



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809

January 31, 2013

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

FROM: Patricia McManaman, Director

SUBJECT: **H.B. 873 - RELATING TO THE YOUNG ADULT VOLUNTARY
FOSTER CARE ACT**

Hearing: Thursday, January 31, 2013; 9:30 a.m.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

PURPOSE: The purpose of H.B. 873 is to add a new part to chapter 346, Hawaii Revised Statutes, to care for and supervise eligible foster youth until their twenty-first birthday. Chapter 346-A will establish a new program called the young adult voluntary foster care program. The young adult voluntary foster care program will support former foster youth in achieving permanency in the transition to adulthood and in becoming independent and self-sufficient by extending voluntary foster care to age twenty-one.

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services strongly supports this Administration bill. This legislation is necessary to extend foster care services for young adults in foster care with the DHS to age twenty-one. This bill would statutorily extend services such as independent living services, case planning, permanency planning, placement and judicial oversight for former foster youth up to age twenty-one. For the youth in foster care who have not been able to be reunified

with their family, adopted or obtain a legal guardian by age eighteen and are not ready to be on their own, extended care can provide safe and stable housing and prevent homelessness for these young people.

Studies have shown that young people who continue to receive services until age twenty-one have better outcomes in several areas including educational achievement and employment, thereby contributing to a more stable workforce and increased lifetime earnings. Increased support for transitioning youth will facilitate the youth's continued development and preparation for successful independence such as decreases in homelessness, dependency on public welfare benefits, and drug dependency, and incarceration.

The federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoption Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-351) allows states to claim federal reimbursement for the costs of caring for and supervising title IV-E eligible foster youth until their twenty-first birthday .

The funds requested are based on calculations prepared with support from consultants who have worked with other states. The figures include projected federal reimbursements. These funds will help to ensure that young adults have the supports they need at a critical point of transition: when they are seeking to complete secondary education; navigate admissions processes and complete postsecondary education and vocational training; and establish themselves in the workforce and adult relationships. Having the supports in place to complete these transition tasks successfully can lay the foundation for long-term positive outcomes for youth leaving foster care.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



The Judiciary, State of Hawaii

Testimony to the House Committee on Human Services

The Hon. Mele Carroll, Chair

The Hon. Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair

Thursday, January 31, 2013

9:30 a.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 329

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

By

Catherine H. Remigio

District Family Judge

Family Court of the First Circuit

Bill No. and Title: House Bill No.873, Relating to the Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care Act

Purpose: Adds a new part to chapter 346, Hawaii Revised Statutes, to care for and supervise eligible foster youth until their 21st birthday.

Judiciary's Position:

The Judiciary supports this bill. We have long been aware of the barriers that youth face when they are in foster custody at the time they turn 18 years old. All of us who are parents of young adults know too well that there are barriers enough in this day and age even for children who have stable homes. To “age-out” without the benefit of a stable and committed loving family leads to high rates of homelessness and unemployment.

While we are in full support of the bill, we would suggest that the changes are made an extension of HRS Chapter 587A rather than HRS Chapters 346 and 571. A main requirement for eligibility under this bill is that the young person was in foster care under the jurisdiction of the family court under Chapter 587A at the time of turning 18 years old. So, it is apparent that the population affected by this bill is exclusively those youth who are or were under Chapter 587A



House Bill No. 873, Relating to the Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care Act
House Committee on Human Services
Thursday, January 31, 2013
Page 2

jurisdiction. Furthermore, it may make more sense to allow the family court to extend jurisdiction when it is in the minor's best interest and the minor agrees. Planning for youth would therefore be more seamless.

We note that Senate Bill No. 1340 adequately addresses the court's concerns of seamless delivery of services to willing youth, whether or not they meet the specific criteria of this bill. Furthermore, Senate Bill No. 1340 keeps the option open for youth up to age 23.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

HAWAII
STATE
COMMISSION
ON THE
STATUS
OF
WOMEN



Chair
LESLIE WILKINS

COMMISSIONERS:

ELENA CABATU
ADRIENNE KING
CARMILLE LIM
AMY MONK
LISA ELLEN SMITH
CAROL ANNE PHILIPS

Executive Director
Cathy Betts, JD

Email:
DHS.HSCSW@hawaii.gov
Visit us at:
humanservices.hawaii.gov
/hscsw/

235 S. Beretania #407
Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: 808-586-5758
FAX: 808-586-5756

January 31, 2013

Testimony in Support of HB 873, Relating to the Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care Act

To: Representative Mele Carroll, Chair
Representative Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair
Members of House Committee on Human Services

From: Cathy Betts, Executive Director, Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women

Re: Testimony in Support of HB 873

The Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women is in strong support of HB 873. The extension of voluntary foster custody for young adults is necessary for several reasons. First, an extension of voluntary foster custody allows young adults the time to successfully transition from being in "the system" to be a self-sufficient contributing community member. These are young adults who have found themselves in our foster care system due to child abuse, neglect, or the lack of any legal caregiver who wanted to provide for them. Many young adults within the system have not had the opportunity to learn basic life skills—whether it means balancing a checkbook, ensuring that they have adequate health care, accessing transportation to and from work, finding a clean and safe apartment—the list could go on and on. To compound these issues even more, many of these individuals transitioning out of foster care are still suffering from the trauma of abuse, neglect, and eventual removal from their home.

It is important to note that any decision to continue foster custody would be made voluntarily by the young adult, allowing these individuals to have a sense of ownership over their case plan and path to adulthood. HB 873 creates a transitioning mechanism for them to ensure they receive the services and help that they need to become successful adults.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Cathy Betts
Executive Director
Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women



LEGAL AID
SOCIETY OF HAWAII

Telephone: (808) 536-4302 • Fax: (808) 527-8088
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 37375 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96837-0375
924 Bethel Street • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Calvin Pang, Esq.
President, Board of Directors

M. Nalani Fujimori Kaina, Esq.
Executive Director

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF
HB873 - RELATING TO THE YOUNG ADULT VOLUNTARY FOSTER CARE ACT

Committee on Human Services - Room 329

Representative Mele Carroll, Chair
Representative Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice-Chair

January 31, 2013 at 9:30 a.m.

The Legal Aid Society of Hawaii submits testimony in support of HB873 – Relating to the Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care Act. This bill would allow a foster child to voluntarily consent to continued foster care until age 21 in order to continue to receive support from the state.

Legal Aid is the only statewide provider of guardian ad litem services to children in foster custody. Since 1996, we have looked out for the best interest of over 3,000 children in the foster care system. We have worked with youth of all ages from birth to eighteen. Some of the most difficult situations are those where youth have remained under the jurisdiction of the Department of Human Services and “age out” because they have reached “adulthood.” For many of these youth, they might be given their very few personal items in a garbage bag and shown the way out the door of the foster home they are living to find themselves homeless on the streets. Others who are more lucky, are able to continue to live with their foster parents, but only while they are going to school.

This program would help to provide a bridge for those leaving the foster care system by providing critical support between ages eighteen and twenty-one. We applaud the Department of Human Services and its various partners for the development of this bill and the recognition that going to college or vocational education is not the only way in which a foster youth can be successful.

We ask for your support in passing this bill to provide foster youth additional opportunities to succeed.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

M. Nalani Fujimori Kaina
Executive Director

The Legal Aid Society of Hawaii (Legal Aid) is the only legal service provider with offices on every island in the state, and in 2011 provided legal assistance to over 10,000 Hawai'i residents in the areas of consumer fraud, public assistance, family law, the prevention of homelessness, employment, protection from domestic violence, and immigration. Our mission is to achieve fairness and justice through legal advocacy, outreach and education for those in need.

HAWAII YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

677 Ala Moana Boulevard, Suite 702 Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Phone: (808) 531-2198 Fax: (808) 534-1199

Web site: <http://www.hysn.org> E-mail: info@hysn.org

Daryl Selman, President
Judith F. Clark, Executive Director
Aloha House
American Civil Liberties Union of Hawaii
Bay Clinic, Inc.
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Honolulu
Big Island Substance Abuse Council
Blueprint for Change
Bobby Benson Center
Catholic Charities Hawaii
Child and Family Service
Coalition for a Drug Free Hawaii
Domestic Violence Action Center
EPIC, Inc.
Family Support Hawaii
Hale Kipa, Inc.
Hale 'Opio 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
KEY (Kualoa-Heeia Ecumenical Youth)
Project
Kids Hurt Too
Kokua Kalihi Valley
Life Foundation
Marimed Foundation
Maui Youth and Family Services
Palama Settlement
P.A.R.E.N.T.S., Inc.
Parents and Children Together (PACT)
Planned Parenthood of Hawaii
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
YWCA of Kauai

January 30, 2013

To: Representative Mele Carroll, Chair,
And members of the Committee on Human Services

Testimony in Support of HB 873 Relating to the Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care Act

Hawaii Youth Services Network (HYSN), a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, supports HB 873 Relating to the Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care Act.

Young people who age out of foster care at age 18 face significant challenges. The Midwest Evaluation of Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth showed that by age 24:

- 40% of young people had been homeless since leaving foster care;
- ¼ did not have a high school diploma (compared to 7.35% of peers who did not experience foster care);
- Half were unemployed (twice as high as the general young adult population);
- 81% of males had been arrested (compared to 17% of all young adults);

Outcomes are much better for young people who stay in care to age 21 (from Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative Issue Brief - :

- Those required to leave care at age 18 were 2.7 times more likely to have been homeless;
- Remaining in care more than doubled the odds that young people would be working or in school at age 19;
- Those remaining in care were twice as likely to have completed at least one year of college by age 21;

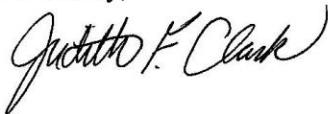
- Young women remaining in care experienced a 38% reduction in the incidence of pregnancy before age 20;
- Those remaining in care were more likely to access independent living services.

Extending foster care to age 21 has financial benefits for both the young adult and society. Increasing opportunities to complete college and vocational programs results in higher earning potential over a lifetime. Extended foster care decreases costs to society from early child bearing as teen mothers are 2.2 times more likely to have a child placed in foster care than those who delay child bearing until age 20 or 21.

Most young people are not prepared to take on all of the responsibilities of adult living at age 18. Our youth in foster care deserve this support in making successful transitions to adulthood.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judith F. Clark". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Judith F. Clark, MPH
Executive Director

TESTIMONY RELATING TO THE YOUNG ADULT VOLUNTARY FOSTER CARE ACT, HB 873

Monte M. McComber II, Director
‘Imi ‘Ike Learning Centers

Committee on Human Resources
House of Representatives
State of Hawai'i

Thursday, January 31, 2013
9:30 AM
Conference Room 329
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

House Bill 873: Relating to the Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care Act
HUS, JUD, FIN

I am writing in support of House Bill 873: Relating to the Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care Act to extend the age of foster care to age twenty-one.

House Bill 873 is soundly written being based on empirical evidence that demonstrates both quantitatively and qualitatively that care extended beyond the age of 18 to youth in foster care is a pre-requisite for the American dream: the ability to pursue one's own happiness and to experience personal success. While there are some youth who have been successful despite the termination of care at age 18, these rare individuals are a special case. The truth is simple: telling a youth you are now an adult at age 18 and newly exempted from the support system that aided you thus far, does not constitute society's duty to a group of youth who are disenfranchised at no fault of their own. It is not pono (right).

True and humane care does not end at the threshold of a major and life-changing event such as attaining the legal age of majority or adulthood, but rather it continues into that transition. Age alone should not be the guiding principle for when care is offered or not. Care should be based on need. The evidence is clear. There is a real need for extended care and that need exists right now in this very moment. Youth are in need at this very moment. An investment in any child is a down payment on a vibrant future for all the members of the society in which the child lives.

Youth in foster care are our combined kuleana (responsibility); the State and its citizens. We, the foster community stakeholders: resource parents, social workers, guardians ad litem, surrogate parents, therapists, care/service providers, teachers, counselors, and many more, are ready to do our part, but we need you to do your part first: pass this bill and support it until the Governor's pen makes it law.

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education Native Hawaiian Education Program and The Friends of EPIC Foundation

‘Imi ‘Ike is a program of EPIC Foundation • Kathie Aways, Executive Director
2535 South King Street, Suite 304 Honolulu, Hawai'i 96826 • (808) 955-6100 • www.epicfoundhawaii.org

EDUCATING, PROTECTING, AND INVESTING IN CHILDREN

kobayashi1-Joni

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, January 29, 2013 2:21 PM
To: HUS testimony
Cc: kenordenstein@aol.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB873 on Jan 31, 2013 09:30AM

HB873

Submitted on: 1/29/2013

Testimony for HUS on Jan 31, 2013 09:30AM in Conference Room 329

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ken Ordenstein	Olomea	Support	No

Comments: Olomea is a 501(c)(3) non profit formed to provide all young people, particularly Native Hawaiians, leaving foster care the chance to become self sufficient, successful adults. There are substantial financial benefits for both young people transitioning from foster care and our community when foster care is extended to age 21. It doubles the percentage of foster youth who earn a college degree from 10.2 to 20.4 thereby increasing earning potential and tax revenue. Extended foster care also lowers the cost related to early childbearing because young women who remain in care are more likely to delay parenting.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov



Hale Kipa

615 Pi'ikoi Street, Suite 203
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-3139

T 808 589-1829
F 808 589-2610
E info@halekipa.org

Executive Staff

Punky Pletan-Cross
Chief Executive Officer

Jaque Kelley-Uyeoka
Deputy CEO

Dori Tyau
Director of Human Resources

Board of Directors

Luke W.T. Yeh
Chair

Scott W.H. Seu
Vice Chair

Greg J. Sitar
Treasurer

Heidi K. Wild
Secretary

Paul Schraff
Past Chair

Brian Isobe
Past Chair

Heidi Cregor
Past Chair

Galen Haneda

Sherri-Ann Iha

Michael Magaoay

Rona M. Suzuki

Susan Y.M. Utsugi

Zadoc W. Brown, Jr.
Neighbor Island Board Liaison

Andy Levin
Neighbor Island Board Liaison

Rep. Mele Carroll, Chair
Rep. Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair
Committee on Human Services

RE: HB 873, RELATING TO THE YOUNG ADULT VOLUNTARY FOSTER CARE ACT
Jan. 31' 2013; 9:30 am

FROM: Jaque Kelley-Uyeoka, ACSW
Deputy CEO, Hale Kipa

My name is Jaque Kelley-Uyeoka and I am the Deputy CEO at Hale Kipa, Inc. Thank you for allowing me to testify in SUPPORT of this bill that increases the maximum age for foster care from 18 to 21.


As the Oahu Independent Living Program provider as well as having transitional living residences and access to housing vouchers for youth who are transitioning out of foster care as well as homelessness, Hale Kipa has had a long and active history in recognizing the challenges youth transitioning out of foster care face as well as developing an array of services designed to build skills, offer opportunities and eradicate barriers. Many of our young people leaving foster care, even if possessing skills and supports, could use more time to mature and make the transition to adulthood. This bill would give them the potential to remain in foster care with access to a range of benefits that allows for a more gradual adult transition and lasting positive success.

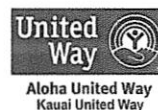
Other States which have extended foster care have demonstrated a trend toward more positive outcomes in the young person's acquisition of education and employment which would suggest more long-term stability. One study noted the "financial benefits of extending foster care-both for individual youth and for society- outweighed initial costs of government by a factor of approximately 2 to 1."

Not all young people will be eligible or choose to participate in this voluntary option but it will prove to be a critical opportunity for many and a safety net for youth who try to do it on their own but discover they could use a little more time and help!

Again, thank you for the opportunity to express our support and please feel free to contact me if you need additional information.

Sincerely,


Jaque Kelley-Uyeoka, ACSW
Deputy CEO, Hale Kipa, Inc.





FAMILY PROGRAMS HAWAI'I

TO: Representative Mele Carroll, Chair
Representative Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair
Committee on Human Services

HEARING: Thursday, January 31, 2013
9:30 am
Conference Room 329

FROM: Judith Wilhoite
Family Programs Hawai'i

RE: HB 873 - Related to the Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care Act

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am the Family Advocate for Family Program Hawaii's It Takes An `Ohana (ITAO) program and a resource caregiver, formerly referred to as foster parent. I strongly support this bill.

HB 873 is a very well crafted bill and explains why this change needs to be made. I would just like to add the following table that gives a clear view of outcomes for young people formerly in foster care compared to the general population of young people.

Outcome	Foster Care	General
No high school diploma or GED	24.4%	7.3%
Not employed	52%	24.5%
Average income from employment	\$12,064	\$20,349
Have health insurance	57%	78%
Males who have been arrested	81.2%	17.4%
Females who have been pregnant	77%	40.4%

Courtney, et al. (2010)

Allowing foster youth to continue to receive support until 21 will help bring better outcomes for our foster youth and thus for all of us. In fact, there is research that shows the financial benefits of extending foster care – both for the individual youth and for society – outweigh costs to government by a factor of approximately 2 to 1.

I applaud this DHS initiative and strongly support this bill to set the requirements needed to extend the foster care to 21.



FAMILY PROGRAMS HAWAII

TO: Representative Mele Carroll, Chair
Representative Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair
Committee on Human Services

HEARING: Thursday, January 31, 2013
9:30 am
Conference Room 329

FROM: Linda Santos, President & CEO
Family Programs Hawai'i

RE: HB 873 Related to the Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care Act

Representatives Carroll and Kobayashi,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Family Programs Hawai'i specializes in services related to the child welfare system. Assisting youth successfully emancipate from foster care is one of our most important program emphasis. We operate 5 different programs working with this population. These programs are located on Oahu and in East Hawaii and are funded primarily by foundations grants or contracts. They were developed because of our concern for the poor outcomes we have seen for emancipating youth.

In the last 10 + years, the Federal Government, as well as the State of Hawaii, has recognized that youth in foster care need additional benefits and services since they are most often without resources when they become 18. New laws have been passed to assist them. The Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care Act provides states with the opportunity to improve the outcomes of these youth. Other states that have already enacted have reported success.

We strongly support this bill to set the requirements needed to extend the foster care to 21.

Bill: HB 873

Date: January 31, 2013

Time: 9:30am

Place: Room 329

Committee: House Human Services

Chair: Representative Carrol

Vice Chair: Representative Kobayashi

I Strongly Support this bill

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Mike Curtis and I am the current Board Chair for Family Programs Hawaii (FPH). We are a non-profit agency that provides services to prevent children from entering foster care; support children and families involved in the foster care system; and assist youth transitioning out of care.

There is a growing emphasis on successful transition to adulthood among child welfare professionals. This has led to Federal programs providing the option to extend care to the age of 21 from the current standard of 18. I encourage you in the strongest terms to follow their lead here in our state.

Take a moment and consider yourself, or your kids if you have them, at the age of 18. Then add to that the challenges that young people face when they come from broken homes. Without adequate support during this crucial time, they are vulnerable to despair and the influence of those who would lead them towards a life of drug use and crime.

I urge you to support us in our call to provide services that will help these kids make a successful transition to adulthood. My belief is that we will reap the rewards of our investment many times over, in the form of better-integrated, productive citizens on the one hand, and reduced crime, public assistance and other societal costs on the other.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important bill.

Sincerely,

Mike Curtis
Board Chair
Family Programs Hawaii



1130 N. NIMITZ HWY, SUITE C-210, HONOLULU, HI 96817
PHONE: (808) 838-7752 TOLL FREE: (866) 636-1644 FAX: (808) 838-1653

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EARL CHAPMAN
Chair

MERVINA CASH KAEO
Vice Chair

PETER LEWIS
Treasurer

SUSAN CHANDLER
Secretary

BETTY CHING

PATRICK K.S.L. YIM

MALIA TAUM-DEENIK

ARLYNNA HOWELL
LIVINGSTON

LAURIE ARIAL TOCHIKI
President / CEO

To: **Committee on Human Services**
Thursday, January 31, 2013
9:30am, Conference Room 329, State Capitol

From: **Arleen Kuwamura, Hale 'Opio Kaua'i**

Re: **Testimony In Support of House Bill 873, Relating to the Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care Act**

My name is Arleen Kuwamura and I work for Hale 'Opio Kaua'i. I am the partner staff Kaua'i branch of the HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board of the Hawai'i Youth Opportunities Initiative.

I would like to submit testimony in support of House Bill 873 which supports extended jurisdiction for foster youth beyond age 18. I support the intent of this bill to have voluntary foster care extended up to age 21.

For some of those who have aged out of the system, they are often not ready to go out on their own or they lack the support and often times the necessary skills needed to be successful adults. I have worked with foster youth for 18 years and have watched many of these youth struggle to make it on their own, many of them have very little or no support when they age out of foster care. If we could extend care during this crucial time of growth when they need services most, I believe we will not only be supporting the individual young person increase their full potential and social capital it will also strengthen the communities they live, work and go to school in.

In Hawai'i, 33% of former foster youth in a recent poll, ages 18 to 23, reported having couch-surfed or moved from home to home because they did not have a place to stay. That is more than the national average of 24% of former foster youth who experience some form of homelessness by age 24.

I want to emphasize that I feel this is an important **option** for youth, and that they should have the choice to remain in foster care beyond 18, as long as they are willing and eligible.

In closing, I would ask this committee to support the intent of and pass House Bill 873.

Thank you very much.



1130 N. NIMITZ HWY, SUITE C-210, HONOLULU, HI 96817
PHONE: (808) 838-7752 TOLL FREE: (866) 636-1644 FAX: (808) 838-1653

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EARL CHAPMAN
Chair

MERVINA CASH KAEO
Vice Chair

PETER LEWIS
Treasurer

SUSAN CHANDLER
Secretary

BETTY CHING

PATRICK K.S.L. YIM

MALIA TAUM-DEENIK

ARLYNNA HOWELL
LIVINGSTON

LAURIE ARIAL TOCHIKI
President / CEO

To: **House Committee on Human Services**
Thursday, January 31, 2013
9:30am, Conference Room 329, State Capitol
From: **Delia Ulima, Statewide Initiative Coordinator**
Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative, EPIC 'Ohana, Inc.
Re: **In Support of House Bill 873, Relating to the Young Adult
Voluntary Foster Care Act**

Aloha and good morning! My name is Delia Ulima and I am a Statewide Initiative Coordinator for the Hawai'i Youth Opportunities Initiative. We are the local site for the national Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative and EPIC 'Ohana is the lead agency for this Initiative in Hawai'i. The Initiative works with systems, such as the Department of Human Services, Child Welfare, other service providers and partners within the public and private sector to create opportunities and support transitioning foster youth to successfully move into adulthood and become a contributing part of our community.

I would like to submit testimony in support of House Bill 873, which provides young people with the voluntary option to remain in a developmentally appropriate foster care program up to age 21.

The State of Hawaii is the "parent" of young people who are in permanent foster care custody. As "wards" of the State, they are in a unique legal class. For those who exit out of this system at age 18, they often find themselves without the necessary supports that any 18-year old would need to survive, let alone thrive. Nationally, outcomes for transitioning foster youth are grim. By the time they are 24, one in four will experience homelessness, 77% of young women will become pregnant, only 3% will obtain a four year college degree, earn significantly less than their peers and 81% of males will be arrested. A Chapin Hall Study showed that the extension of foster care to 21 resulted in the following benefits: increased college attendance, increased earnings, decreased unintended pregnancies, decreased usage of public assistance, decreased homelessness and decreased incarceration.

States currently have the option to extend eligibility across certain Title IV-E programs. Under the 2008 Federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act, federal funds may be drawn down to support the extension of foster care when certain employment and education requirements are met. Currently, there are over 13 states that have opted to extend foster care beyond age 18.

In closing, I would ask this committee to consider what kind of future we would like these young people to look forward to. Think about what our own families provided for us in our very young adulthood? What do we expect to provide for our own biological children? Most in this room would find it unrealistic to expect our own 18 year old children to be completely financially, physically, mentally and emotionally on their own with no parental guidance, no financial supports for a first car, first apartment, support with college, spending money, medical coverage and basic love and encouragement. Providing an option for young people in our foster care system to have additional supports beyond 18 makes ethical and in the long run, financial, sense. We respectfully ask this committee to pass House Bill 873. Mahalo nui loa.



1130 N. NIMITZ HWY, SUITE C-210, HONOLULU, HI 96817
PHONE: (808) 838-7752 TOLL FREE: (866) 636-1644 FAX: (808) 838-1653

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EARL CHAPMAN
Chair

MERVINA CASH KAEO
Vice Chair

PETER LEWIS
Treasurer

SUSAN CHANDLER
Secretary

BETTY CHING

PATRICK K.S.L. YIM

MALIA TAUM-DEENIK

ARLYNNA HOWELL
LIVINGSTON

LAURIE ARIAL TOCHIKI
President / CEO

To: **Committee on Human Services**

Thursday, January 31, 2013
9:30am, Conference Room 329, State Capitol

From: **Michael Masulit, HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board (Kauai)**
Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative, EPIC 'Ohana, Inc.

Re: **Testimony in Support of House Bill 873, Relating to the Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care Act**

My Name is Michael Jay Masulit and I am a Member of the Kaua'i HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board of the Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative.

I would like to submit testimony in support of House Bill 873 which supports voluntary foster care up to age 21 in Hawaii.

For those who age out of the system, they are often not ready to go out on their own because of the lack of support that they need to be a successful adult. I've seen many of my fellow board members who aged out of foster care deal with a lot in their lives. Many of them had very little or no support. I am one of the fortunate ones. When I aged out of foster care, I was able to complete a college degree in culinary arts with the help of an aunt. If it wasn't for this one caring adult who provided housing and college support, I don't know where I would be today.

I want to emphasize that I feel this is an important option for youth, and they should have the choice to remain in foster beyond 18, as long as they want to and are willing to meet the requirements of the program.

In closing, I would ask this committee to pass House Bill 873.

Thank you.



1130 N. NIMITZ HWY, SUITE C-210, HONOLULU, HI 96817
PHONE: (808) 838-7752 TOLL FREE: (866) 636-1644 FAX: (808) 838-1653

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EARL CHAPMAN
Chair

MERVINA CASH KAEO
Vice Chair

PETER LEWIS
Treasurer

SUSAN CHANDLER
Secretary

BETTY CHING

PATRICK K.S.L. YIM

MALIA TAUM-DEENIK

ARLYNNA HOWELL
LIVINGSTON

LAURIE ARIAL TOCHIKI
President / CEO

To: **Committee on Human Services**
Thursday, January 31, 2013
9:30am, Conference Room 329, State Capitol

From: **Tiffany Tuilata, HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board (Oahu)**
Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative, EPIC 'Ohana, Inc.

Re: **Testimony in Support of House Bill 873, Relating to the Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care Act**

Good morning, members of the Committee on Human Services. My name is Tiffany Tuilata and I am a member of the HI H.O.P.E.S Youth Leadership Board of the Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative.

I would like to submit testimony in support of House Bill 873 and support the intent of the voluntary foster care act, which extends the option to remain in foster care up to age 21.

I'm 24 and I aged out of foster care while on the run. I immediately found myself homeless with no support or knowledge on the resources available. When you find yourself sleeping in public restrooms or beaches, you begin to wish you had someone you could rely on or someone who could lend a helping hand. Just thinking of where my next meal would come from or when it would be safe to sleep in the park, it isn't a feeling that any youth should endure. As recent as a year ago, I found myself homeless with two children.

Thankfully, I participated in the Opportunity Passport Program, a program through the Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative which teaches financial literacy training, helps us open bank accounts and have our money matched for asset purchases. I was able to use my matched savings account to make my first purchase for a housing deposit and first month's rent. I was so happy to have a place for me and my children to call home.

Nationally, statistics show that 24% of former foster youth will experience some form of homelessness due to the fact that they don't have a place to stay after they age out of care and don't have supportive adult relationships. Unfortunately, I was one of those statistics and I don't wish any transitioning youth to experience the hardship of being without a home or a supportive adult.

In closing, I would humbly ask this committee to pass House Bill 873 and give foster youth the option to receive the continued support they need to be successful adults in our community. Thank you very much.



1130 N. NIMITZ HWY, SUITE C-210, HONOLULU, HI 96817
PHONE: (808) 838-7752 TOLL FREE: (866) 636-1644 FAX: (808) 838-1653

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EARL CHAPMAN
Chair

MERVINA CASH KAE0
Vice Chair

PETER LEWIS
Treasurer

SUSAN CHANDLER
Secretary

BETTY CHING

PATRICK K.S.L. YIM

MALIA TAUM-DEENIK

ARLYNNA HOWELL
LIVINGSTON

LAURIE ARIAL TOCHIKI
President / CEO

To: **Committee on Human Services**
Thursday, January 31, 2013
9:30am, Conference Room 329, State Capitol

From: **Apuauro Turano, HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board (Oahu)**
Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative, EPIC 'Ohana

Re: **Testimony in Support of House Bill 873, Relating to the Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care Act**

Aloha my name is Apuauro Turano and I am 22 years old. I am a new member of the Oahu HI H.O.P.E.S youth leadership board of the Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative. I am submitting my testimony in support of extending Hawaii's foster care from the age of 18 to 21. I believe if Hawaii's foster youth are given the opportunity for voluntary extended care, there would be a more well-rounded upbringing for these youth transitioning into adulthood.

From my experiences growing up in the foster care system, I am very thankful and blessed to have two wonderful people come into my life and change my perspective about it. At age 11 I lost my father to cancer and I ran away from my mother's because the living arrangements were not safe. I ran away to a friend's house, whose family would become my first foster home. However, I felt I wasn't getting the proper treatment, undivided attention and positive lifestyle that a growing teen should have. I was lucky to have met another friend whom had shared my story to his mother and grandparents and he asked if they could adopt me. It motivated me to bring the issues up to my social/case worker and make a request that had changed my life. In my sophomore year of high school, I was adopted by my friend's grandparents and they helped groom me with a positive perspective in life, taught me to understand life's many hardships with caring guidance and a great amount of responsibility. Even though I aged out at the age of 18, my grandparents are still an active role in my life now at the age of 22.

Although it was by chance that I ended up in the foster care system, the experience I gained has helped me to grow as an individual in becoming an adult. There may not be similar circumstances for other youth to end up with the experience I went through because there are many statistics that show poor outcomes of foster youth. I believe if the opportunity of extending foster care for foster youth to the age of 21 is provided, it will help provide them with the potential of growth and give them a chance to endure the many difficulties of life with an option for a great support system. I have a strong hope that the foster youth will have a chance for a better future. I humbly ask that you pass House Bill 873. Thank you.



1130 N. NIMITZ HWY, SUITE C-210, HONOLULU, HI 96817
PHONE: (808) 838-7752 TOLL FREE: (866) 636-1644 FAX: (808) 838-1653

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EARL CHAPMAN
Chair

MERVINA CASH KAE0
Vice Chair

PETER LEWIS
Treasurer

SUSAN CHANDLER
Secretary

BETTY CHING

PATRICK K.S.L. YIM

MALIA TAUM-DEENIK

ARLYNNA HOWELL
LIVINGSTON

LAURIE ARIAL TOCHIKI
President / CEO

To: **Committee on Human Services**
Thursday, January 31, 2013
9:30am, Conference Room 329, State Capitol

From: **Ashley Slater, HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board (West Hawaii)** Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative, EPIC 'Ohana

Re: **Testimony in Support of House Bill 873, Relating to the Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care Act**

My name is Ashley Slater and I am the President of the HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board of the Hawai i Youth Opportunities Initiative in West Hawai i. I am for the House Bill 873 Extension of Foster Care to age 21 in the State of Hawai i. There are many reasons that I think this Bill should be passed.

One of my reasons is that I feel with this extension, foster youth have more time to grow and learn what they need to, to survive in the real world. I also feel that it gives them a little extra time to connect with that foster family and to safe and comfortable to contact them when exiting out. I feel that every foster youth deserves some one they can fall back on for help and support. Granting this bill allows the foster youth the time they need to build supportive relationships.

Thank you very much.





1130 N. NIMITZ HWY, SUITE C-210, HONOLULU, HI 96817
PHONE: (808) 838-7752 TOLL FREE: (866) 636-1644 FAX: (808) 838-1653

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EARL CHAPMAN
Chair

MERVINA CASH KAEO
Vice Chair

PETER LEWIS
Treasurer

SUSAN CHANDLER
Secretary

BETTY CHING

PATRICK K.S.L. YIM

MALIA TAUM-DEENIK

ARLYNNA HOWELL
LIVINGSTON

LAURIE ARIAL TOCHIKI
President / CEO

To: **Committee on Human Services**

Thursday, January 31, 2013

9:30am, Conference Room 329, State Capitol

From: **Chardonay Rosa-Arango, HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board (Kauai)** Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative, EPIC 'Ohana

Re: **Testimony in Support of House Bill 873, Relating to the Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care Act**

My name is Chardonay Rosa-Arango and I am the President of the Kaua'i HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board of the Hawai'i Youth Opportunities Initiative.

I would like to submit testimony in support of HB 873 and its intent to provide the option of voluntary foster care up to age 21.

I am very fortunate to say that at the age of 16 my foster parents at the time took legal guardianship of me. They not only provided me with security but they assured me that I had a family I could always be a part of. Because I was given a stable home past the age of 18, I was able to transition into adulthood very efficiently. Knowing that I had support and stability in my life, I was able to live out my dream and go to Southwestern Assemblies of God University, a private Christian university, in Waxahachie, Texas. I attended school there for a year and a half and now, at the age of 19, I am at Kauai Community College living with my former foster parents. If I had been completely cut off at 18, I know that the choices I made would have been very different. I believe that if foster care is extended up to 21, many foster youth will be given the opportunity and support in order to transition into adulthood more efficiently.

Statistics show that former foster youth will experience some form of homelessness due to the fact that they don't have a place to stay after they age out of care and don't have supportive adult relationships.

In closing, I would ask this committee to pass HB 873 and give foster youth the option to receive the continued support they need as they make the critical transition into adulthood. Thank you very much.



1130 N. NIMITZ HWY, SUITE C-210, HONOLULU, HI 96817
PHONE: (808) 838-7752 TOLL FREE: (866) 636-1644 FAX: (808) 838-1653

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EARL CHAPMAN
Chair

MERVINA CASH KAEO
Vice Chair

PETER LEWIS
Treasurer

SUSAN CHANDLER
Secretary

BETTY CHING

PATRICK K.S.L. YIM

MALIA TAUM-DEENIK

ARLYNNA HOWELL
LIVINGSTON

LAURIE ARIAL TOCHIKI
President / CEO

To: **Committee on Human Services**
Thursday, January 31, 2013
9:30am, Conference Room 329, State Capitol

From: **Filipe Tauaika, HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board (Oahu)**
Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative, EPIC 'Ohana

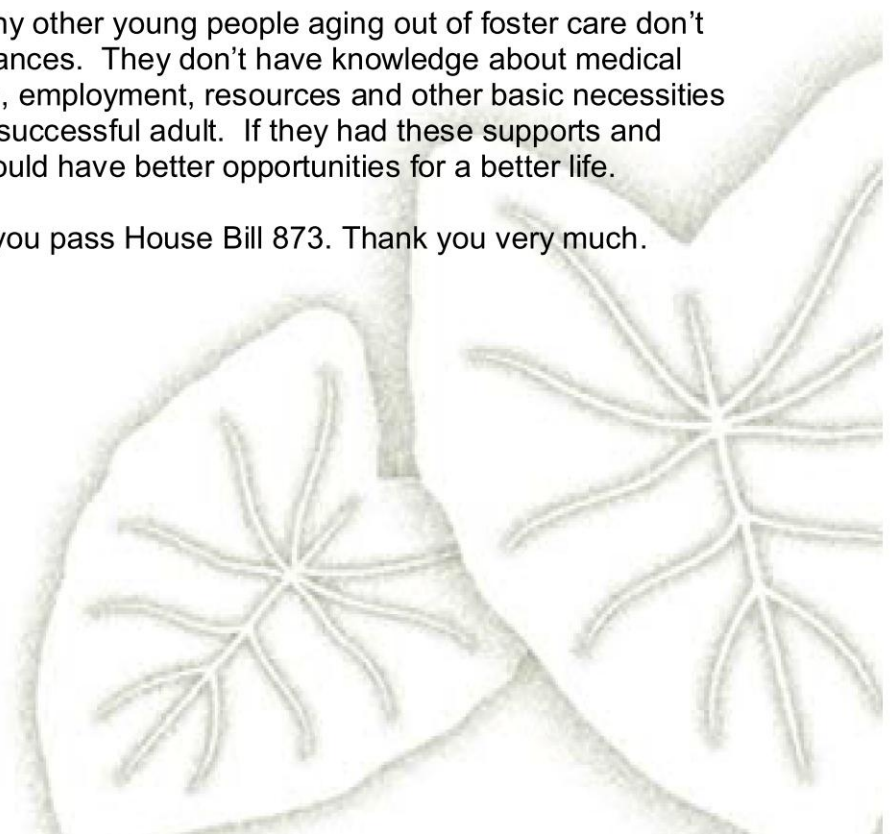
Re: **Testimony in Support of House Bill 873, Relating to the Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care Act**

Good morning members of the House Committee on Human Services. My name is Filipe Tauaika, I am 20 years old and a member of the HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board on Oahu.

I support House Bill 873 to provide foster youth with voluntary foster care to age 21. I was in foster care at a young age and aged out of the Hawaii Youth Correctional Facilities (Ko'olau) at the age of 18. I didn't have a plan for where I would live or what I would do. Fortunately, I found relatives and they helped me with housing, a job and guidance. I was also lucky I found something that I loved to do, boxing. It kept me out of trouble and gave me a goal to work towards, which is to be an Olympic boxer. With the support of my family, coach and others in the community and church, I was able to find resources and stay on track.

Unfortunately, many other young people aging out of foster care don't have the same chances. They don't have knowledge about medical coverage, housing, employment, resources and other basic necessities they need to be a successful adult. If they had these supports and resources, they would have better opportunities for a better life.

I humbly ask that you pass House Bill 873. Thank you very much.





1130 N. NIMITZ HWY, SUITE C-210, HONOLULU, HI 96817
PHONE: (808) 838-7752 TOLL FREE: (866) 636-1644 FAX: (808) 838-1653

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EARL CHAPMAN
Chair

MERVINA CASH KAEO
Vice Chair

PETER LEWIS
Treasurer

SUSAN CHANDLER
Secretary

BETTY CHING

PATRICK K.S.L. YIM

MALIA TAUM-DEENIK

ARLYNNA HOWELL
LIVINGSTON

LAURIE ARIAL TOCHIKI
President / CEO

To: **Committee on Human Services**
Thursday, January 31, 2013
9:30am, Conference Room 329, State Capitol

From: **Gernani Yutob Jr., HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board (Oahu)** Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative, EPIC 'Ohana

Re: **Testimony in Support of House Bill 873, Relating to the Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care Act**

My name is Gernani Yutob, Jr. and I am the President of the O`ahu HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board of the Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative. The Initiative is a national and local effort to create and support successful outcomes for transitioning foster youth.

I aged out of the foster care system in 2008 at the age of 18 and will be turning 23 in April. I will be graduating with my Bachelor of Art in Public Administration degree with Academic Distinction at the University of Hawai'i – West O`ahu in May. Did you know, only 3 percent of foster youth who age out of the foster care system at 18 graduate with a four-year degree by the age of 25? I was very fortunate to have my resource caregiver take me under her wing after I graduated from high school. This meant that I had a place to stay and was able to fully concentrate on school and work without worrying about where I would spend my next night at. Had this not happened, I would be a 23 year old who would most likely not be graduating on time because my main priority would be to survive and figure out where I would get my next meal. Not many foster youth who age out of care will have a supportive adult and the resources in their lives to guide them through one of the most difficult phases in life. When your child turned 18, did you kick him/her out of your home and make him/her fend for him/herself without offering any type of support or guidance? Even at the age of 18, when they are legally considered an adult, they are not ready for what lies ahead just yet. It is imperative that we have the support and resources for youth transitioning out of care to become successful adults in the future.

In closing, I would like to humbly ask this committee to pass HB 873 and give foster youth the continued support they need to make the critical transition to adulthood.

Thank you very much.



1130 N. NIMITZ HWY, SUITE C-210, HONOLULU, HI 96817
PHONE: (808) 838-7752 TOLL FREE: (866) 636-1644 FAX: (808) 838-1653

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EARL CHAPMAN
Chair

MERVINA CASH KAEO
Vice Chair

PETER LEWIS
Treasurer

SUSAN CHANDLER
Secretary

BETTY CHING

PATRICK K.S.L. YIM

MALIA TAUM-DEENIK

ARLYNNA HOWELL
LIVINGSTON

LAURIE ARIAL TOCHIKI
President / CEO

To: **Committee on Human Services**
Thursday, January 31, 2013
9:30am, Conference Room 329, State Capitol

From: **Judy Adviento, HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board (Oahu)**
Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative, EPIC 'Ohana

Re: **Testimony in Support of House Bill 873, Relating to the Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care Act**

My name is Judy Adviento, I am 21 years old and I am the Secretary of the Oahu HI H.O.P.E.S Youth Leadership Board of the Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative.

I would like to submit this testimony in support of HB 873 and its intent to provide the option to participate in voluntary foster care up to age 21.

Some foster youth are not prepared to go out on their own when they turn 18. There are so many negative statistics about youth who age out of care. For example, in a study of young people formerly in foster care, 24% have experienced homelessness at least once, and 81% of the males get arrested in comparison to 17% of their peers in the general population.

I went into foster care at the age of 16. Even before I went into care, I was quite independent. I worked and a lot of my paperwork by myself so when I went into foster care, I was ready to take on those obstacles. It also helped that I had a lot of supportive people around me. When I turned 18, I felt prepared but not every youth is as prepared as I was and it's expressed through the statistics.

I am currently my younger brother's resource caregiver (foster parent) and it would terrify me if I found out that my brother "fell through the cracks" because he was not ready to go on his own at the age of 18. Every youth matures at different rates. This is even true with our peers in the general population. The difference is that foster youth sometimes don't know/have anywhere and anyone to go to when they are in trouble and struggling financially, emotionally, physically, etc.

I want to emphasize that I feel this is an important option for youth, and they should have the choice to remain in foster care beyond 18, as long as they are willing and eligible. In closing, I ask this committee to pass House Bill 873. Thank you very much.



1130 N. NIMITZ HWY, SUITE C-210, HONOLULU, HI 96817
PHONE: (808) 838-7752 TOLL FREE: (866) 636-1644 FAX: (808) 838-1653

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EARL CHAPMAN
Chair

MERVINA CASH KAEO
Vice Chair

PETER LEWIS
Treasurer

SUSAN CHANDLER
Secretary

BETTY CHING

PATRICK K.S.L. YIM

MALIA TAUM-DEENIK

ARLYNNA HOWELL
LIVINGSTON

LAURIE ARIAL TOCHIKI
President / CEO

To: **Committee on Human Services**
Thursday, January 31, 2013
9:30am, Conference Room 329, State Capitol

From: **Keola Limkin, HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board (East Hawaii)** Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative, EPIC 'Ohana

Re: **Testimony in Support of House Bill 873, Relating to the Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care Act**

My name is Keola Limkin, I am 22 years old and I was born and raised on the Big Island of Hawaii. I am the Secretary for the HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board in East Hawaii. During most of my childhood I lived with my mother and my five younger siblings. When I was a sophomore in high school, my siblings and I were placed in foster care until I aged out of child welfare services.

My younger siblings frequently moved between foster homes until my mother regained legal custody of them. I was fortunate to remain with the same foster parent during my entire experience. I developed a strong relationship with my foster dad to the point where I felt permanence. Immediately after graduating from high school, I lived at the University of Hawaii at Hilo dormitory while attending school. Our bond did not wither and he allowed me to live with him during summer break.

I support HB 873 regarding Voluntary Foster Care Act to extend care to 21 in Hawaii. I believe that allowing foster youth to have an option to remain in foster care up until the age of 21 would nurture positive community members. The age group of 18-21 years is a window where healthy risk taking can take place. These young adults will face many new experiences and a foster parent could provide both support and counseling. Foster parents should also be trained to parent these young adults in this specialized period if policy is to change. Foster parent guidance during this critical period for learning will ensure that they succeed in their future endeavors.

I ask this committee to please pass House Bill 873. Thank you.



1130 N. NIMITZ HWY, SUITE C-210, HONOLULU, HI 96817
PHONE: (808) 838-7752 TOLL FREE: (866) 636-1644 FAX: (808) 838-1653

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EARL CHAPMAN
Chair

MERVINA CASH KAEO
Vice Chair

PETER LEWIS
Treasurer

SUSAN CHANDLER
Secretary

BETTY CHING

PATRICK K.S.L. YIM

MALIA TAUM-DEENIK

ARLYNNA HOWELL
LIVINGSTON

LAURIE ARIAL TOCHIKI
President / CEO

To: **Committee on Human Services**
Thursday, January 31, 2013
9:30am, Conference Room 329, State Capitol

From: **Noy Worachit, HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board (Oahu)**
Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative, EPIC 'Ohana

Re: **Testimony in Support of House Bill 873, Relating to the Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care Act**

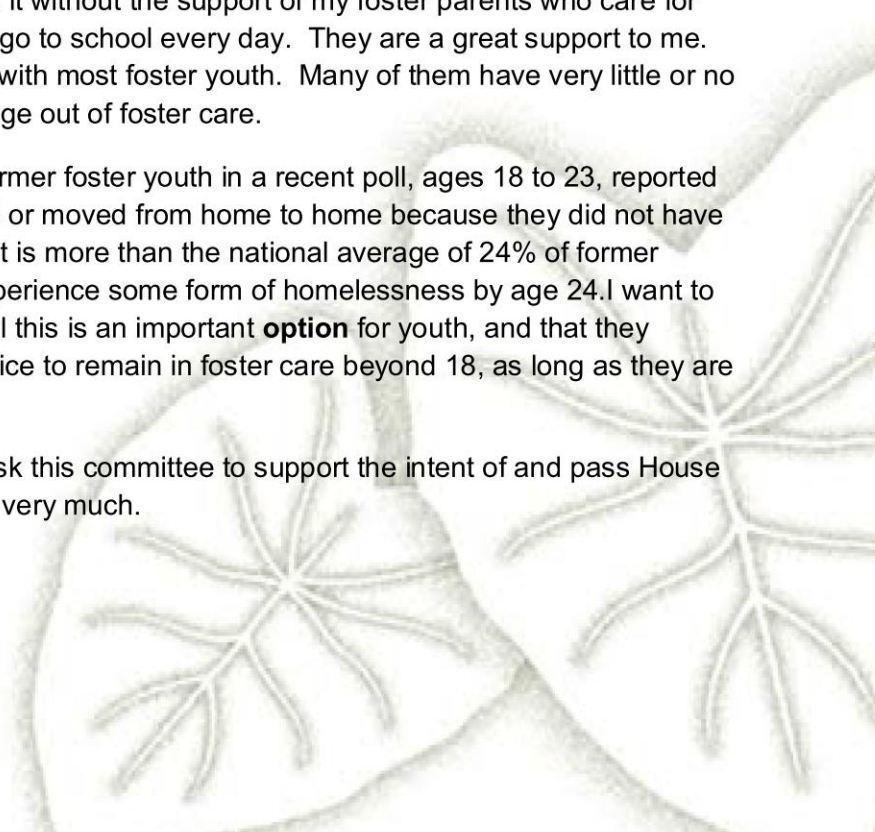
Good morning members of the House Committee on Human Services. My name is Noy Worachit, I am 19 years old and I am the Vice-President of the HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board of the Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative on Oahu.

I would like to submit testimony in support of House Bill 873 which supports the voluntary option to extend jurisdiction for foster youth beyond age 18. I support the intent of this bill to have foster care extended up to age 21.

For some of those who have aged out of the system, they are often not ready to go out on their own or they lack the support they need to be successful adults, which is why I feel it is important that we should have the option of being in foster care until the age of 21. I aged out of foster care at 18 as a single parent. I attend Honolulu Community College and truly believe that I could not have done it without the support of my foster parents who care for my daughter while I go to school every day. They are a great support to me. This is not the case with most foster youth. Many of them have very little or no support when they age out of foster care.

In Hawaii, 33% of former foster youth in a recent poll, ages 18 to 23, reported having couch-surfed or moved from home to home because they did not have a place to stay. That is more than the national average of 24% of former foster youth who experience some form of homelessness by age 24. I want to emphasize that I feel this is an important **option** for youth, and that they should have the choice to remain in foster care beyond 18, as long as they are willing and eligible.

In closing, I would ask this committee to support the intent of and pass House Bill 873. Thank you very much.





1130 N. NIMITZ HWY, SUITE C-210, HONOLULU, HI 96817
PHONE: (808) 838-7752 TOLL FREE: (866) 636-1644 FAX: (808) 838-1653

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EARL CHAPMAN
Chair

MERVINA CASH KAEO
Vice Chair

PETER LEWIS
Treasurer

SUSAN CHANDLER
Secretary

BETTY CHING

PATRICK K.S.L. YIM

MALIA TAUM-DEENIK

ARLYNNA HOWELL
LIVINGSTON

LAURIE ARIAL TOCHIKI
President / CEO

To: **Committee on Human Services**
Thursday, January 31, 2013
9:30am, Conference Room 329, State Capitol

From: **Rachel Burke, HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board (West Hawaii)** Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative, EPIC 'Ohana

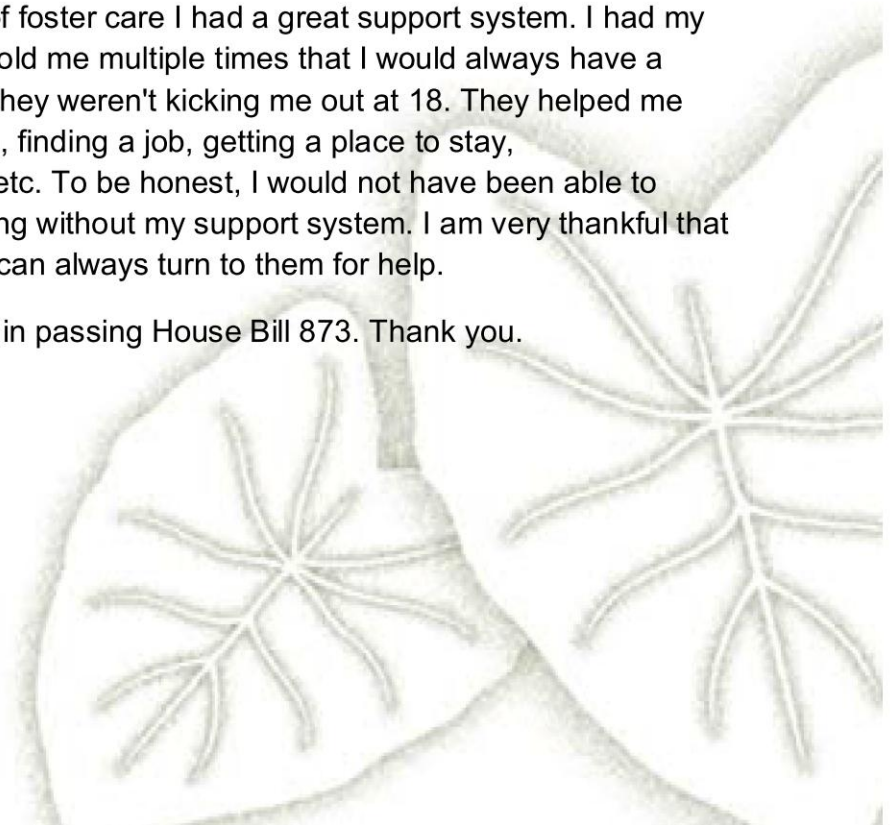
Re: **Testimony in Support of House Bill 873, Relating to the Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care Act**

My name is Rachel Burke and I am 19 years old. I am part of the West Hawaii HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board. I fully support House Bill 873.

Extending voluntary foster care to the age of 21 is very important for several reasons. At age 18 most youth are not able to support themselves. It takes a while to get a job, buy a vehicle, find a place to live, and still be able to save money. By extending the age to 21, it gives young people an opportunity to have the support system they need to get these things done. This gives them a chance to slowly start doing things on their own but also being able to turn to someone for help. I think this bill is crucial to the success of foster youth in Hawaii.

When I aged out of foster care I had a great support system. I had my foster family who told me multiple times that I would always have a place to stay; that they weren't kicking me out at 18. They helped me with transportation, finding a job, getting a place to stay, buying groceries etc. To be honest, I would not have been able to accomplish anything without my support system. I am very thankful that I have them and I can always turn to them for help.

I ask your support in passing House Bill 873. Thank you.





1130 N. NIMITZ HWY, SUITE C-210, HONOLULU, HI 96817
PHONE: (808) 838-7752 TOLL FREE: (866) 636-1644 FAX: (808) 838-1653

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EARL CHAPMAN
Chair

MERVINA CASH KAEO
Vice Chair

PETER LEWIS
Treasurer

SUSAN CHANDLER
Secretary

BETTY CHING

PATRICK K.S.L. YIM

MALIA TAUM-DEENIK

ARLYNNA HOWELL
LIVINGSTON

LAURIE ARIAL TOCHIKI
President / CEO

To: **Committee on Human Services**
Thursday, January 31, 2013
9:30am, Conference Room 329, State Capitol

From: **Samantha U'u, HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board (Maui)**
Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative, EPIC 'Ohana

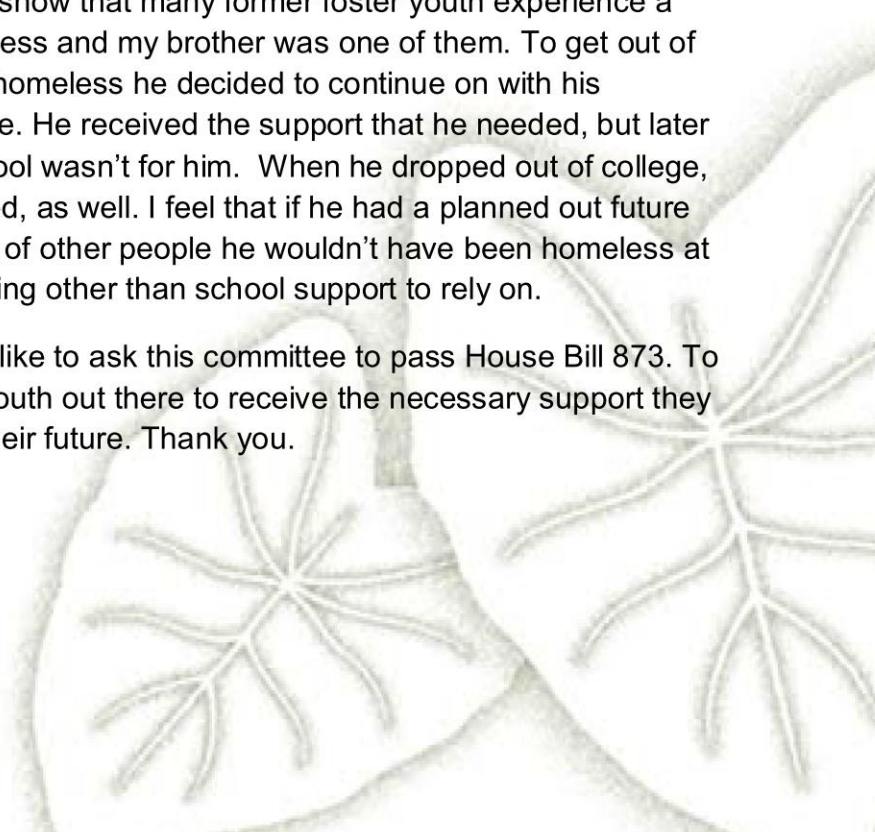
Re: **Testimony in Support of House Bill 873, Relating to the Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care Act**

My name is Samantha U'u, I'm 18, and I am a member of the Maui HI H.O.P.E.S Youth Leadership Board of the Hawaii Youth Opportunity Initiative. I would like to submit a testimony in support of House Bill 873. The Bill supports the extension of voluntary foster care up to age 21.

I aged out of the foster care system when I turned 18 last February. I knew what I wanted, but I didn't know how to achieve it. I didn't have the knowledge of where to go or what to do because nothing was planned out. I was lucky enough to be guided through the process of what I wanted for my future because I continued on with my schooling.

My brother on the other hand struggled much more. He was homeless at one point because he did not receive the necessary support that he needed. Statistics show that many former foster youth experience a form of homelessness and my brother was one of them. To get out of the state of being homeless he decided to continue on with his schooling in college. He received the support that he needed, but later found out that school wasn't for him. When he dropped out of college, the support stopped, as well. I feel that if he had a planned out future along with support of other people he wouldn't have been homeless at the time, with nothing other than school support to rely on.

In closing, I would like to ask this committee to pass House Bill 873. To help other foster youth out there to receive the necessary support they need to plan out their future. Thank you.





1130 N. NIMITZ HWY, SUITE C-210, HONOLULU, HI 96817
PHONE: (808) 838-7752 TOLL FREE: (866) 636-1644 FAX: (808) 838-1653

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EARL CHAPMAN
Chair

MERVINA CASH KAEO
Vice Chair

PETER LEWIS
Treasurer

SUSAN CHANDLER
Secretary

BETTY CHING

PATRICK K.S.L. YIM

MALIA TAUM-DEENIK

ARLYNNA HOWELL
LIVINGSTON

LAURIE ARIAL TOCHIKI
President / CEO

To: **Committee on Human Services**
Thursday, January 31, 2013
9:30am, Conference Room 329, State Capitol
From: **Sharla-Ann Fujimoto**, Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative, EPIC
'Ohana

Re: **Testimony in Support of House Bill 873, Relating to the Young
Adult Voluntary Foster Care Act**

Aloha, my name is Sharla-Ann Fujimoto and I work for EPIC 'Ohana, Inc. and assist with the Hawai i Youth Opportunities Initiative and the HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board in West Hawai i.

I would like to submit testimony in support of House Bill 873, which extends voluntary foster care to the age of 21. I have worked with youth in foster care and formerly in foster care for almost five years and I feel that this is a population in need of support.

Today, there is a youth turning 18, but they are not celebrating the way their peers normally would because this youth is a foster youth. This foster youth is packing their things (most likely into trash bags) while asking themselves the question, "Where am I going to go?" This youth will most likely end up homeless on the street or will end up going back to the biological family they were taken away from only to face the same traumas that that landed them in foster care to begin with. This youth will most likely face extremely poor outcomes because they do not have adequate support.

Those of us who have not been in the foster care system do not understand the true pressure behind turning 18. Most of us were excited at the prospect of turning 18. Most of us have had parents help us out get into college, buy a computer, help us with transportation, and maintain a stable living situation. Most of us that have not been in foster care were not expected to find a job, find housing, get into college, and find adequate transportation on the same day we turned 18. Most of us had a choice if we wanted to leave home or not. For our youth aging out of care, they have no choice and they are absolutely terrified of their 18th birthday—they are expected to make huge life



1130 N. NIMITZ HWY, SUITE C-210, HONOLULU, HI 96817
PHONE: (808) 838-7752 TOLL FREE: (866) 636-1644 FAX: (808) 838-1653

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EARL CHAPMAN
Chair

MERVINA CASH KAE0
Vice Chair

PETER LEWIS
Treasurer

SUSAN CHANDLER
Secretary

BETTY CHING

PATRICK K.S.L. YIM

MALIA TAUM-DEENIK

**ARLYNNA HOWELL
LIVINGSTON**

LAURIE ARIAL TOCHIKI
President / CEO

decisions that they may not be developmentally able to make at such a young age and without adequate supports put into place.

I fully support this bill because if youth in foster care were given the option to remain in care up until the age of 21, they would have a few more years to build the adequate support they need to become successful, self-sufficient adults. They would be able to experience a different type of foster care that is developmentally appropriate for them. They would be given the chance to plan their life as they see fit for them because they would have more than just one day to make all of the huge life decisions.

In closing, I humbly ask this committee to pass House Bill 873. It would benefit the foster youth by supporting the notion that we believe in them and that supports do not end at the age of 18. Thank you.





1130 N. NIMITZ HWY, SUITE C-210, HONOLULU, HI 96817
PHONE: (808) 838-7752 TOLL FREE: (866) 636-1644 FAX: (808) 838-1653

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EARL CHAPMAN
Chair

MERVINA CASH KAEO
Vice Chair

PETER LEWIS
Treasurer

SUSAN CHANDLER
Secretary

BETTY CHING

PATRICK K.S.L. YIM

MALIA TAUM-DEENIK

ARLYNNA HOWELL
LIVINGSTON

LAURIE ARIAL TOCHIKI
President / CEO

To: **Committee on Human Services**
Thursday, January 31, 2013
9:30am, Conference Room 329, State Capitol

From: **Tiffany Darragh, HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board (Maui)**
Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative, EPIC 'Ohana

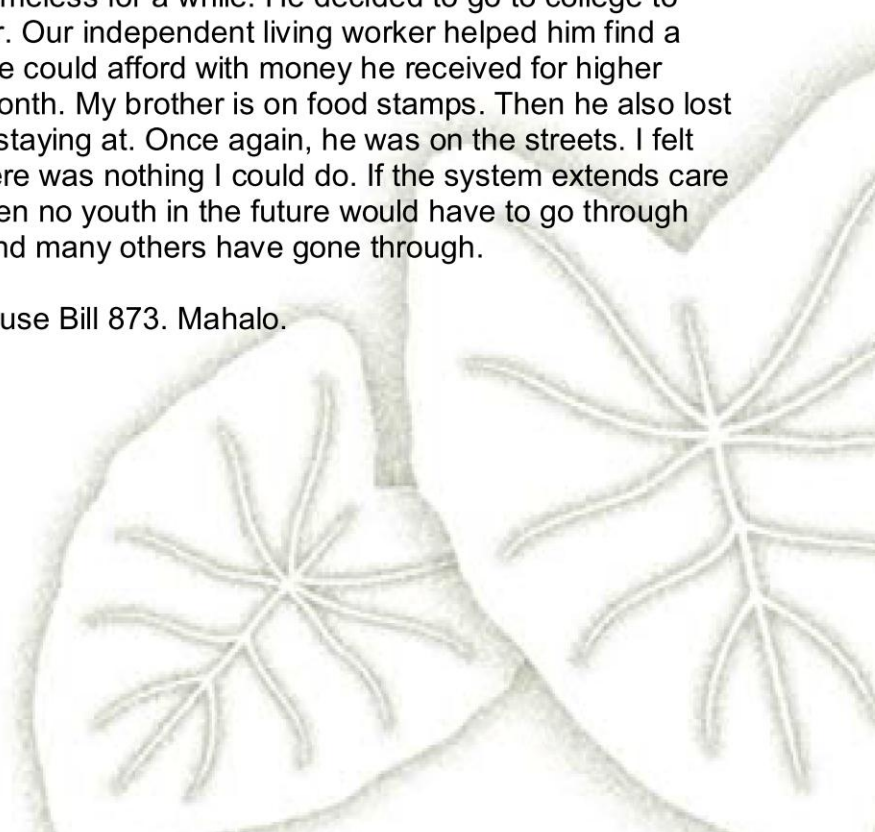
Re: **Testimony in Support of House Bill 873, Relating to the Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care Act**

My name is Tiffany Darragh, I am 19 years old and a member of the HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board on Maui. I recently aged out of foster care on Maui.

I support House Bill 873 to extend voluntary foster care to 21 because I know many youth who have aged out who have absolutely no place to go. They are living at the park or jumping from friend's house to friend's house. If foster care was extended to the age of 21 there would be less worries about where the youth are going with their lives.

When my brother aged out, he was kicked out of my grandparent's house. My brother had never had a job and he didn't do much thinking on how he would find housing. So aging out was a big shock for him. My brother was homeless for a while. He decided to go to college to make his life better. Our independent living worker helped him find a cheap place that he could afford with money he received for higher education every month. My brother is on food stamps. Then he also lost that place he was staying at. Once again, he was on the streets. I felt bad for him but there was nothing I could do. If the system extends care to the age of 21 then no youth in the future would have to go through what my brother and many others have gone through.

Please support House Bill 873. Mahalo.





1130 N. NIMITZ HWY, SUITE C-210, HONOLULU, HI 96817
PHONE: (808) 838-7752 TOLL FREE: (866) 636-1644 FAX: (808) 838-1653

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EARL CHAPMAN
Chair

MERVINA CASH KAEO
Vice Chair

PETER LEWIS
Treasurer

SUSAN CHANDLER
Secretary

BETTY CHING

PATRICK K.S.L. YIM

MALIA TAUM-DEENIK

ARLYNNA HOWELL
LIVINGSTON

LAURIE ARIAL TOCHIKI
President / CEO

To: **Committee on Human Services**
Thursday, January 31, 2013
9:30am, Conference Room 329, State Capitol

From: **Tiffany "Ipo" Lynch Ma'e, HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board (East Hawaii)** Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative, EPIC 'Ohana

Re: **Testimony in Support of House Bill 873, Relating to the Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care Act**

My name is Tiffany "Ipo" Lynch Ma'e and I am the president of the East Hawaii HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board.

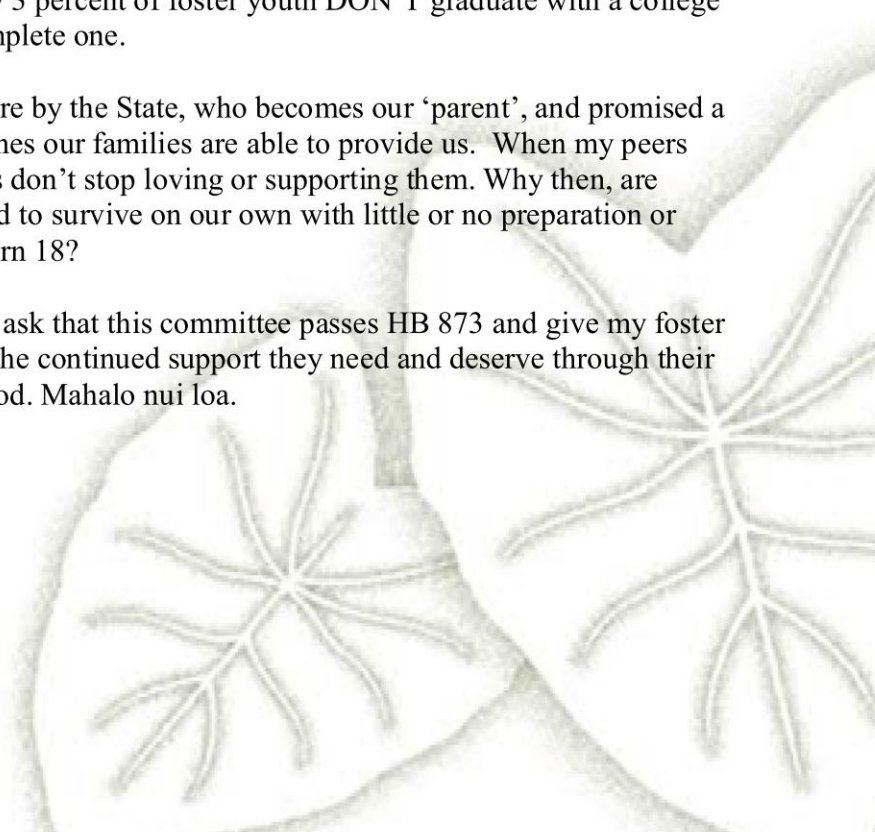
I would like to submit testimony in support of HB 873 and the option it provides for voluntary extended foster care up to age 21.

1 in 5 youth who age out of care become homeless. And only 3 percent of youth who aged out of care graduate with a bachelor's degree. It's a haunting future. The extension of foster care to 21 as an option promotes a healthy transition into adulthood for my foster brothers and sisters in care.

Without a shadow of a doubt, I feel that with the passing of this bill the negative statistics that haunt youth in care will change from negative to positive. Where only 3 percent of foster youth DON'T graduate with a college degree and 97% complete one.

We are taken into care by the State, who becomes our 'parent', and promised a better life than the ones our families are able to provide us. When my peers turn 18, their parents don't stop loving or supporting them. Why then, are foster youth expected to survive on our own with little or no preparation or supports when we turn 18?

In closing, I humbly ask that this committee passes HB 873 and give my foster brothers and sisters the continued support they need and deserve through their transition to adulthood. Mahalo nui loa.



TO: Representative Mele Carroll, Chair
Representative Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair
Committee on Human Services

HEARING: Thursday, January 31, 2013
9:30am
Conference Room 329

FROM: Jeannette Dilly-Leas
Former Foster Youth

RE: HB 873 Related to the Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care Act

Representative Carroll and Kobayashi,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. As House Bill 873 states, young people in foster care are more likely to become homeless and unemployed when they age out of foster care. They lose their support system when they turn 18 because their support system were paid professionals. Due to their circumstances, they have already lost opportunities to mature the way that their peers in biological homes have matured.

I strongly support this Bill because my foster parents took guardianship of me when I was 16. After graduating high school, I went to college. I ended up only attending college for one year. I believe I wasn't mature enough to stay at the time. I found a job and worked for 2 years when I realized that I wanted to attend again. It was so expensive for me to attend, and pay for my rent at the same time. I was on my own and didn't want to burden my guardianship family with my problems. After all, I didn't know them that well anyway. I am now 36 and finally stable enough to go back to college, but it is very hard. I wish that there were more services to help me succeed when I was younger.

This Bill will help emancipated foster youth make it in their life because it will provide them with the support they so desperately need to make a good citizen out of themselves. They are very resilient and strong already, they just need some support along the way.

kobayashi1-Joni

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, January 29, 2013 12:32 PM
To: HUS testimony
Cc: oswalds@oha.org
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB873 on Jan 31, 2013 09:30AM

HB873

Submitted on: 1/29/2013

Testimony for HUS on Jan 31, 2013 09:30AM in Conference Room 329

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
oswald k. stender	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Being involved with a number of organizations dealing with issues confronting foster care children, I strongly support this bill. Many of our children in the foster care system are pushed out when they reach the age of 18. These children immediately become homeless, without any means of support, have no healthcare or a job. They instantly become vagrants on a downhill slide that leads to incarceration and in some cases suicide. After 18 (in fact before they reach 18) society needs to prepare them for adulthood; train and educated them to survive in the adult world and alone. These are wonderful children who need help to survive in the adult world. Mahalo for your support of this bill. Aloha, O.K. Stender, Trustee, Office of Hawaiian Affairs.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

kobayashi1-Joni

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, January 30, 2013 9:01 AM
To: HUS testimony
Cc: mikeandsofia@msn.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB873 on Jan 31, 2013 09:30AM

HB873

Submitted on: 1/30/2013

Testimony for HUS on Jan 31, 2013 09:30AM in Conference Room 329

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
ana sofia krogh-doyle	Individual	Support	No

Comments: To the members of the Senate Human Services committee in regards to the bill relating to the young adult voluntary foster care act. I write to kindly ask your support in extending the foster care age for services. I strongly believe that ages 18 and 21 are very difficult in the lives of many teenagers and if the foster kids can remain in the care of their foster families for this extended period, I believe they will have a much better chance to succeed and have the support they need to engage into college or professional life. I have an adopted brother, and I remember how difficult this age period was for us and how much we needed the support of our parents. Thank you for considering this bill, Ana Sofia Krogh-Doyle

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov

Dennis & Grace Poei
P.O. Box 31204
Honolulu, HI 96820
Email: grace.poei@gmail.com

January 30, 2013

Committee on Human Services

Hearing Date: Thursday, January 31, 2013
Time: 09:30 a.m.
Place: Conference Room 329, State Capitol
Re: HB 873 Relating to the Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care Act

Dear Rep. Carroll and Members of the House Committee on Human Services:

My name is Grace Poei and I thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of House Bill 873 to increase the maximum age for foster care from 18 to 21 to provide additional support to youth who are preparing to leave the foster care system.

As a former foster parent and now adoptive parent of two siblings who came from difficult backgrounds, multiple placements and have suffered much personal loss, my husband and I continue to educate ourselves so that we can provide the care that is necessary to help our children heal. We have benefited from resources of agencies and specially trained persons in various fields of medical, educational, emotional, psychological, neurological health, etc. I believe that without the resources of people in various fields of specialty, our children would not have healed and progressed as much as they have. Although much of the medical, dental and drug costs have been covered by Quest medical insurance, some of the specialized services have been out of pocket expenses for us.

We have also learned that our children have been delayed academically because of, and not limited to, learning disabilities and they have benefitted from private tutors who are trained to work with youth with learning disabilities. As a result of years of tutoring, our children are progressing in school. They still struggle, however with the assistance of caring teachers and tutors, they are progressing and this gives us hope that they will be able to graduate from high school and eventually from college to be able to contribute to our community.

Our children are also learning social skills, and we also try to provide them with opportunities to learn about their culture. Participation in team sports, language school, church, mission trips, hobbies to name a few, are some of the ways that we have seen our children grow and learn to become responsible, compassionate and caring individuals. Again, participation in many of these extra-curricular activities does have a cost. However because of our love for our children, we try to provide what we are able to so that they can heal and grow.

Committee on Human Services

HB 873 Relating to the Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care Act

Page 2

We know that our children do require a longer time to heal and learn because of their difficult backgrounds, and we are committed to being a support to them throughout their adult life. I also see how youth in foster care will need extra support in their transition into their adult life and without the support of the “village” as they say, I do worry that they will make wrong choices with severe consequences that will impact them into their adult life. We as a community also suffer from wrong choices whether it is in the form of crime in the neighborhood, unemployment, dependence on welfare and social services.

We participate with foster and adoptive support groups and try to take advantage of the training provided by Family Programs Hawaii and other organizations to educate ourselves and also be a support to other families. We are so inspired and encouraged by many other foster and adoptive families who are also committed and compassionate in caring for our youth in foster care.

My husband and I know that we cannot change the world, but if we can make a positive difference in the lives of our children who came out of foster care, this will make a huge difference for them, their future families and society.

We urge you to consider the positive impact that HB 873 will provide for many of our foster youth.

Respectfully submitted,

Dennis & Grace Poei

01/30/2013

RE: House Bill 873

RELATING TO THE YOUNG ADULT VOLUNTARY FOSTER CARE ACT

Aloha, Representative Carroll and members of the House Committee on Human Services:

Mahalo for this opportunity to submit my testimony in strong support of House Bill 873 to increase the age for foster care from 18 to 21 years old.

I am a parent of three adult children. I have fostered teens for many years. I have taught in the DOE system at the high school level and have had the experience of working with foster youth in the classroom setting also. I have seen the struggle that these children experience after high school as they stumble along without any safety nets to support them in the form of a loving family. I have received the telephone calls requesting help from my former students that have no family to back them up or be there for them in their times of need. I have had former students that were foster children come to stay with our family as they have no home to call their own upon aging out.

I strongly support House Bill 873 to help to continue the support to our foster youth to help them get a stronger start on their road to independence as adults. The transition from teen life to adult life is a difficult time for most youth that have had the stability and support from their families. Foster youth face a more difficult transition having the added trauma of their past family life and the likelihood of no family support as they make the transition to independency. Adult life becomes a day to day survival mode for them.

Extending the age for foster care to 21 through House Bill 873 would give the foster youth additional time to adjust to adult responsibilities, choices and life in general as they work to become independent, contributing members of our community and society. The additional support will give them a better chance at the successful futures they all dream of and deserve.

Again, I strongly support House Bill 873 to extend the age of foster care to support our keiki to become the leaders of our future.

Mahalo,

Kau'i Keola

Aloha, Representative Carroll and members of the House Committee on Human Services:

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of House Bill 873 to increase the maximum age for foster care from 18 to 21 to provide additional support to youths who are preparing to leave the foster care system.

Those of us who have worked with teenagers in foster care have seen how some of them struggle to find a foothold in the adult world. Everyone faces challenges growing up, but youth who have been in foster care for prolonged periods usually haven't had the stability, family support and positive adult mentoring that is so important to guide young people from childhood to successful adulthood.

The research data documents what all of us have seen, which is that foster youth often need extra help with this critical transition period. We know that foster youths are less likely to have a high school diploma and more likely to have been arrested than their peers. We know they are less likely to be employed, and the girls are at higher risk for becoming pregnant.

In many cases, foster youths have experienced extremely chaotic lives through no fault of their own. A teenager who has spent years moving from house to house within the foster care system likely has spent little time making realistic plans for the future. He or she may not be ready at age 18 to survive in the adult world, but may not have anywhere to go.

House Bill 873 will provide these youths with additional time to organize their lives and prepare for productive adulthood. Extending state support to these youths for just a little longer can help them to get firmly established at work or school, and set them on a positive path.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Kevin Dayton, foster parent

Hilo, Hawaii

TO: Representative Mele Carroll, Chair
Representative Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair
Committee on Human Services

HEARING: Thursday, January 31, 2013
9:30am
Conference Room 329

FROM: Lorie Naftel

RE: HB 873 Related to the Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care Act

Representatives Carroll and Kobayashi,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 873. As a mother and service provider working with youth and families this would be beneficial for foster youth transitioning to adulthood. Statistically, foster youth are already at a disadvantage when they age out of the system. Often, they will lose their support system and may return to dysfunctional families that have no interest in parenting this young adult. Their success rates in adulthood are often challenged resulting in homelessness, unemployment, and serious mental health issues. By increasing the age limit for services to age 21 this would provide the necessary time to build a support system for themselves so they have a chance of succeeding in the future.

As a mother, I don't know how any child at 18 years of age can go out into the world without a plan much less the finances to make it on their own. With the economic climate the way it is it is difficult enough for any young person to make it on their own much less a young person in foster care who has already encountered setbacks which they had no control of. Foster youth aging out may be able to continue their foster placement by learning to pay rent, find employment, seek assistance in applying to school thus building their network of support. Having the network in place will allow them to stumble and perhaps fall but isn't that what happens with all youth?

Foster youth shouldn't be treated any different than our own children. They are already scarred by the label society has given them so shouldn't they have a chance to rid themselves of the stigma and enter the world feeling more confident and prepared. I completely support HB 873 to allow them that chance.

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony in favor of House Bill 873, which would increase the age for children in foster care to age 21.

Young adults who have been in foster care need extra transition time and parental support during young adulthood. By increasing the age that foster youth can leave care, we are insuring more productive adult lives for these children who have had so many extra challenges in their lives. Society will also benefit because statistics show that longer care results in less dependency on the system.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sandra Dale

Foster Parent/Resource Caregiver

January 29, 2013

Testimony in support of House Bill No. 873

Chairman Carroll and Committee Members;

Thank you for this opportunity to express my support of House Bill 873 which proposes to extend the age of foster care services to age twenty-one years for young adults formerly in foster care with the State of Hawaii, Department of Human Services.

At this time I would like to also propose consideration of the age extension be until the twenty-second birthday, rather than the twenty-first birthday.

I am a former Foster Mom and present Birth-Mother to a dependent, disabled, young adult son. I have presently allowed two of his 'Gap kid' homeless, young adult male friends to also live with us....There is a tremendous need for financial, medical and educational public support for this ever growing sector of our community population. Where are these 'Gap Kids' suppose to go? Most end up out on our streets. Homeless, hungry and desperate. I know when I was eighteen years old, I was definitely not ready to completely take care of myself nor "face the world" alone. House Bill 873 is a godsend. I told my own foster daughter that she could stay with me as long as she wanted to. But, I know that's not the truth for so many other foster kids who 'age-out' of the foster care system.

I am a former Private Contract Provider- Mental Health Therapist who specialized in working with the 'Special Needs' kids within the DOE system. My greatest hope is that all "Gap Kids". not just foster kids. will be somehow supported through these first step efforts and the growing public awareness. They need our help!

Thank you for your Earnest Attention To This matter. If you have any further questions please feel free to contact me. God bless President Obama for having extended medical care to these young adults.

Respectfully,

"Rio" Ke'alii Martell, Executive Producer
F.A.P.E. Now! Tv Show (Award-winning &10+ years running)
Cell#: 383-5666
Email: RioMartell@gmail.com