

SB977



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 02/04/2015
Time: 01:15 PM
Location: 229
Committee: Senate Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Kathryn S. Matayoshi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: SB 0977 RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.

Purpose of Bill: Appropriates funds to raise awareness of mental health issues and provide mental health training for public school administrators, teachers, and other school personnel. Appropriates funds to establish additional public school counselor positions in the public schools.

Department's Position:

The Department of Education (Department) appreciates the intent of SB 977 to provide mental health training for public school personnel and raise awareness of mental health issues.

Professional development training for school administrators, teachers and other personnel will increase their capacity to identify, respond, and support students who may be experiencing mental health challenges.

In addition, complex- and state-level school social workers and school-based behavioral health personnel, including school psychologists and behavioral health specialists deliver mental health assessment, counseling and other support services to students.

We are also appreciative of the fact that the bill recognizes additional general fund appropriations are needed to assist with the effective implementation of this measure as the Department would not have the means to do so under our budget appropriation.

A goal of this bill is to increase the number of public school counselor positions. However, school counselor positions are part of a school's Weighted Student Formula (WSF) budget. As such, schools will determine how to spend their WSF funds on personnel.

Further, the Department would like to ensure that the implementation of SB 977 would not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in our Executive Budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Helping Hands Hawai'i

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB977: RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY**

TO: Senator Michelle Kidani, Chair, Education;
Senator Josh Green, Chair, Health;
Members of the Committees on Education and Health

FROM: Jan Harada, CEO, Helping Hands Hawaii

Hearing: **Wednesday, February 4, 2015, 1:15pm; CR 229.**

Chair Kidani, Chair Green, and Committee members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony **in support** of SB 977, appropriating funding to (1) support the raising of awareness of mental health issues and to provide mental health training to public school administrators, teachers, and other school personnel so they may more effectively support students who may be experiencing a mental health crisis or otherwise struggling with various levels of mental health challenges and (2) support the addition of more public school counselor positions to provide needed counseling and other support services to students.

Helping Hands Hawaii has been involved in behavioral health services for adults for over 30 years. In that time, while our work has not been directly with children/youth, our experience in working with a wide variety of community partners in looking at over-arching mental health and behavioral health issues across the State, one of the most frequently raised concerns is the capacity of the public school system to address the challenges presented to our public school students on a daily basis – including bullying in school, violent or abusive family dynamics, lack of community support, and trauma experienced or witnessed. Giving more school personnel the kind of basic knowledge that will allow them to readily identify students struggling with depression, suicide ideation, trauma, and other related symptoms will literally put more “eyes” on the types of problems reflective of mental health challenges that many students face but are unable to give voice to in a way that allows them to independently seek help.

We would like to suggest that in a future draft, some attention be paid to the inevitable legal questions around liability should something get missed or mis-identified. These school personnel identified in Section 1 are not clinicians, and future drafts of the legislation should include provisions related to scope of the training and scope of the subsequent responsibility.

We urge your support for these important strategies to address the needs of public school students who are struggling with mental health-related challenges.

HAWAII YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

677 Ala Moana Boulevard, Suite 702 Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Phone: (808) 531-2198 Fax: (808) 534-1199

Web site: <http://www.hysn.org> E-mail: info@hysn.org

Daryl Selman, President
Judith F. Clark, Executive Director
Aloha House
American Civil Liberties Union of Hawaii
Bay Clinic, Inc.
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Honolulu
Big Island Substance Abuse Council
Blueprint for Change
Bobby Benson Center
Catholic Charities Hawaii
Child and Family Service
Coalition for a Drug Free Hawaii
Courage House Hawaii
Domestic Violence Action Center
EPIC, Inc.
Family Programs Hawaii
Family Support Hawaii
Hale Kipa, Inc.
Hale 'Opio Kauai, Inc.
Hawaii Behavioral Health
Hawaii Student Television
Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition
Hina Mauka Teen Care
Hui Malama Learning Center
Kaanalike
Kahi Mohala Behavioral Health
KEY (Kualoa-Heeia Ecumenical Youth)
Project
Kids Hurt Too
Kokua Kalihi Valley
Life Foundation
Marimed Foundation
Maui Youth and Family Services
Palama Settlement
P.A.R.E.N.T.S., Inc.
Parents and Children Together (PACT)
Planned Parenthood of Hawaii
REAL
Salvation Army Family Intervention Svcs.
Salvation Army Family Treatment Svcs.
Sex Abuse Treatment Center
Susannah Wesley Community Center
The Catalyst Group
The Children's Alliance of Hawaii
Waikiki Health Center
Women Helping Women
YWCA of Kauai

February 1, 2015

To: Senator Michelle Kidani, Chair
And members of the Committee on Education

Senator Josh Green, Chair
And members of the Committee on Health

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 977 RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Hawaii Youth Services Network (HYSN), a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, strongly supports SB 977 Relating to the Department of Education.

Mental health conditions are sometimes called the nation's 'silent epidemic'. Hawaii's approximately 1.3 million residents, close to 32,000 adults live with serious mental illness and about 12,000 children live with serious mental health conditions. National prevalence estimates indicate that one in five children has a mental illness or addictive disorder. Half of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14, three-quarters by age 24.

Despite its prevalence, there is a stigma associated with mental illness which results in too many people suffering in silence without access to care. In youth these illnesses can cause mild to significant impairment in home and school activities and can lead to school failure, disciplinary placements and juvenile justice involvement, and, in extreme cases, suicide.

This legislation provides the necessary funds needed to improve and strengthen mental health training and increase counselor positions within Hawaii's public school system, where early detection of mental illness can truly be a lifesaver. Training can help school administrators, teachers, and other school personnel better manage their schools and classrooms and at the same time help link students and their families to needed services.

Appropriation of funding for mental health training and additional school counselors in public schools is a much need step toward giving mental health conditions a voice and ending the silence.

HYSN page 2

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judith F. Clark". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "J" and a long, trailing flourish at the end.

Judith F. Clark

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [EDU Testimony](#)
Cc: Maecie-Shey.Esperanza@halaukumana.org
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB977 on Feb 4, 2015 13:15PM
Date: Tuesday, February 03, 2015 11:25:47 AM

SB977

Submitted on: 2/3/2015

Testimony for EDU/HTH on Feb 4, 2015 13:15PM in Conference Room 229

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Maecie | Halau Ku Mana | Support | No |

Comments: I support SB 977. As the bill states, “ to raise awareness of mental health issues and provide mental health training for public school administrators, teachers and other school personnel.” The bill not only says to have all school personnel to have mental health training but, to have more counselors. This would allow the students to go to any staff member and talk about their issues. Talking about their problems may lead to doing better in school, having a positive attitude, decreasing stress that the student has, etc.

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SB 977

I'm against this proposed "Bill for an Act" because it is careless and fiscally irresponsible. It is written in such a way that is not measurable, increase awareness by???

As a clinician for the last 10 years with both experience in the DOE and as a DOH contractor, an active DOE Behavioral Health Specialist, as well as a highly competent Industrial and Organizational Consultant, and providing testimony as a private citizen, it is my professional opinion that any oversight by a body that is non-clinical (e.g. Certificate Employees) in this regard is unethical because Certificate Employees (e.g. counselors) do not possess the advance skill sets to provide "raised mental health awareness training to administrators".

The department already has the human capital in place to provide this service through the expertise of the clinical psychologist, behavioral health specialist, and etc., (Certified Employees). We cannot expect the expert training to administrators from managerial staff, teachers, and those alike because it diminishes the field of professional psychology and not in the scope of study of the school counselor.

Suggestions

1) Instead of continuing to cut Special Education funding and diminishing the said Certified Employees' positions based on ROI's on direct service the legislature needs to look as its human capital already in place to leverage this "Bill for an Act" by assigning this as additional duties to the clinical psychologist, behavioral health specialist, and etc., as well as reduce the cutting or attraction of these said positions.

2) The DOH has a greater competency as a system in the proposed "Bill for an Act" and the allocation of funds would be better used for Children and Adolescent Mental Health as the (CAMHD) trainer.

Harold Ames, Public Servant