



The Judiciary, State of Hawaii

Testimony to the House Committee on Human Services

Representative Dee Morikawa, Chair

Representative Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair

Tuesday, February 9, 2016, 9:00 a.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 329

by

Rodney A. Maile

Administrative Director of the Courts

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

Bill No. and Title: House Bill No. 2121, Relating to Legal Services.

Purpose: House Bill No. 2121 appropriates moneys from the general fund for civil legal services for low- and moderate-income persons to be purchased by the Judiciary.

Judiciary's Position:

The Judiciary strongly supports House Bill No. 2121 to appropriate funds for civil legal services providers to deliver civil legal services to low- and moderate-income persons. Civil legal services providers extend a lifeline to the most vulnerable in our community. The amount requested will restore funding for civil legal services for low- and moderate-income persons to pre-recession levels through contracts administered by the Judiciary.

House Resolution No. 12, H.D. 1 and Senate Resolution No. 6, S.D. 1 (2015) requested the Hawaii Access to Justice Commission to assemble state and community entities to determine and report which agency or organization should administer funding for civil legal services to low- and moderate-income persons. The resolution requested that the report include a history of state funding of civil legal services, issues historically faced by civil legal service providers, analysis of assigning administration to governmental entities, recommended level of funding and proposed legislation. This bill reflects the recommendations of the Working Group.



House Bill No. 2121, Relating to Legal Services
House Committee on Human Services
Tuesday, February 9, 2016
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The Judiciary concurs with the recommendations of the Working Group that the Judiciary administer the funding, and the Judiciary supports the Working Group's recommendation that the Judiciary be given the discretion to contract the administration of the funding with a nonprofit organization with at least five years' experience in administering grants to providers of civil legal services. Compensation for the administration is recommended to be limited to not more than five per cent of the total amount allocated for these services each fiscal year.

However, the Judiciary can only support these recommendations if such funding is not taken from the Judiciary's general operating funds or other critical needs. As noted in the report, the Judiciary has a significant concern that any funds provided by the Legislature be additional funding and not be made at the expense of the Judiciary's current budget requests and base budget, which would impact operations including contracts for treatment and prevention.

By establishing this process and restoring funding, providers of civil legal services will be able to plan and manage the delivery of much needed legal assistance to low- and moderate-income persons.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

Trever Asam
 Cades Schutte
 1000 Bishop St.
 Honolulu, HI 96813

Committee on Human Services
 House of Representatives
 Rep. Dee Morikawa, Chair
 Rep. Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair

Re: **HB 2121, Relating to Legal Services
 Testimony in Support.**

To the Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

I strongly support the appropriation of funds for the purchase of civil legal services for low and moderate income individuals.

I am a partner at the law firm of Cades Schutte, our law firm's pro bono coordinator, and a director and Vice-President at Volunteer Legal Services Hawaii.

Volunteer Legal Services Hawaii coordinates and facilitates pro bono work by private practice attorneys for low and moderate income individuals in civil matters such as divorce, adoption, family law, and other civil disputes. Appropriations such as those requested here fund the organization's administrative functions, which in turn leverage the efforts of the private bar.

Organizations such as Volunteer Legal Services Hawaii fulfill a critical function within our legal system by ensuring access to the legal system and justice for all. I urge passage of HB 2121 to ensure continued funding for these activities.

Thank you for your support.



Trever Asam



HAWAII

AMERICANS FOR DEMOCRATIC ACTION

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Feb. 4, 2016

TO: Honorable Chair Morikawa & Members of the Human Services Committee

RE: HB2121 Relating to Legal Services
Support

Americans for Democratic Action is a national organization founded in the 1950s by leading supporters of the New Deal and led by Patsy Mink in the 1970s. We are devoted to the promotion of progressive public policies.

We support HB 2121 as it would provide funds for civil legal services for low and moderate income persons to be purchased by the judiciary. Thousands of Hawaii residents need civil legal services that they just cannot afford and that our legal services providers don't have the capacity to provide. Many people who need civil legal services fall into a "gap group" who are ineligible for services with Legal Aid Society of Hawaii or Native Hawaiian Legal Corporation. People need services for guardianships, adoptions, and issues relating to housing, education, and other social services. It is only fair that poor citizens have the right to legal representation in these cases. Therefore please look favorably on this bill.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John Bickel
President

kobayashi2-Jessi

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 04, 2016 8:29 PM
To: HUS testimony
Cc: louis@hawaiidisabilityrights.org
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB2121 on Feb 9, 2016 09:00AM

HB2121

Submitted on: 2/4/2016

Testimony for HUS on Feb 9, 2016 09:00AM in Conference Room 329

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Louis Erteschik	Hawaii Disability Rights Center	Comments Only	No

Comments: Funding for legal services programs is a vital public function. We served on a Task Force convened by the Access To Justice Commission which led to this proposal. It would be very beneficial to dedicate permanent funding to these programs as it provides stability as well as sufficient resources to serve indigent clients.

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

February 5, 2016

Peter W. Olson
Direct Line: (808) 521-9385
Direct Fax: (808) 540-5059
E-mail: polson@cades.com

VIA E-MAIL

Committee on Human Services
House of Representatives
Rep. Dee Morikawa, Chair
Rep. Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair

Re: HB 2121, Relating to Legal Services

To the Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to support HB 2121.

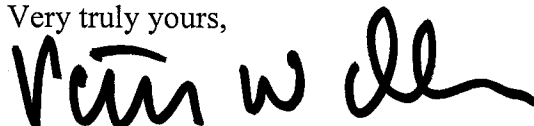
I am a partner in the Cades Schutte law firm, and it was my great honor and privilege to serve as the President of Volunteer Legal Services Hawaii ("VLSH") from 2011 to 2015. I remain on VLSH's board of directors.

Based upon my years of service as officer and director of VLSH, and also as a volunteer attorney providing pro bono services through VLSH, I have witnessed first-hand the tremendously important and good work that VLSH does in coordinating and providing desperately needed civil legal services to Hawaii's low and moderate income populations. Those critical needs would likely go unmet if not for the safety net provided by organizations such as VLSH.

One of the founding principles of our Nation is that all men and women are created equal; and that all of our citizens must be afforded equal rights and equal opportunities. HB 2121 provides much-needed funding to organizations such as VLSH, so that it may continue its important work in making sure there is equal access to our justice system for all of Hawaii's citizens.

I strongly urge the passage of HB 2121. Thank you for your support.

Very truly yours,



Peter W. Olson

C S

lmanageDB:3370394.1

Cades Schutte Building
1000 Bishop Street, Suite 1200
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Tel: 808.521-9200
Fax: 808.521-9210
www.cades.com

Kona Office
75-170 Hualalai Road, Suite B-303
Kailua Kona, Hawaii 96740
Tel: 808.329-5811
Fax: 808.326-1175

Maui Office
444 Hana Highway, Suite 204
Kahului, Hawaii 96732
Tel: 808.871.6016
Fax: 808.871.6017

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DAMON KEY LEONG KUPCHAK HASTERT

A LAW CORPORATION

VIA FAX: 586-6311
DPM

Committee on Human Services
House of Representatives
Rep. Dee Morikawa, Chair
Rep. Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair

Attorneys at Law

1001 Bishop Street, Suite 1600
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813-6432

Telephone: (808) 531-8011
Facsimile: (808) 531-1147
E-Mail: info@hawaiilawyer.com
Website: www.hawaiilawyer.com

RE: Testimony in Support of HR 2121 Relating to Legal Services

To the Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

I strongly support HR 2121 for the appropriation of funds for the purchase of civil legal services for low and moderate income individuals.

I write this letter in both my personal capacity as an attorney and as a Director of Volunteer Legal Services Hawaii (VLSH). Volunteer Legal Services Hawaii coordinates and facilitates pro bono work by private practice attorneys providing services to precisely the members of our community whom this bill is intended to serve: low and moderate income individuals.

Through its volunteer attorneys, VLSH provides in civil legal services in the areas of Family Law (Divorce, Child Custody, Child Support, Guardianship, Paternity, Adoptions), Estate Planning (Wills, Trusts, Powers of Attorney, Advance Healthcare Directives), and District Court Matters (such as Landlord-Tenant, Small Claims, Contract Disputes). In addition, it assists our Veterans in their Disability Claims.

Appropriations such as requested under HB 2121 fund VLSH's administrative functions, which in turn leverage the efforts of the private bar. Organizations such as VLSH meet critical needs within our legal system by ensuring access to the legal system and justice for all. I urge passage of HB 2121 to ensure continued funding for these critical activities.

Thank you for your consideration and support for HB 2121.

Sincerely yours,


David P. McCauley

- Matthew T. Evans
- Daniel D. Hagan
- Conan S. Keith
- Y.R. Deane, Jr.
- Joshua A. Kufano
- Gregory W. Apple
- Leonard R. Kupchak
- Christopher J. Leong
- Kevin C. Leong
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- Mark M. Murakami
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- David B. Reoline
- Douglas C. Smith
- Robert H. Thorne
- Samuel K.M. Wong
- Michael A. Yoshida
- Mahealani M.V. Young

- Of Counsel
- B. Clark Becken
- Paul F. Conner
- C. J. Damon, Jr.
- Timothy Eyerly
- Carl M. Hamer
- Judith A. Schevchok

Charles W. Key
(808) 508-

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TO: Chair Karl Rhoads
Vice Chair Joy San Buenaventura
Members of the Committee

FR: Nanci Kreidman, M.A.
Chief Executive Officer

RE: H.B. 2121

Aloha, and thank you for hearing H.B. 2121 today. It has long been apparent to the organizations providing legal services to the community, and to those needing assistance, that there are scarce resources invested in the delivery of legal services.

Access to justice is a phrase and a real concept that has swept the nation and resides in the hearts of our Hawaii communities. In order to meet or move in the direction of achieving such a lofty goal, there must be a larger investment of funds. When individuals, families, marginalized communities, differently abled, low income people and victims of domestic violence are represented adequately, or provided with necessary information to navigate the legal system, it serves the interests of the community as a whole.

The legal system is not a familiar or user friendly system for people unacquainted with it. Assistance to find redress or remedy helps people regain balance, stability and impetus to become contributing members of the community. It is also, most certainly, good for the courts to have parties with representation. Better outcomes, better management of court calendars and more timely resolution of challenges stands to serve us all.

Funds included in this Bill shall help to restore the loss of funds during the economic crisis and build momentum for efforts intended to really meet community need.

P. O. Box 3198 Honolulu, HI 96801-3198
O'ahu Helpline: 808 531-3771 | Toll-free: 800 690-6200 | Administration: 808 534-0040 | Fax 808 531-7228
dvac@stoptheviolence.org | www.domesticviolenceactioncenter |
facebook.com/domesticviolenceactioncenterhawaii





Legal Financial Center
700 Bishop Street, Suite 900
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

808 Bays 1760
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

tel: (808) 523-0000
fax: (808) 533-0381
e-mail: m.lung@bayslung.com
www.legalhawaii.com

Harvey J. Lung
Linda W. Rose
Lynn L. Holma
Bruce G. Moss
Craig B. Wang
Raymond C. Chan
Myron C. Carroll
John J. Lavarias
Scott M. Love
Dore W. Hoyt
Matthew C. Swanson

Sharon E. Ho
Christine E. Cummings
David E. Moore
Kerwin S. Shinkawa
Joseph S. Tong
John D. Lee, III
Kamala L. Uy
Arlene S. Morgan
Craig E. Allison

Chairman of
the Commission

Deborah A. Berman
A. Berman & Pines
Patterson, Lawler
& Pines LLP

Erson C. Bava
2007-2010

February 5, 2016

Via Fax (808) 586-6311

To the Chair, Vice Chair,
and Members of the Committee:

I strongly support the appropriation of funds for the purchase of civil legal services for low and moderate income individuals.

I am a Partner at Bays Lung Rose & Holma. Although I write this testimony in my personal capacity (and not on behalf of Bays Lung Rose & Holma), my job has given me insights into the great legal needs of lower income citizens of Hawai'i.

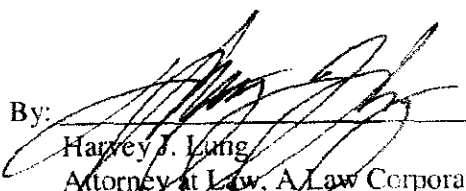
Volunteer Legal Services Hawaii coordinates and facilitates pro bono work by private practice attorneys for low and moderate income individuals in civil matters such as family law, adoption, divorce, and other civil disputes. Appropriations such as those requested here fund the organization's administrative functions, which in turn leverage the efforts of the private bar.

Organizations such as Volunteer Legal Services Hawaii fulfill a critical function within our legal system by ensuring access to the legal system and justice for all. I urge passage of HB 2121 to ensure continued funding for these critical activities.

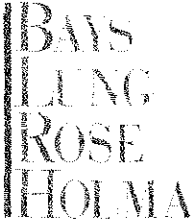
Thank you for your support.

Best regards,

BAYS LUNG ROSE & HOLMA

By: 
Harvey J. Lung
Attorney at Law, A Law Corporation
Its General Partner

HJL:tsm



Attorneys at Law

Legal Financial Group
700 Bishop Street, Suite 200
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

P.O. Box 1750
Honolulu, Hawaii 96806

Tel: (808) 528-0000
Fax: (808) 528-0183
E-mail: info@bayslung.com
www.bayslung.com

Harvey J. Lang
Cynthia H. Rose
Sandra L. Brown
Katie D. Voss
Craig B. Wagner
Kurt B. Engle
Michael C. Carroll
Arlene L. Evans
Susan M. Low
Darrin W. Brock
Marilyn C. Sproull

Attorneys at
Law Corporation

Sharon L. Day
Christopher D. Allen
David R. Voss
Kristin A. Spivey
Jonathan J. Lee
John D. Berry III
Christopher Lee
Michael R. Kimm
Gina T. Allison

Of Counsel
A. Reginald Lee
Philip J. Decker
John W. Campbell

Esq., J. Duff
008-2011

February 5, 2016

Via Fax (808) 586-6311

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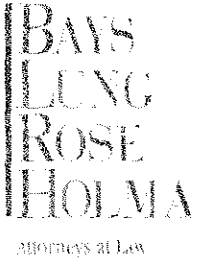
Best regards,

BAYS LUNG ROSE & HOLMA

By:

Michael C. Carroll
Attorney at Law, A Law Corporation
Its General Partner

MCC:tsm



Popo Fernald Center
700 Kalia Street, Suite 900
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

PO Box 18
Honolulu, Hawaii 96802

Tel: (808) 525-0000
Fax: (808) 525-0184
Email: info@legallhawaii.com
www.legallhawaii.com

Francis J. Long
Cassid E. Rose
Katie L. Holma
Bruce D. Yoon
Craig J. Yagoubo
Ryan D. Fiedt
Daniel C. Carroll
Adrian L. Lumbiaz
Sarah A. Lewis
Curt W. Hawk
Matthew C. Shimamura

Stephen J. Hise
Gloria D. Chinnick
David R. Moore
Kerstin A. Shikawa
Jandra S. Kosi
John D. Ferns III
Donald C. Fry
Marion S. Kinger
Amri E. Alphon

Clyde A. Wolf
J. Bernard Ellis
Philip L. DeLoach
Jerrick Campbell

Lynn S. Fisher
(708) 2007

February 5, 2016

Via Fax (808) 586-6311

To the Chair, Vice Chair,
and Members of the Committee:

I strongly support the appropriation of funds for the purchase of civil legal services for low and moderate income individuals.

I am a Partner at Bays Lung Rose & Holma and a Director and President of Volunteer Legal Services Hawaii. Although I write this testimony in my personal capacity (and not on behalf of Bays Lung Rose & Holma), my job has given me insights into the great legal needs of lower income citizens of Hawai'i.

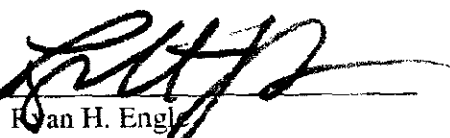
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Thank you for your support.

Best regards,

BAYS LUNG ROSE & HOLMA

By: 
Ivan H. Engle
Attorney at Law, A Law Corporation
Its General Partner

RHE:tsm



Hupa Prasad Foster
700 Bishop Street, Suite 900
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

111 Bay View
Honolulu, Hawaii 96806

Tel: (808) 525-0000
Fax: (808) 533-4184
Email: mail@legalrose.com
www.legalrose.com

Barry J. Lung
Crystal E. Rose
Karin L. Holma
George D. Voss
Craig P. Wagnell
Kurt B. Brune
Christopher J. Frost
Alicia L. Garcia
Susan M. Law
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Grant J. Wilson
D'Annunzio
A. Bernardini
Philip L. Deane
John K. Campbell

Jason A. Bahr
Craig Quinn

February 5, 2016

Via Fax (808) 586-6311

To the Chair, Vice Chair,
and Members of the Committee:

I support the appropriation of funds for the purchase of civil legal services for low and moderate income individuals.

I am a Partner at Bays Lung Rose & Holma. Although I write this testimony in my personal capacity (and not on behalf of Bays Lung Rose & Holma), my job has given me insights into the difficulties surrounding access to legal services for the lower income citizens of Hawai'i.

Volunteer Legal Services Hawaii coordinates and facilitates pro bono work by private practice attorneys for low and moderate income individuals in civil matters such as family law, adoption, divorce, and other civil disputes. Appropriations such as those requested here fund the organization's administrative functions, which in turn leverage the efforts of the private bar.

Organizations such as Volunteer Legal Services Hawaii fulfill a critical function within our legal system by ensuring access to the legal system and justice for all. I urge passage of HB 2121 to ensure continued funding for these critical activities.

Thank you for your support.

Best regards,

BAYS LUNG ROSE & HOLMA

By: 

Sarah M. Love
Attorney at Law, A Law Corporation
Its General Partner

SML:tsm

TESTIMONY OF THOMAS D. FARRELL
Regarding House Bill 2121 Relating to Legal Services

Committee on Human Services
Rep. Dee Morikawa, Chair

Tuesday, February 9, 2016, 9:00 a.m.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

Good morning Representative Morikawa and members of the Committee:

I strongly support this bill.

I run a small law firm concentrating in Family Law. All of us are volunteer attorneys with Volunteer Legal Services Hawaii (VLSH), and I serve on its board. We see, first hand, the need for civil legal services to be provided to those who would otherwise have no access to justice. This bill will not only help fund VLSH, but it will provide financial support to the Legal Aid Society and other partners in the legal services community.

Indulge me, if you will, and let me take a moment to tell you about VLSH.

Just this past weekend, I handled an adoption for a woman who has been in casual possession of a seven year old girl for the past five years. The child's mother has been in and out of prison, and the father is unknown. My client needs to have the legal authority to act as a parent, and also to make sure that mom doesn't demand the return of this child in a drug induced moment. The paperwork for an adoption is daunting, even for lawyers. At \$300/hour, this woman---who makes about \$1,500/month---would never be able to afford to hire an attorney. She's getting her adoption done through VLSH. And, by the way, the taxpayers of Hawaii will benefit from this too. This child will remain in a safe and loving home, and will not be one of those who are in our CPS system and in foster care at taxpayer expense.

That's just one example of why civil legal services are vital, but they aren't free. My time may be free, but it takes an organization like VLSH to screen the cases, recruit the attorney volunteers, and match clients to lawyers. VLSH complements the work of the Legal Aid Society, which does not rely on volunteers, but also is an important partner in helping to provide access to justice. In fact, 40% of VLSH intakes are cases that Legal Aid was not able to accept.

VLSH has an annual budget of around \$600,000 year. We do fundraising, we get private grants, we get some of the interest on lawyers' trust accounts, and we get support from the bar. But for

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also handling national security cases involving revocation or denial of security clearances

700 Bishop Street, Suite 2000, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
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*Certified by the National Board of Trial Advocacy. The Supreme Court of Hawaii grants Hawaii certification only to lawyers in good standing who have successfully completed a specialty program accredited by the American Bar Association.

Testimony of Thomas D. Farrell
HB 2121
February 9, 2016
page 2

the last several years, we haven't been able to make it without a GIA. That GIA was supposed to be a temporary measure. We have lurched from year to year, struggling to keep our doors open.

Last year, the Legislature created a task force on funding civil legal services, and their ultimate recommendation was that the best answer was to create a line item in JUD 100. This bill makes the appropriation and places it in the Judiciary. That will create a stable base of funding.

This is a modest investment that will do great good. Thank you for the opportunity to testify this morning.



Law Office of
Rebecca A. Copeland
LLC

February 8, 2016

Chair Dee Morikawa
Vice Chair Bertrand Kobayashi
Committee on Human Services,
House of Representatives
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, HI

***House Bill 2121, Relating to Legal Services
Testifying in STRONG SUPPORT***

Dear Chair Morikawa, Vice Chair Kobayashi and Committee Members:

I write in strong support of HB2121 RELATING TO LEGAL SERVICES, a bill being considered by this Committee on Tuesday February 9, 2016. As you know, this bill would appropriate monies from the general fund for civil legal services for low- to moderate-income persons to be purchased by the judiciary.

I am a local attorney. As a member of the Hawaii State Bar Association, I am in my second term on the Board of Directors for the HSBA as an Oahu Director. I also serve as a Board Member on the City and County of Honolulu's Zoning Board of Appeals, a position I have held for several years. I am also a Board Member on the Hawaii LGBT Legacy Foundation and Equality Hawaii. My testimony is not submitted in my official capacity for any of the above organizations, but in my personal capacity.

As a member of the Hawaii bar, and a member of the Access to Justice Commission's Committee on Increasing Pro Bono Legal Services, I have helped create a new program to match low to moderate income pro se appellate litigants with attorneys willing to represent them on a pro bono basis. The Appellate Pro Bono Pilot Project was approved by the Hawaii Supreme Court last year, and accepted its first client in December 2015. The partners for the Pilot Project are the HSBA Appellate Section and Volunteer Legal Services of Hawaii. The Pilot Project fills an area where there was a need for pro bono attorney assistance that was not previously being served.

The partnership with Volunteer Legal Services of Hawaii is instrumental to the success of the program, however, because VLSH maintains oversight of the cases that are handled through the Pilot Project, it must allocate its own resources to the Pilot Project even though there is not a

separate funding mechanism to compensate VLSH for this service. Also, because this is a Pilot Project, there are many cases that will not be eligible for the program – and many pro se litigants who will nevertheless need legal assistance on appeal. As this committee is aware, there are many individuals at all stages of court cases that cannot afford market attorney rates, and who are denied justice merely because they cannot do so.

HB2121 is important because it will provide funding to assist a growing population in our state of individuals who need and deserve to access the courts, but cannot afford to hire an attorney. Mahalo for your consideration of HB2121.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca A. Copeland". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rebecca A. Copeland



**VOLUNTEER LEGAL
SERVICES HAWAII**

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB2121: RELATING TO LEGAL SERVICES

**Committee on Human Services
Tuesday, February 9, 2016 at 9:00 a.m.
Conference Room 329**

CHAIR MORIKAWA, VICE CHAIR KOBAYASHI, AND MEMBERS OF THE HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE:

Volunteer Legal Services Hawaii strongly supports passage of H.B. 2121 which appropriates funds for civil legal services to low and moderate income individuals in our state.

I am the Executive Director of Volunteer Legal Services Hawaii (“Volunteer Legal”). I also serve as a Commissioner on the Access to Justice Commission, and am a member of the Hawaii State Bar Association. Volunteer Legal has been providing civil legal services to the low- and moderate-income community in the State of Hawaii for 35 years. It does so in partnership with volunteer attorneys who donate their personal time and professional skills to ensure that the people who live in poverty or near poverty have meaningful access to legal services.

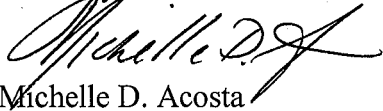
Each day, Volunteer Legal staff speak with individuals and families experiencing a legal crisis affecting very basic aspects of their lives: housing, financial stability, ability to maintain relationships with their children, and the ability to care for a vulnerable family member. Those who qualify for our services have limited personal resources, and often times face social barriers. Through a variety of direct services: outreach, education, legal advice and counseling, guidance for self-representation, and full-representation, staff and volunteer attorneys are able to provide meaningful assistance to those with civil legal needs.

Funding for civil legal aid services is an investment that not only provides our community with an important resource, but saves our state money in the long run. Civil legal aid, when used effectively can help reduce dependency on costly social services. For example, a single mother is able to move out of a shelter and afford an apartment after receiving assistance in enforcing her child support order, or when a child avoids entering the foster care system after his grandfather receives help establishing legal guardianship.

Unstable funding undermines the ability of civil legal service programs like Volunteer Legal to effectively develop, maintain, and deliver services. Dedicated funds through an appropriation for civil legal services for the low and moderate income community ensures that programming and services remain a reliable resource for those who need it the most.

On behalf of Volunteer Legal Services Hawaii and those we serve, I respectfully request your support of H.B. 2121. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michelle D. Acosta". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Michelle D. Acosta
Executive Director



**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

Jodi S. Yamamoto, Esq.
President, Board of Directors

M. Nalani Fujimori Kaina, Esq.
Executive Director

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB2121 – RELATING TO LEGAL SERVICES.

Committee on Human Services - Room 329

Representative Dee Morikawa, Chair
Representative Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice-Chair

February 9, 2016 at 9:00 a.m.

The Legal Aid Society of Hawaii submits strong testimony in support of HB2121 – Relating to Legal Services.

This bill would go to restoring general revenue funding for civil legal services to 2008 levels. Civil legal services are critical in that they can provide real world solutions to help families in crisis find stability and hope. The recommendation for this funding was the result of an off-session working group established by HR12 which Requesting the Hawaii Access to Justice Commission to Assemble Various State and Community Entities to Determine which Agency or Organization should Administer Funding for Civil Legal Services to the Low- and Moderate-Income.

The Legal Aid Society of Hawaii has provided civil legal services to the community for over 65 years. Through our ten offices which include one on each of the major Hawaiian islands, our staff assist residents of Hawaii to navigate and solve basic issues which require legal interventions. In 2015, our staff of 100 closed over 8,500 cases and opened almost 9,800 in legal areas ranging from family, housing, consumer, foreclosure, public benefits, elder law, homelessness, immigration, language access, and child welfare.

As members of the Committee of Human Services, we ask for your support on this measure as it will help to increase our community's ability to bring civil legal services to those most in need.

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 2015 provided legal assistance to over 8,500 Hawaii 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.

kobayashi2-Jessi

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, February 03, 2016 4:07 PM
To: HUS testimony
Cc: breaking-the-silence@hotmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB2121 on Feb 9, 2016 09:00AM*

HB2121

Submitted on: 2/3/2016

Testimony for HUS on Feb 9, 2016 09:00AM in Conference Room 329

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

Comments:

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kobayashi2-Jessi

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 04, 2016 7:41 PM
To: HUS testimony
Cc: memarkley1@me.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB2121 on Feb 9, 2016 09:00AM

HB2121

Submitted on: 2/4/2016

Testimony for HUS on Feb 9, 2016 09:00AM in Conference Room 329

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Maryellen Markley	Individual	Support	No

Comments: As a long-time Disability Advocate for Legal Aid, I could share with you many, many stories from my disabled clients about how very hard it is when they cannot work due to a disability, and without earnings, they cannot afford to hire an attorney to help get services. It is a vicious cycle, and Legal Aid, Volunteer Legal Services of Hawaii and related organizations are their only hope of finding a way to survive. You all know this already. What you may not know was how hard it was working for a nonprofit where every year you were faced with the very real possibility of losing your job due to unstable funding. That, more than almost anything else I believe, contributed to our high turnover rate. This bill will mean stable funding for these critical agencies that mean everything to those in need. Very respectfully, please support this bill. It will be a wonderful legacy of meaningful legislation that will deeply affect the lives of thousands of our most vulnerable people in Hawaii year after year. Thank you very sincerely, Dr. Maryellen Markley

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.

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To the Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

I strongly support the appropriation of funds for the purchase of civil legal services for low and moderate income individuals.

I am a Professor of Law at the University of Hawai`i William S. Richardson School of Law. Although I write this testimony in my personal capacity (and not on behalf of the Law School or University), my job has given me insights in to the great legal needs of lower income citizens of Hawai`i.

Volunteer Legal Services Hawaii coordinates and facilitates pro bono work by private practice attorneys for low and moderate income individuals in civil matters such as family law, adoption, divorce, and other civil disputes. Appropriations such as those requested here fun the organization's administrative functions, which in turn leverage the efforts of the private bar.

Organizations such as Volunteer Legal Services Hawaii fulfill a critical function within our legal system by ensuring access to the legal system and justice for all. I urge passage of HB 2121 to ensure continued funding for these critical activities.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

/s/ Justin D. Levinson

To the Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

I strongly support the appropriation of funds for the purchase of civil legal services for low and moderate income individuals.

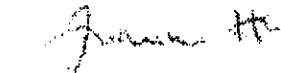
I am a Partner at Gilford Sato & Associates CPAs, Inc. and also the treasurer of Volunteer Legal Services Hawaii for the past 15 years. Although I write this testimony in my personal capacity (and not on behalf of the firm), my job has given me insights in to the great legal needs of lower income citizens of Hawaii.

Volunteer Legal Services Hawaii coordinates and facilitates pro bono work by private practice attorneys for low and moderate income individuals in civil matters such as family law, adoption, divorce, and other civil disputes. Appropriations such as those requested here fund the organization's administrative functions, which in turn leverage the efforts of the private bar.

Organizations such as Volunteer Legal Services Hawaii fulfill a critical function within our legal system by ensuring access to the legal system and justice for all. Urge passage of HB 2121 to ensure continued funding for these critical activities.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,


Joanne Hoe

Edward Thompson, III

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, February 08, 2016 6:57 PM
To: HUS testimony
Cc: blawaiianlvr@icloud.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB2121 on Feb 9, 2016 09:00AM*



HB2121

Submitted on: 2/8/2016

Testimony for HUS on Feb 9, 2016 09:00AM in Conference Room 329

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
De MONT R. D. CONNER	Ho'omana Pono, LLC.	Support	No

Comments:

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Badger Arakaki

A LIMITED LIABILITY LAW COMPANY

Via Facsimile 808-586-6311



Scott C. Arakaki
Robert E. Badger
Lawrence R. Cohen
David R. Squeri
Joanne S.C. Sheng

Of-counsel:
Mario R. Ramil

TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AND COMMERCE

TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

Regular Session of 2016
Tuesday, February 9, 2016
9:00 a.m.

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 2121 – RELATING TO LEGAL SERVICES

TO THE HONORABLE DEE MORIKAWA, CHAIR, AND MEMBERS OF THE
COMMITTEE:

My name is Scott C. Arakaki, Esq. I have been a Hawaii licensed lawyer for over 20 years, am a volunteer with Volunteer Legal Services Hawaii (“VLSH”), and support House Bill 2121 that will provide financial support to Judiciary to provide civil legal services for low- and moderate-income persons.

Homelessness is one of the biggest issues facing the State of Hawaii today. As you know, homelessness places a significant burden on those who are homeless as well as the government entities, non-profit groups, and private parties, who are trying to help address this growing issue. While there appears to be no easy answers to solve homelessness, VLSH tries to do its part with the assistance of its professional and energetic Executive Officer and staff and its many volunteer Hawaii attorneys and Board of Directors, by providing legal services and/or other legal-related assistance to help those qualified tenants and their family stay in their rental units and/or get back their rent or security deposit. Given that the tenant’s funds and the availability of rentals are limited, VLSH serves an important legal role to those tenants who would never be able to afford private legal assistance and, in turn, does its part to combat homelessness by keeping Hawaii tenants in homes when justice and the law so require.

Testimony on House Bill No. 2121
Tuesday, February 9, 2016
Page 2

In addition to providing legal representation, VLSH provides educational opportunities for Hawaii attorneys to help low- and moderate-income persons as well as for their potential clients themselves. For example, within my law practice, I have a lot of landlord-tenant experience and have agreed to provide a seminar for the VLSH volunteer attorneys, who may practice in other areas of law, about Hawaii's Residential Landlord-Tenant Code so they may be better volunteers for VLSH and its clients.

Also, VLSH organizes and supplies handout materials for residents at transitional shelters as part of their program to transition and stay in private rentals. For years, I have provided a number of seminars to transitional shelter residents about the Landlord-Tenant Code, the tenant's and the landlord's rights and duties, and some practice pointers from the legal perspective. I hope that these seminars are informative and, in my small way, assist these residents to help themselves transition from transitional shelters to private rentals or better housing options.

For the reasons discussed in this testimony, I would strongly support the proposed funding in House Bill 2121 to provide civil legal services for low- and moderate-income persons. I believe that House Bill 2121 can do much good for organizations, like VLSH and others, who in turn will provide important legal services for the many people in need in the State of Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on House Bill 2121.