

HAWAII YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

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Daryl Selman, President

Judith F. Clark, Executive Director

Adolescent Services Program, Kaiser
Permanent Medical Care System

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

College Connections

Community Assistance Center

Domestic Violence Action Center

EPIC, Inc.

Family Support Hawaii

Friends of the Missing Child Center of HI

Hale Kipa, Inc.

Hale 'Opi'o 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

Kokus Kaihi 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

September 4, 2012

To: Representative John Mizuno, Chair
And members of the Committee on Human Services

Testimony for Informational Briefing on Violence in Hawaii

Hawaii Youth Services Network (HYSN), a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, will focus its testimony on violence related to youth.

I am pleased to report that Hawaii has a relatively low number of violent crimes committed by juveniles compared to other states. In 2010, there were only 270 juvenile arrests for violent crimes including murder (2), forcible rape (13), robbery (128), and aggravated assault (127).

According to the 2011 Youth Behavioral Risk Survey, young people in Hawaii are less likely than their peers nationally to have engaged in a physical fight one or more times in the past 12 months. Among Hawaii youth, 22.3% had engaged in a physical fight compared to 32.8% nationally.


Bullying is an area of concern for our youth, however. One-fifth of Hawaii students reported being bullied on a school campus in the past 12 months. At the 2011 Children and Youth Summit, bullying was the top priority for legislative action identified by the participating youth and youth advocates. It received nearly 3 times as many votes as the second priority issue.

HYSN believes that that the Legislature should consider a comprehensive approach to bullying prevention and intervention that includes:

- Bullying prevention education and character education designed to promote peace and harmony and positive ways of resolving disputes;
- Education for parents and community members;
- Training for teachers and school personnel on prevention and intervention skills, and alternative means of dispute resolution;
- Law enforcement involvement only when other means fail.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Judith F. Clark
Executive Director

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVE
THE TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE
INTERIM OF 2012
COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES
Rep. John M. Mizuno, Chair
Rep. Jo Jordan, Vice Chair

September 4, 2012

Good morning Chair Mizuno and Vice Chair Jordan,

My name is Bill Richter and I am the Secretary of the Hawaii Rifle Association and the President of the not-for-profit Lessons in Firearms Education, an organization that provides monthly courses in basic firearms safety and operations. I am also a Registered Nurse and former paramedic who over the last 25 years has personally treated hundreds, if not thousands of victims of violent crime while working in emergency departments and intensive care units.

First, I would like to thank you for inviting me to testify today. I am confident that we all share the same goal to reduce violent crime, whatever the cause and where ever it occurs, and we appreciate you allowing us to provide our perspective on this matter.

The causes of crime, including violent crime, are complex, and involve multiple socioeconomic factors. Attempting to address this complicated and multifaceted problem using simplistic means is bound to fail. Accordingly, trying to address the causes of violence by banning or restricting some of the "tools" sometimes used is also destined to fail.

Firearms are tools. In the hands of a law abiding citizen, a firearm poses no danger to the public and can be used to effectively prevent a smaller, weaker individual, such as a battered woman, from becoming the victim of a violent crime. How frequently this occurs is a matter of debate, but ranges from 70,000 to 2.5 million times a year. These defensive gun uses (DGUs) very often do not involve firing the gun, the mere presence of it dissuading the criminal from continuing an attack. The frequency of these DGUs is important because it helps us evaluate the relative risks of using a firearm to protect someone from violence. Most don't realize that firearms are used daily for this purpose.

The National Research Council, the operating arm of the National Academy of Science, has studied the effect of gun control laws on crime and could find no link between restrictions on gun ownership and lower rates of crime, firearms violence or even accidents with guns. It is interesting to note that the funding for this study was provided in part by the Joyce Foundation, a notoriously anti-gun organization.

But we need not reinvent the wheel here. We can instead look to the experience of other states that have mistakenly confused gun control with crime control. In 1976, Washington D.C.,

instituted one of the strictest gun-control laws in the country. The murder rate increased 134 percent (77.8 per 100,000) while the overall rate for the country declined 2 percent. Some try to claim that Virginia's less stringent gun laws are responsible for Washington D.C.'s high rate, but Virginia Beach, Virginia's largest city, has one of the lowest rates of murder in the country at 4.1 per 100,000.

New York City, long known for strict regulation of all types of weapons, had only 19 percent of the 390 homicides in 1960 involve pistols. By 1972, it was 49 percent of 1,691. In 1973 there were only 28,000 lawfully possessed handguns in the nation's largest city, but police estimated that there were 1.3 million illegal handguns.

By contrast, New Hampshire has almost no gun control and its cities are rated among the safest in the country. Across the border in Massachusetts, which has very stringent gun-control, cities of similar size suffer from two to three times as much crime as New Hampshire.

Vermont has the least restrictive gun-control law. Any Vermonter not otherwise prohibited from owning a firearm can carry a concealed weapons without a permit or license. Yet Vermont has one of the lowest crime rates in America, ranking 49 out of 50 in all crimes and 47th in murders.

But we don't even have to look outside Hawaii for evidence of this phenomenon. In 1968 Hawaii passed a series of increasingly strict gun control laws. The murder rate increased from 2.4 to 7.2 per 100,000 by 1977. So, once again, gun control does not mean crime control. If the goal is to reduce the rate of violence in Hawaii we must look beyond the naïve and misguided attempts to impose further onerous restrictions on our law abiding citizens, who, ironically seek only to protect themselves from the violence we are discussing today.

Recent court cases will likely make additional gun control efforts much more difficult and possibly overturn some existing ones. Recent Supreme Court cases like Heller and McDonald have clearly established that the right to own a firearm for legal purposes, including self-defense, is a core, fundamental constitutional right. That means that any proposed gun control law will have to meet a much higher bar and if implemented will likely be the subject of costly legal challenges.

In light of how ineffective gun control laws are in reducing crime, the proven effectiveness in safely protecting the law abiding from violent crime, and the possibility of costly legal actions that will likely find many proposed gun control laws unconstitutional, it would seem clear that other, more effective measures will need to be considered if the true goal of this effort is to reduce crime and not a veiled attempt to implement more gun control laws.

Thank you.

Bill Richter,
Secretary, Hawaii Rifle Association

THE HAWAII RIFLE ASSOCIATION

P.O. BOX 543, Kailua, Hawaii 96734

Rep. John M. Mizuno
House of Representatives
Committee on Human Services
State of Hawaii

TESTIMONY SUBMITTED TO: [HUS testimony@ Capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:HUS_testimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov), for printing and submittal.

TESTIMONY REGARDING THE INFORMATIONAL BRIEFING, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2012
(10:00 A.M., CONFERENCE ROOM 325, STATE CAPITOL, 415 SOUTH BERETANIA STREET.)

The Hawaii Rifle Association wishes to express their strong belief that the Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America is one of the foundation stones, upon which this great nation has been formed. We further believe that NO actions should ever be taken by our government to diminish, alter, or attempt to remove this amendment from our Constitution. All American citizens, who are not felons, mentally incompetent, or barred by other legal restrictions should be allowed to exercise their rights to firearm possession, as stated in the Second Amendment. Prime among the reasons for firearm possession is the right to protect one's self, and one's family from those who would violate the laws of the country and cause harm to us and our families. Secondly, we support the rights of legal gun owners to participate in the shooting sports, firearm collecting, and legal hunting. We DO NOT support illegal possession of firearms or the use of firearms for illegal purposes. There are plenty of laws on the books right now that control the use of guns for legal purposes and restrict illegal uses. We DO NOT need more laws regarding guns, with one exception, that exception is the passage of a comprehensive "shall issue" concealed carry law for the State of Hawaii. Concealed carry laws are working exceptionally well in 45 of the 50 states. Hawaii needs to take heed and move to enact this critical self protection legislation. Implementation of the gun laws that are currently on the books is what we need to curb gun crimes. Stiff punishment for gun crimes is the best solution.

Respectfully submitted,

Harvey F. Gerwig
HRA President

Tisha Woytenko
Honolulu, HI 96821

September 4, 2012

Aloha Members of the Department of Human Services,

My name is Tisha Woytenko and I am an advocate for our homeless persons in our community. I was asked by Representative John Mizuno to join a grassroots group of leaders and organizations in the community "to work on ways to address violence and seek methods of intervention to prevent violence and hate crimes." Our meeting also sought "to increase public education concerning the recent acts of violence and to work on a plan to have effective preventative measures to improve security and safety for families, students, neighbors, schools, work and society."

I support the group's proposal to pass a bill and adopt the United Nations Decade Resolution on Peace for Hawaii, declare October as a Peace and Nonviolence Awareness month, hold an essay contest for youth on peace, and a peace caucus during the month of October. These are proactive ways that we can teach our children the importance and benefits of peace and nonviolence in our society.

I also support and would like to suggest peer mediation programs and/or conflict resolution classes for a quarter in all public schools. My son served as a peer mediator for one year at Wilson Elementary and learned valuable life skills. These are life skills every student should learn and it would also contribute to lower violent crimes in Hawaii.

In the Aloha state, we should all be committed to living pono, in peace and nonviolence so that our keiki can continue grow up in the freedom that we all love. *Ua mau ke ea o ka aina i ka pono.* "The Life of the land is perpetuated in righteousness." When we commit to peaceful ways, our land will be full of life.

Mahalo,



Tisha Woytenko

Seth Woytenko
1469 Kalanikai Place
Honolulu, Hawaii

September 4, 2012

Aloha Representatives,

My name is Seth Woytenko and I am testifying about being a peer mediator. When I was 10 years old, I had the privilege of serving as one of the student peer mediators at Wilson Elementary for one year.

As a peer mediator, I needed to help solve conflicts among our peers in a peaceful way. I learned strategies through our training and were supervised in our sessions. I think this is a great program for all schools to have and they would be as great a school as Wilson Elementary is.

Thank you,



Seth Woytenko
Seventh grader, Niu Valley Middle School

Tisha Woytenko
"Mom" approved