

SB 2940

Measure Title: MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR YOUTH SERVICES.
Report Title: Keiki Caucus; Youth Services; Appropriation
Description: Appropriates funds as a grant to the Kalihi YMCA, Parents and Children Together, and Susannah Wesley Community Center to support youth services.
Companion:
Package: None
Current Referral: HMS, WAM
Introducer(s): CHUN OAKLAND

TO: Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services
Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services

FROM: Ruthann Quitiquit, President and CEO, Parents And Children Together
Ronald Higashi, Executive Director, Susannah Wesley Community Center
Anthony Pfaltzgraff, Senior Vice President of Community Development,
YMCA of Honolulu

DATE: February 6, 2012

RE: In Support of SB 2940, Making an Appropriation for Youth Services

Parents And Children Together (PACT), Susannah Wesley Community Center (SWCC), and the Kalihi YMCA have been working together for over 20 years to provide youth services in the Kalihi Palama community. We have weathered funding ups and downs during that time but are currently facing one of the most critical funding shortages we have ever encountered. With the elimination of TANF funds for youth services in Kalihi coupled with other cuts in State funding, funding for youth services in this community has been cut by approximately \$450,000 in the past year. Cutbacks have resulted in staff layoffs, furlough days, reduction in hours, and, most importantly fewer after school opportunities for children and youth in Kalihi.

A report completed for Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) underscores what a number of other national studies have demonstrated in recent years: "Research has shown that 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. are the peak hours for youth to commit or be victims of crimes and to smoke, drink or do drugs. Afterschool programs can keep youth out of trouble, improve school attitudes and behavior, strengthen social networks, teach new skills and improve self-confidence by offering safety, structure, supportive adults and exposure to new and different experiences. Conversely, youth without adult supervision afterschool are at risk for academic and behavior problems. However, the demand for afterschool programs exceeds the supply, and access to quality out-of-school-time activities is especially limited in low-income communities."

This lack of after school programs hits middle school students hardest, and may be a contributing factor to the following data from the 2007 – 2008 Hawaii Student Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs (ATOD) report:

- In the peer domain, "Risk factors such as peer substance use and antisocial behavior can vary by grade, gender, and ethnicity, *with the largest increase occurring between elementary and middle school.*"
- Age of first use of *cigarettes, alcohol, and marijuana* were more likely to be initiated before the age of 14 for both males and females, with the exception of prescription drug use.

- For use of marijuana within the past 30 days “higher rates were reported by students in Hawai’i compared to the nation (8th grade: Hawai’i 7.0%, nationwide 5.8%).”

According to the October 10, 2011 Star Advertiser – currently 53% of students statewide are now eligible for free/reduced lunch. This is the highest rate in two decades and is a key indicator of poverty. Students in the Kalihi area fare even worse than the State average with 67% to 99% of students at the various elementary and middle schools qualifying for free/reduced lunch (data obtained from 2011 School Status and Improvement Reports, arch.k12.hi.us).

Youth in Kalihi face many issues and needs and continue to be at high-risk for academic and behavior related problems. In the past several years, the new immigrant population from Micronesia, Chuuk, Marshall Islands, and other COFA nations has increased dramatically in this community. In addition to facing the existing problems of gang participation, substance use and abuse, criminal behavior, and school failure, many of the children and youth from these new populations also face acculturation issues, bullying and prejudice. Youth need services and supervised activities to prevent their participation in these risky behaviors and increase their chances of school success, high school graduation and successful transition to adulthood. The new immigrant youth population is extremely at-risk for participation in these behaviors and need youth services to help the transition to the local culture and society here in Hawaii.

Youth services work. These three agencies are in the unique position to collaborate to provide quality community-based afterschool programs that are evidence-based and where youth have immediate access to a comprehensive array of services. We have seen positive changes in the Kalihi Community in the past two decades and need your support to continue to make a difference.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, February 07, 2012 7:36 AM
To: HMS Testimony
Cc: info@schha.com
Subject: Testimony for SB2940 on 2/7/2012 1:30:00 PM

Testimony for HMS 2/7/2012 1:30:00 PM SB2940

Conference room: 016
Testifier position: Support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Annie Au Hoon
Organization: Individual
E-mail: info@schha.com
Submitted on: 2/7/2012

Comments: