



TO: Senator David Y. Ige, Chair
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair
Committee on Ways and Means

HEARING: Tuesday, March 25, 2014
9:05 am
Conference Room 211

FROM: Mike Curtis, Board Chair – Family Programs Hawaii

RE: HB 1576 - RELATING TO FOSTER CARE SERVICES

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. 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.

What has happened to our foster children is not their fault, but they often pay the highest price for our social ills. More than anyone else in our society, it is our children who pay the price for problems such as adult joblessness, adult drug addiction and adult mental illness. We all recognize that we have a responsibility to these children, and the state of Hawaii has made great progress in recent years in recruiting and training caring, capable foster parents, so these children will have stable, safe homes in times of crisis.

However, State foster board reimbursement rates have not been increased for 22 years and we all know that during the last 22 years, the price of food, diapers, toys, preschool, rent, electricity, school supplies and all of the many, many items that our families purchase every day have soared.

I urge you to support us in our call to provide additional resources to help these families and kids. My belief is that our island communities 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.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in strong support of HB1576.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Curtis