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## **OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY**

### TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 367

#### A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO RELATING TO APPROPRIATIONS TO THE OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY OF THE COUNTY OF HAWAII.

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY  
Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Chair  
Rep. Joy A. San Buenaventura, Vice Chair

Friday, February 3, 2017, 2:00 P.M.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 312

Honorable Chair Nishimoto, Vice-Chair San Buenaventura and Members of the Committee on Judiciary, the Office of the Prosecuting Attorney, County of Hawai'i submits the following testimony in support of House Bill No. 367.

This measure appropriates funds for the expansion to West Hawai'i of the Big Island Juvenile Intake and Assessment Center (BIJIAC) of the Office of the Prosecuting Attorney of the County of Hawaii

The legislature finds that juvenile crime and recidivism are precursors to criminal activity and involvement in social services in adulthood, both which come at a cost to the youth, their families, the community, and taxpayer dollars. Immediate assessment and intervention plays a vital role in disrupting or halting this progression.

To improve outcomes for youth and also to protect public safety, BIJIAC was developed and implemented in East Hawai'i in 2013. The mission of BIJIAC is to:

- 1) Prevent and reduce delinquent behavior by providing an immediate assessment upon intake and to refer youth to appropriate community services; and
- 2) Assist law enforcement and increase public safety by providing a safe location for youth in their custody, allowing officers to return to patrol duties.

For the past three contract years, BIJIAC has served a total of six hundred twenty-seven youth (328 boys, 299 girls) at an annual estimated cost per youth of \$947. Of youth served, only 4% had a new arrest or delinquent offense. In contrast, in 2013 the annual cost of a bed at the Hawai'i Youth Correctional Facility was \$199,320, and 75% of youth released were re-adjudicated as delinquent or convicted as adults of new crimes within three years of release.

The purpose of this Act is to expand BJIAC services to a location in West Hawai'i. Currently, when youth are picked up by police in West Hawai'i, they are processed at the police station and then released to a parent or guardian when one is located and/or available. Youth do not receive an immediate intervention or referral to appropriate community services, and it takes several months before the youth's court date arrives, providing no immediate accountability for the offense and allowing more time to continue unhealthy/unsafe behavior. In addition, the arresting officer must sit with the youth sometimes for hours until the parent or guardian arrives, preventing the officer from returning to patrol duties.

The Office of the Prosecuting Attorney, County of Hawai'i supports the passage of House Bill No. 367. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.



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Founded in 1865  
William Booth, Founder

**The Salvation Army-Family Intervention Services  
Big Island Juvenile Intake Assessment Center (BIJIAC)  
And Community Based Outreach (CBO) Program**

To Whom It May Concern:

The following document is regarding state legislature bill HB367 requesting appropriation of \$250,000 to expand BIJIAC to West Hawai'i. It is the opinion of this writer that this proposed appropriation will benefit youth and state resources alike. The facility in East Hawai'i offers support to local entities like law enforcement, department of education, social services and parents of the community. Having a place like this that is dedicated to their wellbeing highlights the importance of building a strong youth population. In addition to alleviating the stress of the adult community these facilities help to engage and empower youth, offering services like anger management, life skills, substance abuse prevention, college preparation and employment aid. West Hawai'i has a large homeless youth population and having a facility in that region that can help these youth find their way off the street is essential to helping them create a strong foundation to build their future on. What makes the BIJIAC program of East Hawai'i so successful is the community collaboration, giving separate organizations an additional platform to interact which helps to improve communication across the board. If West Hawai'i is granted this expansion of BIJIAC the entire community will begin to reap the benefits of unity, building a stronger Hawai'i.

Sincerely,

*Tamara Granada*

*Youth Development Specialist IV, BIJIAC/CBO Program*

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My name is Rhonda Okamura-Horiuchi, and I am employed with The Salvation Army/Family Intervention Services, who currently holds the contract for the only Big Island Juvenile Intake and Assessment Center (BIJIAC), on the of the Island of Hawaii (Big Island). The BIJIAC program is located on the eastside of the Island of Hawaii, whose geographic boundaries extend from Hilo through Waiohinu, Kau and the town of Honokaa. We continue to accept youths that are beyond those boundaries as no other resource exists.

I am submitting this letter in support of H.B. No. 367, which proposes to earmark monies to create a second BIJIAC program on the westside of the Island of Hawaii. First because there is such a tremendous need of a resource of this magnitude. Here, on the Island of Hawaii we are often challenged by the limited availability of support and services for our youth, their families, the Hawaii County Police (HCPD), and other community partners such as but not limited to the Department of Human Services, Child Welfare Services (DHS/CWS), and the Family Court, Third Circuit, which includes the Juvenile Client Services.

BIJIAC began with a vision to alleviate the burden of the HCPD of the common practice of “babysitting” juveniles after they had been arrested and processed. It was apparent that our Officers spent hours with the juvenile until the Legal Guardian, whether it be a parent, DHS or a Probation officer could be located and the juvenile could then be released. The BIJIAC program has since expanded and plays a supporting role to the youths and their families involved with these afore-mentioned agencies.

During this last contract year which began effective October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016, East Hawaii BIJIAC completed intakes, assessments and placements of forty-five youths whose origins were in West Hawaii. This created multiple hardships as due to the geographic distance, removal from family and friends, a change in school (perhaps the only constant in this youth’s life), a change in medical and dental care, just to identify a few.

To move forward with a BIJIAC in West Hawaii would ease the burden for all of those who have a vested interest in the youth as well as the partners in the communities in which the youth and their families live in. It is believed that the success in preventing further inclusion of that youth into the judicial system will be realized with BIJIAC and the services that will be offered to those on the other side of the Island of Hawaii.

Thank you very much....

Mark Morikawa

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Testimony in SUPPORT of HB367 RELATING TO APPROPRIATIONS TO THE OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY OF THE COUNTY OF HAWAII.

As a social worker for East Hawaii Child Welfare Services, I know that BIJIAC in Hilo is effective and a valuable resource to both the DHS, DOH, HPD, and the community. As a citizen, I am thankful the office of prosecuting attorney created this program to help reduce crime and free up our police force to get back to their regular duties, and no spend time babysitting teens when Salvation Army can provide the service.

This is a large island, and we need to make it smaller by adding a West Hawaii BIJIAC. Not only would it benefit West Hawaii agencies and the community, it would benefit East Hawaii as well, as East Hawaii BIJIAC and the police and DHS, are being asked to use valuable time and resources to service West Hawaii.

Please allow this bill to pass. Thank you.

**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 2, 2017 2:26 PM  
**To:** JUDtestimony  
**Cc:** sue.leeloy@hawaiicounty.gov  
**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for HB367 on Feb 3, 2017 14:00PM\*

**Categories:** Yellow Category

**HB367**

Submitted on: 2/2/2017

Testimony for JUD on Feb 3, 2017 14:00PM in Conference Room 325

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Susan L.K. Lee Loy	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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