

LATE



February 2, 2016

To: Senator Michelle Kidani, Chair; Senator Breene Harimoto, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Education

healthy
mothers
healthy
babies

From: Lisa Kimura, Executive Director, Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies

Re: Testimony in Support of S.B. 2232

COALITION
OF HAWAII

Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Harimoto, and members of the Senate Committee on Education:

Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition of Hawaii (HMHB) supports S.B. 2232, which establishes a sexual abuse prevention instructional program for public schools, sets guidelines for instruction, and is modeled after Erin's Law. Sexual abuse remains a serious and ongoing threat to the safety, health and well-being of children and young people in the State of Hawaii. Nationally, 1 in 6 women and 1 in 33 men have been the victim of sexual assault in their lifetimes. Of these, 44% were under the age of 18 at the time of the assault.

Given the high incidence of sexual abuse perpetrated against minors, it is important that children and young people be taught the knowledge and skills necessary to protect themselves against sexual violence and obtain help to end abuse as quickly as possible. Moreover, it is critical that those who interact the most with children and young people, including parents, other guardians, educators and school staff, receive sufficient training to understand issues of sexual violence and respond appropriately.

Despite the combined efforts of the State Department of Education (DOE), teachers from both public and private schools, and the University of Hawaii's Teacher Institute of Education, implementation of age-appropriate, evidence-based sexual abuse prevention education curricula is reportedly not consistent system-wide, and resources for the provision of training and education are limited.

Consequently, students in Hawaii may not receive regular, consistent child abuse prevention education, nor are parents informed about child abuse topics. In addition, many school teachers and staff do not receive sufficient training on talking to students about child sexual abuse prevention, the effects of sexual abuse on children, handling sexual abuse disclosures, and mandated reporting.

Laws requiring that public school systems implement a program of regular, consistent sexual abuse prevention education for students, teacher and staff training, and parental involvement, have passed in 26 states and Guam. These laws and the programs they would create represent a national trend in safety, health and well-being education and are collectively referred to as "Erin's Law" after an Illinois survivor of child sexual abuse who has led the national movement. S.B. 2232 would be a positive step towards ensuring system-wide sexual abuse prevention education, by requiring all public schools to establish a program for students in pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade.



TO: Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Harimoto, and Members of the Senate Committee on Education

FROM: Ryan Kusumoto, President & CEO of Parents And Children Together (PACT)

DATE/LOCATION: February 3, 2016; 1:15 p.m., Conference Room 229

RE: TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB 2232 – RELATING TO EDUCATION

My name is Ryan Kusumoto. I am the President & CEO of Parents And Children Together.

I strongly urge you to support SB 2232 – Relating to Education. Sadly, 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will be the victim of child sexual abuse by their 18th birthday. There are more than 42 million survivors of child sexual abuse in the United States. This is a matter that is often kept silent and as a result is left unaddressed (most people do not even realize this is a significant issue or that they are a victim). In almost every case, the only witnesses to this crime are the perpetrator and the victim. Perpetrators often tell the child this is a secret and no one will believe them. Children rarely report abuse and are meant to feel that the abuse was their fault. Most victims never tell anyone until several years after the abuse, if they ever tell at all.

The children who endure this traumatic sexual abuse have a long list of adverse issues. These issues include:

- Poor academic performance
- Dropping out of high school
- Self mutilation
- Persistent post traumatic stress disorder
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Increased risk for abuse in subsequent relationships
- Difficulty in forming meaningful and trusting relationships
- Cognitive deficits
- Depression
- Dissociative symptoms
- Suicide

It is critical to identify these child victims early so that support can be put in place to significantly reduce the likelihood of the long-term adverse issues and costs of the above listed items.

We support Erin's Law because it recommends:

- Child sexual abuse prevention education should be taught in grades as early as pre-Kindergarten through high school.
- Giving children the tools to speak up and seek help.
- Providing intentional and age-appropriate programming in schools regarding child sexual abuse.
- Training school staff and faculty regarding child sexual abuse prevention and the handling of sexual abuse disclosures.

If we do not take strong measures to address these matters that impact child sexual abuse, it will continue

to grow and will only negatively impact Hawai'i's future, people, keiki, communities, culture, economy, reputation, commerce, and industries. This Bill will also place emphasis on those who take advantage of the most vulnerable, as they are the culprits and drivers of this criminal enterprise. This is cutting into the fabric of the Aloha State and is not acceptable here in Hawai'i. We support the passing of this bill.

Founded in 1968, Parents And Children Together (PACT) is one of Hawaii's not-for-profit organizations providing a wide array of innovative and educational social services to families in need. Assisting more than 18,000 people across the state annually, PACT helps families identify, address and successfully resolve challenges through its 16 programs. Among its services are: early education programs, domestic violence prevention and intervention programs, child abuse prevention and intervention programs, child and adolescent behavioral health programs, and community building programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **strong support of SB 2232**, please contact me at (808) 847-3285 or rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org if you have any questions.

LATE

From:
To:
Cc:
Subject: *Submitted testimony for SB2232 on Feb 3, 2016 13:15PM*
Date: Wednesday, February 03, 2016 8:21:53 AM

SB2232

Submitted on: 2/3/2016

Testimony for EDU on Feb 3, 2016 13:15PM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dylan Armstrong	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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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