing they wouldn't have no medical coverage, not knowing how to apply and the resources and information.

As a Member of the Hawaii Foster Youth Coalition, Kauai Chapter, it has benefited me by providing me useful information which will help me become independent after aging out of the system. I would like help to apply for my own medical insurance and experience the process. Many foster youth don't know about all the pros and cons of being a foster youth and what happens after aging out. A lot of us after aging out of the system usually end up homeless and getting into drugs and alcohol. Passing the bill may be really helpful for those foster youth who are or have aged out of the system to know that they still have medical insurance until they're 26 and provide them with a sense of security so they don't feel overwhelmed aging out of the system, this will also benefit any youth who becomes a part of the system in the future.

Always,
Brianne Nagamine
Hawaii Foster Youth Coalition
Kauai Chapter President
808-245-2873

To: Committee on Human Services; Senator Chun-Oakland, Chair
Tuesday February 7, 2012
1:30 PM, State Capitol
From: Jo-Lynn Kahala-Minczer

Re: In Support of SB 2589

Aloha and Good Afternoon Senator Chun-Oakland, Vice-Chair Ihara and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jo-Lynn Kahala-Minczer, I am a former foster youth and an active member of the Hawaii Foster Youth Coalition, where I get to interact with so much other foster youth throughout the state.

I would like to submit testimony in support of SB 2589, which extends medical coverage to former foster youth by automatic enrollment.

I aged out of the foster care in Hawaii and will be turning 20 at the end of the month. I am currently a full-time student at the University of Hawaii at Manoa as a sophomore. I recently have been re-enrolled into the Med-Quest program after being cut-off for a year after aging out of the system. The part that threw me off the most was that I did not even know that my medical insurance was expired.

It was my first year in college and I was out on my own. Although I thought I was well prepared to take on the world, the world threw me some curveballs. Away from family and out on the continental U.S., I was a small fish in a big pond. At the time, I was majoring in Graphic Design, therefore I worked late nights at the studio. One night I was working on the desk and my scalpel broke and cut a big gash in my foot. I freaked out when I realized that it was my vein I could see, which my blade nearly encountered. I rushed to the university's health center with blood heavily flowing out and got stitches. When I got the bill, I was told my medical insurance did not work, forcing me to get medical insurance with the University to cover charges. I was so confused- my medical insurance only works in Hawaii?

Upon transferring back home to the University of Hawaii at Manoa, my medications were cancelled as well. I got a call from the pharmacy that explained to me that I no longer had medical insurance and had to pay for the medications. I went to an office I have never been to in my life to get an application to apply for Med-Quest. It took me time to figure out everything but eventually I completed it. After weeks of getting documents, waiting, submitting another application and more waiting, I finally received a letter in late November of 2011 informing me of all my medical insurance information.

Now hear me good, I am an intelligent, hardworking student. I have a loving family and helpful guardian. I support and take care of myself well. But with all the preparation in high school, I still struggled with my medical insurance because I did not know anything about it, not even my guardian knew. As a foster child, once we hit 18, were thrown into the world and are expected to understand everything there is to know about being an adult. When I asked my peers, they all just said "Oh my parents still claim me, so I just go under their medical insurance." Studies show that 57% of former foster youth at age 23 and 24 are covered with medical insurance, whereas 78% of our peers receive coverage. Automatically enrolling foster youth and providing guidance in medical insurance can raise this percentage.

PHONE: (808) 989-4183 EMAIL: JKAHALAM@HAWAII.EDU

In closing, I would humbly ask this committee to pass SB 2589. This bill could help so many young adults in working away from a heavy past and towards a strong and healthy future by automatically enrolling in medical coverage.

Thank you very much.

Senate Bill 2589

Submitted by: Sandra Ng, Masters of Social Work student at UHM

Hearing Date: February 7, 2012

Aloha Chairperson Suzanne Chun Oakland and members of the Committee on Human Services, I am Sandra Ng, a student from the University of Hawaii's Myron B. Thomson, School of Social work. I am testifying in support of SB 2589 because this bill will help support the foster youth of Hawaii by enrolling former foster youth in appropriate medical assistance programs and reenroll them until they reach age 26.

Every year, 20,000 youth age out of the foster care system in the United States. Many of these youth are not prepared for independent living at the age of 18. Being in foster care is a risk factor for adult homelessness or instability in housing. Homelessness is also linked to poor health, mentally and physically. Lack of medical coverage is only one of many issues former foster youth have to contend with. These youth have to negotiate housing, education, transportation, work, and social services on their own.

There are four points I want to emphasize from a study published in 2007, by the Issues in Comprehensive Pediatric Nursing Journal, explaining the main reasons former foster youth give for not having health care:

- Limited access to health care providers
- Limited knowledge of health care options provided by social service staff (which is not their ultimate responsibility)
- Gender can influence access and frequency of health care. For example, females have greater access to health care due to a need for contraception/ pregnancy care while males do not access health care unless of serious illness or accident.
- Dissatisfaction and mistrust of institutions and service providers lead to mistrust of medical providers.

Research has also shown that foster youth are more likely to have mental health issues, and be involved with crime or homelessness. Other research has shown that former foster youth are also dealing with PTSD from their experiences in foster homes or group homes, which means they have to deal with pressures of adulthood while managing a mental disorder. This is serious, and their mental health issues need to be treated, but many of them do not have access or can pay for treatment.

This bill will benefit foster youth and also the community in the long run. Of what we know about health, regular medical check ups are great methods in preventing or regulating health problems in the future. It is important to provide medical coverage all the way until 26 years of age because of the high cost of medical payments/premiums; most choose to forgo medical treatment in order to pay for more immediate needs, such as food or housing.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify for SB 2589.

Regards,
Sandra Ng

Testimony of
Mark Galloway
before the
Senate Committee on Human Services
Friday, February 7, 2012
1:30pm
State Capitol, Conference Room 016
in consideration of
SB 2589
Relating to Foster Youth

Good afternoon Chair Chun-Oakland, Vice Chair Ihara, and committee members. As a social worker who continues to work with current and transitioned foster youth, I am writing in SUPPORT of SB 2589, relating to requiring the department of human services to automatically enroll former foster youth in an appropriate medical assistance program and automatically re-enroll former foster youth until they reach age twenty-six.

Having access to appropriate medical treatment is a basic right that should be afforded to all people. Current federal law allows a young person who is transitioning into adulthood, from a traditional family, to be placed on their parent's medical insurance plans until age 26. Unfortunately this opportunity is not provided to current youth who are transitioning out of the foster care system at age 18. At the age of 18, the state is no longer legally responsible for a transitioned foster youth. A young person who is transitioning out of the foster care system is unrealistically expected to obtain their own transportation, obtain employment, seek out/enroll into higher education, find their own housing, and apply for their own medical insurance. This lack of support results in many of these young people living transient lifestyles, while attempting to meet their basic needs. Requiring the department of human services to automatically enroll former foster you into an appropriate medical insurance plan and automatically re-enroll former foster youth until age 26 would ensure that these young people have access to appropriate medical care when needed.

In closing I respectfully ask that this committee pass SB 2589 to require the department of human services to automatically enroll former foster youth in an appropriate medical assistance program and automatically re-enroll former foster youth until they reach age twenty-six.

Thank you

Mark Galloway

P.O. Box 6779 Hilo, HI 96720

ChunOakland2 - Tyrell

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Sunday, February 05, 2012 1:30 PM
To: HMS Testimony
Cc: rfinai23@gmail.com
Subject: Testimony for SB2589 on 2/7/2012 1:30:00 PM

Testimony for HMS 2/7/2012 1:30:00 PM SB2589

Conference room: 016
Testifier position: Support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Robyn Finai
Organization: Individual
E-mail: rfinai23@gmail.com
Submitted on: 2/5/2012

Comments:

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, February 07, 2012 12:57 AM
To: HMS Testimony
Cc: matthewmurray24@gmail.com
Subject: Testimony for SB2589 on 2/7/2012 1:30:00 PM
Attachments: Testimony SB2589.docx

Testimony for HMS 2/7/2012 1:30:00 PM SB2589

Conference room: 016
Testifier position: Support
Testifier will be present: Yes
Submitted by: Matthew Murray
Organization: Individual
E-mail: matthewmurray24@gmail.com
Submitted on: 2/7/2012

Comments:

Foster youth should have access to stable health care. Many former foster youth are burdened with having to apply (in many instances, without parental assistance) for many other things in their lives (financial aid, housing, food stamps, auto insurance, college, jobs, etc.). Having to re-apply for med-QUEST once they reach age 18 should not have to be one of them. Please give these youth the privilege of having steady and reliable access to health care, they need it, and the statistics prove it. Many former and current foster youth have experienced or are currently experiencing intense trials in their young lives, including having to become adults at early ages. These youth may not even know where to start when it comes to applying for medical insurance. Please help these youth overcome the many challenges they face by providing them with the assurance they will have medical insurance until they are 26 years old. Please vote in favor of SB2589. Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony.