



---

## FAMILY PROGRAMS HAWAII

---

TO: Senator David Ige, Chair  
Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair  
Committee on Ways and Means

HEARING: Tuesday, February 28, 2012, 9:00 am  
Conference Room 329

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 support the intent of Senate Bill 2589. However, we request that the bill have amendments that make this law work in such a way that Hawai'i would be able to access federal funds to help pay for health insurance coverage for youth who age out of the DHS foster care system. Therefore we ask that this committee incorporate the language that House companion bill HB 2292 has incorporated into this bill. That language is as follows:

- (a) The department of human services shall provide medical assistance to former foster youth who:
- (1) Are under twenty-four years of age on July 1, 2012; under twenty-five years of age on January 1, 2013; and under twenty-six years of age on January 1, 2014;
  - (2) Were in foster care under the responsibility of the State on the date of attaining eighteen years of age or such higher age as the State may elect pursuant to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010, Public Law No. 111-148;
  - (3) Were enrolled in the Medicaid program while in such foster care; and
  - (4) Have a household income of up to three hundred per cent of the federal poverty level for Hawaii.
- (b) The department of human services shall seek approval from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to implement this section, and implementation shall be subject to approval by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid.
- (c) The department shall adopt rules pursuant to chapter 91 as may be necessary to effectuate the purposes of this section.

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



1350 S. King Street • Suite 309 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96814 • [www.pphi.org](http://www.pphi.org) • Phone: 808-589-1156 • Fax: 808-589-1404

February 28, 2012

**To:** Chair David Ige, Vice Chair Michelle Kidani and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
**From:** Katie Reardon Polidoro, Director of Government Relations & Public Affairs  
**Re: Testimony in Support of SB 2589**

Planned Parenthood of Hawaii (PPHI) supports SB 2589, which automatically re-enrolls foster youth into a medical assistance program until they reach the age of twenty-six. PPHI is particularly concerned with need for health care coverage for teens exiting foster care. While these teens are eligible for health care assistance programs, such as Medicaid, it is often difficult for them to find new coverage and providers on their own. Automatic re-enrollment for teens exiting foster care would help these young people stay covered and avoid negative health consequences.

According to the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, youth in foster care are at a higher risk for unintended pregnancy. Some studies have shown that by the time girls in foster care reach the age of 19, almost half of them have become pregnant.<sup>1</sup> Teens who exited foster care were less likely to receive family planning services than their peers, were less likely to use contraception, and were more likely to experience a second pregnancy.<sup>2</sup>

The reproductive health implications of losing medical coverage after leaving foster care are alarming. Equally as concerning are the socio-economic outcomes. Teen pregnancy and childbirth often results in a wide range of problems for teens and their children. Teens who become pregnant are significantly less likely to graduate from high school, with only 32% of teen mothers obtaining a diploma by the age of 30.<sup>3</sup> They are more likely to need welfare assistance, more likely to be single parents, and often have more children earlier than their peers. Their children also face obstacles as they are more likely to have physical and mental health problems, such as low birth weight and mental disabilities, are more likely to be abused or neglected, and are more likely to be placed into foster care.<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, the loss of access to health care after exiting foster care could lead to a long lasting cycle of poverty.

Because we believe that all people have the right to access affordable and quality health care, and that young people are best served when they are provided with the information and tools to make responsible health care decisions, PPHI strongly supports SB 2589. Please pass this bill.

<sup>1</sup> National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, *Science Says: Foster Care Youth*, Number 27, August 2006, [http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/resources/pdf/SS/SS27\\_FosterCare.pdf](http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/resources/pdf/SS/SS27_FosterCare.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Id.

<sup>3</sup> National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, *Whatever Happened to Childhood? The Problem of Teen Pregnancy in the United States*, 1997.

<sup>4</sup> Id.

**Honolulu Health Center**

1350 S. King Street, Suite 310  
Honolulu, HI 96814  
808-589-1149

**Kailua Kona Health Center**

75-184 Hualalai Road, Suite 205  
Kailua Kona, HI 96740  
808-329-8211

**Kahului (Maui) Health Center**

140 Ho'ohana Street, Suite 303  
Kahului, HI 96732  
808-871-1176  
(A Maui United Way Agency)