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GOVERNOR



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February 6, 2013

To: The Honorable Mele Carroll, Chair
House Committee on Human Services

Date: Thursday, February 7, 2013
Time: 09:30 a.m.
Place: Conference Room 329, State Capitol

From: Mila Kaahanui, MSW
Executive Director
Office of Community Services (OCS)

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT

Testimony for H.B. 1187, Relating to Human Trafficking

I. OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION

The measure proposes to amend the Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) to add a new section designating the month of January as "Human Trafficking Awareness Month."

The Office of Community Services supports this bill.

II. CURRENT LAW

There is no current provision in the HRS regarding Human Trafficking Awareness Month. January is National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month.

III. COMMENTS ON SENATE BILL

The Office of Community Services (OCS) is an advocate for the disadvantaged in Hawaii, including immigrants, refugees and victims of human trafficking. We support efforts to raise awareness of this issue and ask the proposal be amended to include the word "Slavery" in the title of the designation. Thank you for your consideration and approval of this proposal.



46-063 Emepela Pl. #U101 Kaneohe, HI 96744 · (808) 679-7454 · Kris Coffield · Co-founder/Legislative Director

TESTIMONY FOR HOUSE BILL 1187, RELATING TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING

**House Committee on Human Services
Hon. Mele Carroll, Chair
Hon. Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair**

**Thursday, February 7, 2013, 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 329**

Honorable Chair Carroll and committee members:

I am Kris Coffield, representing the IMU Alliance, a nonpartisan political advocacy organization that currently boasts over 150 local members. On behalf of our members, we offer this testimony in support of HB 1187, relating to human trafficking.

In 2011, lawmakers passed HB 141 and HB 240, the former of which outlawed labor trafficking in the islands and the latter of which strengthened existing anti-prostitution laws by expanding witness protection for victims and targeting repeat offenders, particularly pimps and johns. Both bills were important steps in rectifying Hawaii's poor image and record with regard to anti-trafficking statutes. Importantly, these new laws focus on demand for labor and sex trafficking, signaling our state's move toward combating those most responsible for trafficking violations—pimps, johns, owners and managers of prostitution houses, and traffickers themselves—while protecting those who are most vulnerable. In 2012, policymakers passed a “vacating convictions” bill, for the first time allowing persons who have been wrongfully convicted of prostitution-related offenses and can demonstrate that their offenses were coerced to petition to have these convictions vacated from their record, so that they can matriculate into healthy, sustainable, fruitful lifestyles.

The IMU Alliance lauds the State Legislature's efforts, during the last two sessions. At the same time, we call upon lawmakers to continue the fight against human trafficking by hearing and advancing bills that increase awareness of trafficking activities occurring within our state's communities. Though human trafficking awareness month may be written off by some as a “feel good” gesture, we feel that this effort, if coupled with a coordinated statewide “end demand” campaign, could enhance public vigilance and, in turn, result in greater prosecutions of traffickers and protections for victims.

Again, the IMUAlliance thanks you for your hard work to stem human trafficking on our shores. Room for improvement remains, however, and we feel that the measure in question will help to consecrate the last biennium's momentum into a concerted movement. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

Sincerely,
Kris Coffield
Legislative Director
IMUAlliance