

SB 3046

Measure Title: RELATING TO CHILD WELFARE.

Report Title: Child Welfare; DHS; Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act of 2010; CAPTA

Description: Requires the department of human services to comply with the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act of 2010.

Companion:

Package: None

Current Referral: HMS, JDL

Introducer(s): CHUN OAKLAND



FAMILY PROGRAMS HAWAII

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

HEARING: Thursday, February 9, 2012, 1:30 pm
Conference Room 016

FROM: Linda Santos
Family Programs Hawai'i

RE: SB 3046

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

We strongly support Senate Bill 3046.

In today's economic climate, it makes sense to be prepared to qualify for all funding that can bolster Hawai'i Department of Human Service's (DHS) budget. That is what SB3046 proposes to do. It states that the DHS "shall adopt and comply with the language of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act of 2010, including any amendments adopted after December 20, 2010." This helps ensure that DHS is able to continue to meet the requirements and conditions required to receive federal assistance as it relates to the grant program under the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act of 2010.

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

**TESTIMONY ON SB 3046 RELATING TO CHILD WELFARE
BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES**

February 9, 2012

1:30 pm

Conference Rm. 016

Aloha Chair Chun Oakland, Vice-Chair Ihara, and members of the Senate Committee on Human Services. My name is Stephen Morse, and I am the Executive Director of Blueprint for Change (BFC). I am here to testify in **support of SB 3046 Relating to Child Welfare with amendments.**

Members, BFC is a non-profit, charitable organization that is the technical, financial, and administrative support entity for five Neighborhood Place programs statewide that provide support and family strengthening services to families at risk of child abuse and neglect. We are a community-based prevention program that is funded primarily by a POS contract by the Department of Human Services as part of the Differential Response System. Our Neighborhood Place programs are unique among CAN prevention programs because they are the only places where children and families at risk of child abuse and neglect can get services without a referral or appointment and by simply knocking on the door.

I am here today to testify in support of amending SB 3046 to make this bill a vehicle for codifying the Differential Response System as a permanent part of the State's Child Welfare statute and that a minimum and adequate level of funding be guaranteed annually for DRS programs. During the past 15 years, the Neighborhood Places and other prevention programs funded under the Differential Response System have been recognized as chiefly responsible for the turnaround in child abuse and neglect rates in Hawaii, from one of the highest in the country, to one of the lowest. For example, in 2003, there were 7,835 reports of CAN made to the State. In 2007, reports went down to 4,690.

In the process of helping reduce CAN reports, these prevention programs have also saved the State billions of dollars in social costs, such as welfare payments, foster care payments, unemployment compensation, substance abuse treatment, and incarceration. As such, we are the most cost effective programs in the State system.

But, the severe downturn in our economy has had a huge negative impact on funding for our programs that past three years, and we believe these cuts, which have caused a reduction in prevention services, has once again led to increases in CAN reports. For instance, in 2008, there were 4,628 reports to the State's Child Welfare System. In 2009, reports increased to 5,939. This increase of over 1,300 reports represents the single greatest jump in annual CAN reports since these statistics began being kept in 1975.

By codifying and ensuring adequate annual funding for DRS prevention programs, the State can reduce rates of CAN continually and comply with the requirements of the federal CAPTA law. Mahalo for allowing us the opportunity to testify this afternoon.