



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
**OFFICE OF YOUTH SERVICES**  
707 Richards Street, Suite 525  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

February 10, 2016

TO: The Honorable Dee Morikawa, Chair  
House Committee on Human Services

The Honorable Roy M. Takumi, Chair  
House Committee on Education

FROM: Merton Chinen, Acting Executive Director

SUBJECT: **HB 1987, Relating to Youth Gangs**

Hearing: Thursday, February 11, 2016, 9:00 a.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 329

**OFFICE'S POSITION:** OYS supports the intent of the measure but requests that any appropriation not affect the priorities in the Executive Biennium Budget. OYS agrees that many factors can contribute toward an apparent increase in graffiti, violence, substance abuse and criminal activities. Risk factors such as poverty, higher concentrations of immigration, lack of parental guidance and supervision, and social disorganization in the community can negatively impact a community and its ability to respond to an apparent youth gang problem. Careful analysis of the extent and depth of the type of criminal activity, and apparent symptoms of underlying social and economic dynamics is required prior to committing valuable resources toward any initiative related to our State's at-risk and troubled youth. The investment of resources to implement a youth gang response system would cost approximately \$850,000 per year, based on funding that OYS coordinated 10 years ago that supported 2 dedicated positions within OYS, and activities such as maintaining a statewide information system, evaluation and research, intelligence and law enforcement, coordinating a multi-agency task force at the state and county levels, and cost of living adjustment.

OYS supports a coordinated and multi-agency approach to strengthen and improve a community's response in addressing problems affecting a community such as youth violence, including a statewide information system and clearinghouse, outreach to and establishing relationships with high risk youth to help promote education, self-esteem, individual growth and development, leadership, and responsibility. Currently, prevention and intervention efforts are underway through ongoing partnerships with various resources such as the police, Department of Education, Judiciary, community-based agencies, and the University of Hawaii, to address problems such as increased criminal activities that may be more related to ethnic and geographic concerns rather than a strict definition of gang activity.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the measure is to appropriate funds for a coordinated gang response system to include the police departments, the Office of Youth Services, the Department of Education, and the Department of the Attorney General. In addition, this measure appropriates funds to the University of Hawaii to conduct an evaluation of the youth gang response system.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.

**kobayashi2-Jessi**

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 02, 2016 9:04 PM  
**To:** HUS testimony  
**Cc:** sabra@afyhawaii.com  
**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for HB1987 on Feb 11, 2016 09:00AM\*

**HB1987**

Submitted on: 2/2/2016

Testimony for HUS/EDN on Feb 11, 2016 09:00AM in Conference Room 329

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Sabra Della Lucia	Adult Friends for Youth	Oppose	No

Comments:

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## TESTIMONY

### COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Thursday, February 11, 2016

9:00 a.m.; Conference Room 329

Rep. Dee Morikawa, Chair, Human Services Committee Rep. Roy Takumi, Chair, Education Committee; Rep. Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair of Human Services Comm; Rep. Takashi Ohno, Vice Chair of Education Comm.

By: Dennis Arakaki for the Kalihi Community Youth Violence and Gang Prevention and Intervention Task Group.

Aloha Mai Keia Kakahiaka kakou, Chair Morikawa and Chair Takumi, Vice Chairs Kobayashi & Ohno and members of the House Human Services Committee. I stand in strong support of HB 1987.

As the convenor of the Kalihi Community Youth Violence and Gang Prevention and Intervention Task Group, I want to relay our concerns for the growing incidences of youth violence in our communities and neighborhoods. We have seen and heard reports about a proliferation of violence on school campuses, parks, housing complex', fast food establishments and almost all public places that youth gather. These fights, that some refer to as gang fights, occur quickly as young people use the latest communication devices to spread the word which allow them to gather and disperse very quickly.

Kalihi is a melting pot of diverse cultures and ethnicities where many young immigrants and families get their start. The socio-economic factors that are woven throughout the community lead many young people feeling isolated and even excluded from the mainstream cultures as well as academic and economic successes. It's unfortunate but there is de facto segregation by ethnicity and socio-economic factors that are not intentional but create a community of youth faced with alienation caused by lack of opportunity to join the mainstream culture. Thus, the so called gangs are centered on territorial identities and ethnic similarities as their source of pride.

Our Task group makes the following recommendations:

- 1) Delete Section 5. For the evaluation of the Youth Gang Response system. A report was completed previously and the findings are still applicable.
- 2) Delete Section 6. Given the tremendous workload of the department of education, it would be a burden to have the DOE implement the gang prevention and intervention programs. The police departments in each county are proposed to receive resources in Section 3.

I have also attached an addendum to my testimony which lists programs and services that are vital to prevention and intervention of youth violence, delinquency and gang activity.

While the bill is introduced at the request of the Kalihi Youth Violence and Gang Prevention and Intervention Task Group, the signs of organized youth gang activities are island wide and even state wide. Kalihi is like the canaries in the mine and the problems that face our community serve as indicators of more ominous problems we face statewide with our youth. The Task Group members recognize the importance and effectiveness of prevention and intervention strategies that provide programs and activities that keep youth out of the judicial system and the costly alternatives of rehabilitation and treatment.

I urge you to pass this measure and refer it to the Finance Committee with a strong recommendation for funding. Mahalo!

# KALIHI YOUTH GANG PREVENTION & INTERVENTION TASK FORCE

LATE

## GRANTS IN AID

NAME	AGENCY/ORGANIZATION	AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION
School/Neighborhood Counseling Program	ADULT FRIENDS FOR YOUTH	?	<b>GROUP COUNSELING PROGRAM: OAHU</b> -Low income, minority, high-risk youth gang members Central Middle, Farrington, Dole & Kalakaua
Student Anti-Bullying & Violence Convention	ADULT FRIENDS FOR YOUTH	?	Implementation of two annual student Anti Bullying and Violence Convention One targets 4 <sup>th</sup> & 5 <sup>th</sup> graders and other targets 9 <sup>th</sup> graders as well as 7 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup> graders, as requested. Equips students with necessary skills to interrupt the cycle of bullying
11 <sup>th</sup> Annual Aloha Youth Rugby 7's Tourn. & HiroBuilt Fitness	ADULT FRIENDS FOR YOUTH	?	Augments funding for AFY's Rugby Tournament and HiroBuilt Fitness strength & conditioning program Participants are from all over the state and the mainland
Education and Skill Building for Truancy Prevention and Kalihi Palama Juvenile Assessment Center Youth and Families (New service) Collaboration with Kalihi YMCA	SUSANNAH WESLEY COMM. CTR.	\$164,538.	<b>Community Based Outreach</b> -Aggressive outreach and case-finding activities within the community is essential in connecting clients to appropriate services. <b>Intake and Assessment</b> Determine interest and eligibility for services. <b>Referral Services.</b> Determine the services that are needed for successful implementation. Follow -up/After Care services

NAME	AGENCY/ORGANIZATION	AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION
Continued	SWCC		<b>Positive Alternative Activities</b> Develop/strengthen skills & talents -Activities focus on goal setting, career exploration, and post high educational opportunities <b>Educational Development Activities</b> Alternative Secondary School Services Sports, Fitness, and health Community Building & service Youth Leadership
After School Program Expansion for Kalihi Palama Youth	Palama Settlement	\$49,806.	Provide youth in Kalihi and Palama Neighborhoods a safe and nurturing place to learn. Focus on low income, immigrant population, at-risk youth. Develop and improve reading, writing, literacy and math skills.
Kuhio Park Terrace Community Teen Program	Parents And Children Together (PACT)	\$181,428	To provide quality, evidence-based services to at-risk children and youth who live in Kuhio Park Terrace/ Kuhio Homes in Kalihi. Through this proposal, PACT will continue current basic youth center services (educational support, enrichment and recreation, arts and culture, and social/life skill development) and expand services to include a more substantial emphasis on STEM, technology and digital media that will provide opportunities for this population to develop 21 <sup>st</sup> century skills that are essential to future success.
Comprehensive After school services	Parents and Children Together (PACT)	\$ 84,429. (CITY FUNDS)	After school services for underserved youth living in Puuwai Momi, an at-risk community. Target population 200 underserved youth, ages 7-18. Youth at-risk for educational failure and early participation in risky behavior.

<b>HO'OPIKO AFTER SCHOOL PROJECT</b>	<b>YMCA OF HONOLULU</b>		<b>No further information Contact Steksin Diopulos</b>
<b>SAFE SPACES, HEALTHY LIVES</b>	<b>KOKUA KALIHI VALLEY</b>	<b>?</b>	<b>Weekly tennis, bicycling, malama aina, hula dn cultural storytelling activities. Community based approach to building young people's physical health and personal resilience. Nurturing youth as apprentices/leaders and strengthening Kalihi Valley's safety-net for families.</b>





**kobayashi2-Jessi**

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Monday, February 01, 2016 7:38 PM  
**To:** HUS testimony  
**Cc:** breaking-the-silence@hotmail.com  
**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for HB1987 on Feb 11, 2016 09:00AM\*

**HB1987**

Submitted on: 2/1/2016

Testimony for HUS/EDN on Feb 11, 2016 09:00AM in Conference Room 329

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Dara Carlin, M.A.	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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**kobayashi2-Jessi**

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 02, 2016 2:20 AM  
**To:** HUS testimony  
**Cc:** starmer@hawaii.edu  
**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for HB1987 on Feb 11, 2016 09:00AM\*

**HB1987**

Submitted on: 2/2/2016

Testimony for HUS/EDN on Feb 11, 2016 09:00AM in Conference Room 329

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Kaelan	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 02, 2016 9:14 PM  
**To:** HUS testimony  
**Cc:** lisa@afyhawaii.com  
**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for HB1987 on Feb 11, 2016 09:00AM\*

**HB1987**

Submitted on: 2/2/2016

Testimony for HUS/EDN on Feb 11, 2016 09:00AM in Conference Room 329

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Lisa Tamashiro	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

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**kobayashi2-Jessi**

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 10, 2016 10:47 AM  
**To:** HUS testimony  
**Cc:** kumemoto@hawaii.edu  
**Subject:** Submitted testimony for HB1987 on Feb 11, 2016 09:00AM

**HB1987**

Submitted on: 2/10/2016

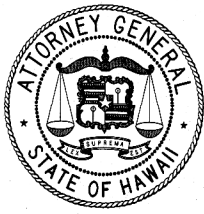
Testimony for HUS/EDN on Feb 11, 2016 09:00AM in Conference Room 329

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Karen Umemoto	Individual	Comments Only	No

Comments: As a researcher who has specialized in youth and gang violence over the past twenty years, I strongly support this bill. Gang activity appears to be increasing while funding for gang intervention has been decreasing. There is a great need for more resources for gang intervention programs along with monitoring and evaluation of these efforts before gang- related problems become too large to handle in a more effective and manageable way. The adage goes, "and ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." This cannot be more true in this case and I urge your support.

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**TESTIMONY OF  
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE, 2016**

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**ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:**  
H.B. NO. 1987, RELATING TO YOUTH GANGS.

**BEFORE THE:**  
HOUSE COMMITTEES ON HUMAN SERVICES AND ON EDUCATION

**LATE**

**DATE:** Thursday, February 11, 2016 **TIME:** 9:00 a.m.

**LOCATION:** State Capitol, Room 329

**TESTIFIER(S):** Douglas S. Chin, Attorney General, or  
Lance M. Goto, Deputy Attorney General

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Chairs Morikawa and Takumi and Members of the Committees:

The Department of the Attorney General appreciates the intent of the bill, but the Department may not be the appropriate agency to oversee a youth gang response system.

The purpose of this bill is to appropriate funds for the development of a youth gang response system coordinated by the Department of the Attorney General that incorporates the critical elements of a statewide law enforcement task force, a statewide intelligence information system and clearinghouse for youth gangs, statewide public and parent education programs, community intervention and prevention programs, youth prevention and intervention services, school-based gang and drug prevention and intervention programs, and an evaluation of the youth gang response system. Funds are appropriated for police departments, the Office of Youth Services, the Department of Education, the Department of the Attorney General, and the University of Hawaii.

The Department has no internal expertise or experience with youth gangs. The Department is not currently involved in juvenile crime enforcement. It does not have current information of the extent of the youth gang problem in the State or the need for the proposed youth gang response system. The county police departments currently are responsible for juvenile crime enforcement and addressing youth gang activity.

While we support the goals of this bill, we respectfully recommend this program would be more likely to succeed if it is housed within an agency or entity that has experience dealing with youth gangs.

