

HB1780

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LATE

TESTIMONY

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND LABOR

Friday, March 14, 2014 10:00 am Conference Room 016 State Capitol

Testimony of Chris Lethem in Strong Opposition of **HB1780**

RELATING TO THE CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT AGENCY.

Dear Chair Clayton Hee and members of JDL,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition of HB 1780.

The CSEA is asking to fill these positions which are really quite unnecessary and in fact, are looking for fill positions that will simply be used to reward friends and family. It is already a bloated agency with too many employees. The head of this agency is only interest in growing his authority and status through bloating this agency. Realize that more revenue at the state level translates into more federal dollar reimbursement.

The CSEA has a problem of incompetent staff and sloppy oversight. Simply adding more staff won't redress these core problems that plague the CSEA. Whenever there is legislation to create more accountability of how child support moneys are being distributed, Gary Kemp will invent absurdly bloated numbers that anyone with a technology background knows to be completely fictitious. For example 3 million dollars to ensure that children who are over 18 are able to receive child support payments directly. The actual cost to implement such functionality would be no more than \$30,000 dollars.

Anyone who has dealt with CSEA soon understands there is a real cult of arrogance and animosity toward parents who have been ordered to pay child support. For decades, parents who have been ordered to pay child support and asked for better accountability. There is no mechanism to assure that child support dollars being spent for the direct benefit of children those monies are intended for.

Let's be clear, the vast majority of parents who are ordered to pay child support are the working poor. They find themselves often leaving Hawai'i because they cannot survive on the monies they have left, after they child support payments are taken from their checks. And when they lose their job CSEA will take months to schedule a hearing meanwhile the child support continues to roll up.

Some of the shady practices that the CSEA employs are changing hearing dates without notice, "In Gross" child support orders, imputing income whenever parents lose their no job when it is no fault of their own. Continuing to collect child support for children who no longer live at the home.

In summary, if you want to improve the CSEA, then what other states are doing. Develop accountability and structures that give parents peace of mind that child support dollars aren't being wasted and are being spent for the direct benefit of the children those dollars are intended.