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STATE
COMMISSION
ON THE
STATUS
OF
WOMEN



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Executive Director
Catherine Betts, JD

Email:
Catherine.a.betts@hawaii.gov
Visit us at:
humanservices.hawaii.gov
/hscsw/

235 S. Beretania #407
Honolulu, HI 96813
Phone: 808-586-5758
FAX: 808-586-5756

February 22, 2016

To: Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair
Senator Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor
Senator Jill N. Tokuda, Chair
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

From: Cathy Betts, Executive Director
Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women

Re: Testimony in Support, SB 2321, SD1, Relating to Domestic Violence

The Commission supports SB 2321, SD1, which would require any state, city, or county agency that employs personnel whose job duties require or may require intervention in a domestic abuse situation to have a minimum of 8 hours of training regarding domestic abuse intervention. The Commission continues to support additional hours of training, noting that the bill's original language specified 15 hours.

Comprehensive, ongoing, and culturally competent training regarding domestic violence is crucial for anyone working with victims, survivors, or family members involved in domestic violence. When adequate training is not received, systemic and institutionalized ramifications are felt—including victims being forced to file for a restraining order in order to retain custody of children (identified as not a best practice, but still occurring), limited english proficiency (LEP) victims not being offered interpreter services because a responding officer doesn't identify the person as LEP, or children being removed from a protective parent because a first responder identifies the victim as the abuser. These are all egregious results that stem from a lack of training about the complexities and nuances of domestic violence. While agencies may feel that this request is cumbersome and unnecessary, all anecdotal and statistical evidence reflects the high need for specialized training for any first responder. When a positive, helpful, and unbiased first responder interacts with a victim of domestic violence, the first responder has an immediate impact—one that can mean the difference between life and death.

The Honolulu City Council passed resolution 14-251, which created the Honolulu County Domestic Violence Response Task Force. I sat as Co-Chair of that Task Force and helped to develop preliminary and final recommendations through that process. The preliminary and final recommendations of that community wide task force included extensive, ongoing and culturally competent training for all intervenors in domestic violence. This has been an ongoing recommendation from many victim service providers for the better part of the last three decades. It's time that this crucial step in making our community safer is implemented. Training staff for 8 hours is a small amount of time to commit in order to ensure all victims are treated with dignity and respect. Thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of this measure.



February 23, 2016

To: Hawaii State Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor, and the
Committee on Ways and Means
Hearing Date/Time: Wednesday, February 24, 2016 (10:00 a.m.)
Place: Hawaii State Capitol, Rm. 211
Re: Testimony of American Association of University Women –
Hawaii in **support of S.B. 2321 HD1**, relating to domestic
violence training

Dear Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran (Chair), Senator Maile S.L. Shimabukuro (Vice Chair), Senator Jill N. Tokuda (Chair), Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, and Members of the Committees,

I am grateful for this opportunity to testify in **strong support of S.B. 2321 HD1** requiring a minimum of eight hours of domestic violence specific education for first responders. Given the costs of not intervening in domestic violence, minimal expenditures are required in agency dollars.

My testimony is on behalf of the approximately 400 members of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) in Hawaii, who list gender-based violence as an important current concern. My testimony is informed by many years of work in the field of domestic violence, and research conducted with survivors of intimate partner violence. In addition, when I lived in New Zealand, I managed a 24-hour, 7-days/week domestic violence hotline, and I also trained hotline Advocates to respond skillfully and empathetically to survivors of violence. I provided extensive education to Advocates for Women, and also worked with police, courts, and other service agencies on behalf of survivors.

Based on these experiences, I argue that passage of S.B. 2321 HD1 is vitally important, with great potential to improve assistance offered to survivors of violence in Hawaii. It is essential to mandate education for “state and county employees who act as interveners in domestic violence situations, including but not limited to judges, firefighters, emergency medical services personnel, and law enforcement” (S.B. 2321, lines 14-17). I have taught at the University of Hawaii – Manoa for six years, and have heard many horror stories from students about lack of assistance from law enforcement. This is inexcusable, and this situation will only change with education and police instruction from higher levels to deal appropriately with survivors of domestic violence.

In conclusion, passage of S.B. 2321 HD 1 is an important step in improving *uniform, empathetic, and responsive* service provision from state and county employees for survivors of domestic violence.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely
Susan J. Wurtzburg, Ph.D.
Policy Chair



HAWAII STATE COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

February 22, 2016

To: Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith- Agaran, Chair
Senator Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Jill N. Tokuda, Chair
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair

From: Michelle Rocca, Training and Technical Assistance Director
Hawaii State Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Re: Testimony in Support of SB 2321, SD1

Good morning Chair Keith-Agaran, Chari Tokuda, Vice Chair Shimabukuo, Vice Chair Dela Cruz, and members of the committee. On behalf of the Hawaii State Coalition Against Domestic Violence we thank you for the opportunity to share our testimony in **support of SB 2321, SD 1** relating to domestic violence training.

Domestic violence is a serious and pervasive issue in our community. Having a consistent, well informed, and evidence based response from the professionals across the various systems that intersect with survivors is imperative to achieve a desirable outcome. Judges, firefighters, emergency medical services personnel, and law enforcement are some of the systems that a victim/survivor may cross paths with in her journey to seek justice and safety from a violent partner. This measure will ensure that the professionals in these fields are trained with a minimum of fifteen hours of education to best meet the needs of a survivor.

Domestic violence is a dangerous and often lethal crime. Research strongly indicates that domestic violence is one of, if not the most predominant social issues in our State. According to the Bureau of Justice, one third of all murdered females are killed by their current or former intimate partners. A coordinated community response is the best tool we have to combat domestic violence as a society, and a coordinated community begins with adequate training and education. We believe that fifteen hours of training is manageable for the departments to implement and will help alleviate ambiguity and confusion a responder may have when determining the best means possible to meet the needs of a domestic abuse victim.

Equipping our systems with the knowledge and tools that they need to adequately respond to these complex and often dangerous scenarios improves the experience for the victims, and assists professionals with meeting the responsibilities of their duties in a confident and competent manner.

Thank you for your consideration and for the opportunity to provide testimony on this matter.



February 25, 2016

To: Senator Gilbert Keith Agaran, Chair
Senator Maile Shimabukuro, Vice Chair and
Members of the Committee on Judiciary and Labor

To: Senator Jill Tokuda, Chair
Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Vice Chair and
Members of the Committee on Ways and Means

From: Jeanne Y. Ohta, Co-Chair

RE: SB 2321 SD1 Relating to Domestic Violence
Hearing: Wednesday, February 24, 2016, 10:00 a.m., Room 211

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus writes in support of SB 2321 SD1 Relating to Domestic Violence. However, we prefer the original version of the measure which would require 15 hours of training rather than SD1 which reduces the requirement to 8 hours. Domestic violence is a serious and complex issue. Its seriousness deserves more than a day of training.

Domestic violence is a pervasive and life-threatening issue in our community. In order to address the seriousness of domestic violence, we need consistent, well-informed, and evidence-based responses from first responders and others who come into contact with survivors. Judges, firefighters, emergency medical services and law enforcement personnel are some of the systems that a victim/survivor may cross paths with in her journey to seek justice and to protect herself and her family. This measure will ensure that the professionals in these fields are trained with a minimum of fifteen hours of domestic violence specific education to best meet the needs of a survivor.

Domestic violence is a dangerous and often lethal crime. Research strongly indicates that domestic violence is one of, if not the most predominant social issues in our State. According to the Bureau of Justice, one third of all murdered females are killed by their current or former intimate partners. A coordinated community response is the best tool we have to combat domestic violence as a society, and a coordinated community begins with adequate training and education. We believe that fifteen hours of training is manageable for the departments to implement and will help alleviate ambiguity and confusion a responder may have when determining the best means possible to meet the needs of a domestic abuse victim.

It will also lead to a better understanding of the needs of the victim and her family. Hopefully the training will also help dispel myths and misunderstandings of the needs of the victim. We want to prevent questions like “why don’t you just leave him?” or “what did you expect when you went back?”

Equipping our systems with the knowledge and tools that they need to adequately respond to these complex and often dangerous scenarios improves the experience for the victims and assists professionals with meeting the responsibilities of their duties in a confident and competent manner.

The Hawai‘i State Democratic Women’s Caucus is a catalyst for progressive, social, economic, and political change through action on critical issues facing Hawaii’s women and girls. It is because of this mission, the Women’s Caucus supports this important measure.

We ask that you pass this measure and thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [JDLTestimony](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB2321 on Feb 24, 2016 10:00AM
Date: Monday, February 22, 2016 10:57:04 PM

SB2321

Submitted on: 2/22/2016

Testimony for JDL/WAM on Feb 24, 2016 10:00AM in Conference Room 211

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ann S Freed	Hawaii Women's Coalition	Support	No

Comments: Aloha Chair Tokuda, Chair Keith-Agaran, Vice Chairs and members, Our testimony from the previous committee stands. We do not agree with the committee report which reduces the number of required hours of training from 15 to 8. Given the scope and seriousness of the problem I really hope that the original suggestion, by those who work with victims, of 15 hours remains. We are also disappointed that law enforcement is not supporting this most basic of initiatives. Perhaps they don't realize the message they are sending to the community, i.e. not really serious about fixing the problem. Mahalo, Ann S. Freed Co-Chair, Hawaii Women's Coalition

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TO: Chair Tokuda, Vice Chair Dela Cruz, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Chair Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair Shimabukuro, and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor
FROM: Ryan Kusumoto, President & CEO of Parents And Children Together (PACT)
DATE/LOCATION: February 24, 2016; 10:00 a.m., Conference Room 211

RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2321, SD1 – RELATING TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

I strongly urge you to support SB 2321, SD1 – Relating to Domestic Violence. We support the intent of SB 2321 to require training for state and county employees who act as interveners in domestic violence situations. **We also believe it is essential to include school personnel under this bill.** Students who are at risk or currently living in domestic violence situations are most likely to show signs of poor academic performance led by unhealthy behaviors. In order to provide the best and most convenient services to families experiencing these unfortunate situations, we must educate teachers and staff to become professional interveners of domestic violence.

Schools are primary connections to our communities that also share strong relationships with our parents and keiki. It would only be natural that we take advantage of those trusting relationships to provide the services they need and further benefit from. The teachers who spend time with the students on a daily basis should be able to recognize signs of unhealthy influence and link resources to their families. School personnel should no longer wonder out of suspicion or feel hopeless in attempts to help students in need.

It is of crucial importance that we maintain involvement between schools and the community to ensure healthy families and generations to come. With the expansion of resources provided by trained interveners of domestic violence situations, we will make great strides to reduce the amount of domestic violence occurrences and families affected by it.

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 2321, SD1**, please contact me at (808) 847-3285 or rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org if you have any questions.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [JDLTestimony](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: *Submitted testimony for SB2321 on Feb 24, 2016 10:00AM*
Date: Monday, February 22, 2016 11:55:30 AM

SB2321

Submitted on: 2/22/2016

Testimony for JDL/WAM on Feb 24, 2016 10:00AM in Conference Room 211

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Laurie Field	Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest and Hawaii	Support	No

Comments:

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [JDLTestimony](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: *Submitted testimony for SB2321 on Feb 24, 2016 10:00AM*
Date: Monday, February 22, 2016 3:49:02 PM

SB2321

Submitted on: 2/22/2016

Testimony for JDL/WAM on Feb 24, 2016 10:00AM in Conference Room 211

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

Comments:

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