

HAWAII STATE COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Date: February 9, 2015

To: Senator Will Espero, Chair
Senator Rosalyn H Baker, Vice-Chair
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

From: Marci Lopes, Executive Director
Hawaii State Coalition Against Domestic Violence

RE: SB 396 – STRONG SUPPORT

PLACE: Conference Room 229

DATE and TIME: Tuesday, February 10, 2015 1:15 p.m.

The Hawaii State Coalition Against Domestic Violence is a statewide partnership of 21 domestic violence program and domestic violence shelter providers on 6 of our Hawaiian Islands. Our mission is to engage communities and organizations to end domestic violence through education, advocacy, and action for social justice.

As a result of the highly publicized incident in which an officer abused his former girlfriend, many concerns have surfaced in regards to the victimization of domestic violence victims whose partners serve in the police force. Our police department must improve its responses to officers who have violated their intimate partners. HSCADV supports the amendment defined in Section Two and believe and further supports the efforts to ensure that individuals who wish to report allegations of officer-involved domestic abuse do not have to do so in writing or by notarized statement. Removing this requirement removes yet another barrier that victims of officer related abuse endure when trying to seek assistance and hold their perpetrator accountable.

We hope the committee would look to the Hawaii State Coalition Against Domestic Violence membership and our Survivor Action Committee as a resource and source of support for any needed recommendations.

Marci Lopes, Executive Director



WOMEN'S CAUCUS

DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAII

WITNESS TESTIMONY

February 10, 2015

To: Senator Will Espero, Chair
Senator Rosalyn Baker, Vice Chair and
Members of the Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental and Military Affairs

From: Jeanne Y. Ohta, Co-Chair

RE: SB 396 Relating to Police Departments
Hearing: Tuesday, February 10, 2015, 1:15 p.m., Room 229

Position: SUPPORT

The Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus writes in support of SB 396 Relating to Police Departments which would specify that citizen complaints against a police officer that involve allegations of domestic abuse against a family or household member on the part of the police officer shall not be required to be in writing or sworn to by the complainant.

Recent events and questions related to those events made apparent the need for a change in policy with regard to officer-involved domestic violence cases. The requirement that the complaint be in writing or sworn to by the complainant is used to deter victims from filing complaints or the victim is told that she must return when a notary is available to notarize the statement. These requirements re-victimize the victim and make it appear that her complaint will have a higher bar to overcome than those of domestic violence victims whose partners are not police officers. Victims are already reluctant to file complaints against their spouses who are officers.

This measure is a good start to improve how officer-involved domestic violence cases are handled. We respectfully request that the committee pass this measure and we thank the committee for the opportunity to provide testimony.