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**THE HONORABLE GILBERT S. C. KEITH-AGARAN, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY**

Twenty-Sixth State Legislature
Regular Session of 2012
State of Hawaii

March 19, 2012

Re: S.B. 2950, S.D.2, H.D.1, Relating to Appropriations for the Honolulu Family Justice Center

Chair Keith-Agaran, Vice-Chair Rhoads, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney submits the following testimony in support of S.B. 2950, S.D. 2, H.D. 1, Relating to Appropriations for the Honolulu Family Justice Center. The original bill was part of the Department's 2012 Legislative Package.

The Department of the Prosecuting Attorney is requesting \$350,000 as a grant-in-aid for FY 2013 for start-up costs for the Honolulu Family Justice Center. The bulk of the monies, approximately \$250,000, are necessary to rent space to house the Honolulu Family Justice Center, to connect the Center to the City's computer system, and to pay for other start-up, non-recurring expenses. The remaining \$100,000 is necessary to supplement federal grant monies to purchase office equipment, furnishings, and supplies for the Honolulu Family Justice Center.

Prosecutor Keith M. Kaneshiro previously submitted testimony to this Committee that the Family Justice Center model has been identified as a best practice in providing services to victims of domestic violence. The model is victim-centered and recognizes the benefit of bringing together police, prosecutors, advocates, and other intervention service-provider professional to work together in serving domestic violence victims and holding offenders accountable. Having all these agencies and services under one roof makes it more likely that victims will seek help because it is easier to access comprehensive, integrated services from one location instead of having to travel from agency to agency to receive these services.

There are currently some 60 operating Family Justice Centers nationwide and abroad that have embraced the model. These Centers have reported that, among other benefits, the Family Justice Center model enhances cooperation between victims and police and prosecutors, reduces the number of victim recantations, reduces domestic violence-related homicides, and reduces recidivism by holding offenders accountable for their actions.

The Honolulu Family Justice Center is a community-safety initiative whose time has come. Much of the groundwork and planning have already occurred. Beginning in May 2010, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney held a series of strategic planning meetings and focus groups sessions which were attended by elected officials, including the Honorable Chair of this Committee, representatives from the Judiciary, the Honolulu Police Department, the Honolulu Prosecutor's office, neighbor island prosecutors, service providers, the military, and other community stakeholders. Significantly, domestic violence survivors were also invited to participate in a focus group session in which they were given the opportunity to describe the kinds of services they felt were necessary when victims were ready to extricate themselves and, in many cases, their children from a domestic violence relationship. There was overall support for the development of a Honolulu Family Justice Center during this early planning phase.

Thereafter, the planning for the Honolulu Family Justice Center continued in earnest. In August 2011, the City identified a City-owned building on River Street ("River Street property") as a possible location for the Honolulu Family Justice Center. In September 2011, Prosecutor Kaneshiro hired the first Director for the Honolulu Family Justice Center. Also in September 2011, the Prosecutor's office submitted a CIP budget request to the City Administration for the purpose of hiring a design and planning consultant to develop the River Street property as the site for the Honolulu Family Justice Center. However, in October 2011, the River Street property was withdrawn from consideration as the site for the Honolulu Family Justice Center. Since that time, efforts have been underway to find office space to house the Honolulu Family Justice Center. Several prospective locations at reasonable rental rates have been identified but funding is necessary before further lease negotiations may proceed.

At a March 15, 2012 budget briefing before the Honolulu City Council, Prosecutor Kaneshiro requested the opportunity to meet with the Chinatown community to discuss the idea of housing the Honolulu Family Justice Center at the City-owned, River Street property. The River Street property may still be a viable location for the Honolulu Family Justice Center.

Since the inception of the development for a Honolulu Family Justice Center in 2010, no State funds have been used to support its development. All of the expenses that have gone into the planning and development of the Honolulu Family Justice Center have been paid with federal grant monies. S.B. 2950, S.D. 2, H.D. 1 represents a first for the Honolulu Family Justice Center in seeking State assistance. The request comes at a time when the Honolulu Family Justice is poised to open its doors in the Fall of 2012 if the grant-in-aid is approved.

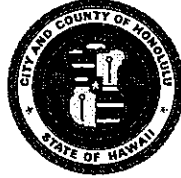
In addition to S.B. 2950, S.D. 2, H.D. 1, Prosecutor Kaneshiro is pursuing other sources of funding for the Honolulu Family Justice Center. Prosecutor Kaneshiro has requested an amendment to one of the federal grants and, if approved, would make a total of approximately \$50,000, available for rent. Prosecutor Kaneshiro is also requesting funding from the Honolulu City Council.

The groundwork and planning for the opening of the Honolulu Family Justice Center are well underway. With the approval of this grant-in-aid request, the Honolulu Family Justice Center is prepared to open its doors within a couple of months after the funds are released.

For the foregoing reasons, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney, City and County of Honolulu strongly supports S.B. 2950, S.D. 2, H.D. 1 and requests appropriations for a grant-in-aid in the amount of \$350,000 for the Honolulu Family Justice Center.

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March 20, 2012

The Honorable Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair
House Committee on Judiciary
Twenty-Sixth Legislature
Regular Session of 2012
State of Hawaii

**Testimony of Mayor Peter Carlisle on S.B. 2950, S.D. 2, H.D. 1
Relating to Appropriations for the Honolulu Family Justice Center**

Chair Keith-Agaran and Members of the Committee:

I would like to submit the following testimony in strong support of this bill.

Each year law enforcement agencies respond to alarming incidents of domestic violence. The prevalence of family violence is even more alarming when one considers that experts estimate that only 25 percent of such cases are actually reported. There are many reasons why victims often fail to report domestic violence, including love, fear, religious beliefs, threats to children, lack of money or resources, or simply not knowing that help is available. Criminal and civil justice systems may unintentionally make it difficult for victims to seek help. Victims must often travel from location to location to seek services that are scattered through a community or region. They must tell their story over and over again to officials representing agencies, such as law enforcement, courts, legal aid, medical, transportation, housing, social services, mental health, rehabilitation, financial assistance, and many more.

A Family Justice Center addresses these issues by providing a combination of services and interventions from one location to help victims and offenders break the cycle of violence and develop healthy relationships. A Family Justice Center is the co-location of a multi-disciplinary team of professionals who work together, under one roof, to provide coordinated services to victims of family violence. While a Family Justice Center may house many partners, the basic partners include police officers, prosecutors, civil legal service providers, and community-based advocates. The core concept is to provide one place where victims can go to talk to an advocate, plan for their safety, interview with a police officer, meet with a prosecutor, and receive assistance and information regarding shelter, medical care, and other services. A collaborative effort provides more support to victims and children involved in family violence through improved case management and a more fluid exchange of information and resources. Bridging existing gaps increases a victim's access to services and resources and makes the entire process

of reporting a domestic violence incident much less overwhelming for the victims and children involved.

The Family Justice Center model has been identified as a best practice in the field of domestic violence intervention and prevention services by the United States Department of Justice. The documented and published outcomes in the Family Justice Center model have included reduced homicides, increased victim safety, increased autonomy and empowerment for victims, reduced fear and anxiety for victims and their children, increased efficiency and coordination among service providers, and reduced recantation and minimization by victims when wrapped in services and support.

A Family Justice Center is based on the needs of the clients it serves. And when compared to the financial impact of domestic violence on the legal system, the health care system, and the business community, or the impact on children, the cost of a Family Justice Center is minimal and the model is cost effective.

For more information, please visit www.familyjusticecenter.com.

I respectfully request your favorable consideration of this bill, and I thank you for this opportunity to testify before you.

Testimony for SB2950 on 3/20/2012 2:00:00 PM

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Sent: Monday, March 19, 2012 1:09 PM

To: JUDtestimony

Cc: breaking-the-silence@hotmail.com

Testimony for JUD 3/20/2012 2:00:00 PM SB2950

Conference room: 325

Testifier position: Support

Testifier will be present: No

Submitted by: Dara Carlin, M.A.

Organization: Individual

E-mail: breaking-the-silence@hotmail.com

Submitted on: 3/19/2012

Comments: