



The Judiciary, State of Hawai‘i

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Senator Jill N. Tokuda, Chair

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair

Tuesday, February 28, 2017 at 1:35 p.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 211

By

R. Mark Browning

Senior Judge, Deputy Chief Judge

Family Court of the First Circuit

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

Bill No. and Title: Senate Bill No. 499, Relating to the Zero to Three Court.

Purpose: Appropriates funds for staff positions and various services to support the Hawaii Zero to three court.

Judiciary's Position:

The Judiciary supports this bill and wishes to acknowledge and thank the Legislature for its initiative in the critical area of providing safety and succor to children in this age bracket by applying specific strategies developed by scientific research.

In 2008, the family court began to implement its vision of a “Zero to Three Court” in response to increasing scientific evidence that: (1) babies and toddlers are neurologically compromised by dysfunctional family dynamics even if they are not directly physically harmed; (2) their compromised brains result in long lasting compromised behaviors and learning disorders; (3) early intervention is effective in preventing or alleviating these problems; and (4) there are proven techniques that can help many of these babies and toddlers.

The bill, at pages 1 to 5, can be a model “primer” for both laypersons and persons in policy making positions. Research and practices are clearly explained along with the



Senate Bill No. 499, Relating to the Zero to Three Court
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Tuesday, February 28, 2017 at 1:35 p.m.
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consequences of inaction (or untimely action) and the positive results of skilled timely intervention. Pages 1 to 5 are also a good example of principled public policy based on “good” science. Social science research and data can sometimes be less than conclusive, not because of the research, but because of the difficulty of establishing sound metrics. In contrast, this research has been focused on and builds upon medical/neurological data that can be quantified.

The Zero to Three Court began with federal “seed” funding and grants from the national non-profit Zero to Three organization. The court was then continued through monies that the national organization applied for and received from the Kellogg Foundation and the HMSA Foundation. The current funding from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (SAMHSA) will end mid-2017. Long term sustainability will require a dependable stream of state funding. This critically timely bill will prove to be the watershed transition, as recognized on page 5, that will not only insure sustainability for this important court but will also enable an expansion of community resources benefiting all families in addition to the families in court.

The appropriations listed on page 6 of this bill are admirable evidence of the Legislature’s deep understanding and appreciation of the research-based tenets of the Zero to Three Court. In our Judiciary Appropriations bill (SB469, S.D. 1), we have requested the resources needed to sustain the Zero to Three Court at its current level of operations. However, the resources proposed in this bill will expand on our budget request and will enable the Zero to Three Court to enhance its program for the vulnerable population it serves. Additionally, we are grateful for the bill’s express intent, at page 6, that “It is not the legislature’s intent that the requested funds supplant the judiciary’s existing funding or budget requests.”

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809

February 28, 2017

TO: The Honorable Jill N. Tokuda, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways & Means

FROM: Pankaj Bhanot, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 499 - RELATING TO THE ZERO TO THREE COURT**

Hearing: February 28, 2017; 1:35 p.m.
Conference Room 211, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services supports this bill.

PURPOSE: The purpose of SB 499 is to appropriate funds for the Hawaii Zero to Three court to fund the program manager and case manager positions, transportation costs for parents to visit their children, emergency housing assistance, a parent incentive program, training and professional development for court team members and community partners, creation of visitation and parent coaching contracts, and evaluation of the program.

The Zero to Three court provides a valuable structure for families and children in the court system involved with Child Welfare Services and has added resources that help support them in establishing a safe, nurturing home. Numerous studies have shown the benefits to children and society when children's length of stay in foster care is shortened with effective case management, and children and their families are successfully reunited.

The voluntary nature of this program makes it a unique model in the child welfare system which emphasizes the motivation of the families to participate and learn what is necessary to become stable families who eventually need no further reliance on the judiciary or welfare system.

Families are provided special attention and given more time and social opportunities to learn from each other and professionals in the field. The success of the program is built

upon the limited number of families served at one time, frequent nature of court hearings, specialized services available for the families, and trusting relationships built between the families, case manager and service providers. Many families report they enjoy working with the case manager and thus want to stay in the program even though monthly court hearings are cumbersome.

In SFY2016, 21 families were served which involved 31 parents, 26 children 0-3 years of age and 13 older siblings. The national ZERO TO THREE's Quality Improvement Center for Research-Based Infant-Toddler Court Teams, is collecting data on the outcomes for Hawaii and 13 other pilot sites and will be issuing a report in the fall of 2017.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



Hawaii Chapter

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February 26, 2017

Dear Senator Jill N. Tokuda, Chair
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair,

RE: SB499 RELATING TO THE ZERO TO THREE COURT

Hearing: 2/28/2017 1:35 PM

The AAP-Hawaii chapter strongly supports SB499 which provides funding for staff and services for a Zero to Three Court. As pediatricians, we have seen firsthand the problems that toxic stress causes in early childhood. We recently had Dr. Andrew Gardner who is a national expert from Ohio talk to stakeholders in early childhood about raising resilient children. In this talk, he stated that adversity leads to physiologic stress, which in turn leads to damage of the developing brain. Therefore, the child's first years of life is critical for future development and learning.

A Zero to Three court was established in 2009 to support maltreated children. However, in 2012, this court has lost its national funding. A study done from 2013 to 2016 showed that this program was very successful "in meeting the objectives of reducing parental alcohol or drug use, improving reunification outcomes for families, decreasing the length of stay if foster care and number of placements, increasing visitation frequency, ensuring timeliness of service availability, and increasing access to services."

Therefore, we ask this committee to support funding for the Zero to Three court in terms of staffing and services to help these children in the most fragile time of their lives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vince Yamashiroya".

Vince Yamashiroya, MD, FAAP

Treasurer, American Academy of Pediatrics-Hawaii Chapter



February 27, 2017

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

From: Karen Worthington, Project Coordinator
Early Childhood Action Strategy

Re: SB499 – Relating to the Zero to Three Court
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 211, February 28, 2017, 1:35 PM

Position: Action Strategy supports SB499 Relating to the Zero to Three Court

Dear Senator Tokuda, Senator Dela Cruz, and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of Hawaii's Early Childhood Action Strategy, a public private collaborative that recognizes the strength of communities and works across sectors to increase the number of young children in Hawaii who are born healthy, developing on track, ready for school when they enter kindergarten, and proficient learners by third grade.

Action Strategy strongly supports SB499 which provides state funding for staff positions and essential services for the Hawaii Zero to Three Court (HZTT) which serves one of Hawaii's most vulnerable populations: children aged three and younger who are victims of child abuse and neglect.

The HZTT was created with federal funding in 2009 as part of a national initiative to help family courts improve outcomes for maltreated infants and toddlers, reduce the recurrence of abuse and neglect of the youngest children, and to reduce the time these children spend in out of home care. This is one of Hawaii's most fragile populations and with appropriate interventions, the negative outcomes associated with abuse and trauma at such a young age can be avoided. Younger children are victimized at higher rates than older victims and are at greatest risk for serious injury and death from abuse and neglect. In 2015 in Hawaii, 37% of confirmed child victims of abuse and neglect were aged three and younger (Hawaii Department of Human Services, *A Statistical Report on Child Abuse and Neglect in Hawaii 2015*, page 6).

Supporting the healthy development of young children and preventing abuse and neglect are key components of the Action Strategy approach. Action Strategy collaborates with initiatives throughout the state that further these goals, including the HZZT. The HZTT Court utilizes the latest research on infant and toddler brain development and the impact of trauma on child development, and implements evidence-based interventions with families.

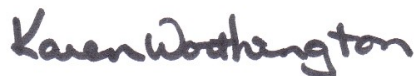
A key element of the success of the HZTT is the multi-disciplinary HZTT Court Team which provides legal, case management, and social services supports for the family. The Team connects families with needed services such as mental and physical health services, parenting support, addiction treatment, housing and more. One primary goal for the team is to help the family succeed on its own and not return to the child welfare or court systems.

This approach works! The cost savings to the state over a child victim's lifetime is huge. In 2012, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention determined that the estimated lifetime cost for every victim of child abuse and neglect is approximately \$210,012; the costs from a child death are even higher (*The economic burden of child maltreatment in the United States and implications for prevention*). Dollar figures do not capture the physical, social and emotional benefits for the child and parent who are able to have a safe, loving relationship after receiving appropriate interventions, nor do they capture the benefits to future generations once a cycle of abuse and addiction is broken.

Action Strategy asks that you pass SB499 to continue the essential services provided by the HZZT. The federal SAMHSA grant which funds the court ends in July 2017. Without this critical service, more young children in Hawaii will be victims of abuse and neglect and will be at higher risk for serious injury and death.

Action Strategy is committed to ensuring Hawaii's young children are healthy, safe and ready to learn and SB499 supports that vision. Please feel free to contact me for additional information. I can be reached at 808-214-9336 or karen@clnhawaii.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen Worthington". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Karen Worthington, JD



HAWAII FAMILY SUPPORT INSTITUTE
Making Hawaii's Families Strong

February 27, 2017

Senator Jill Tokuda, Chair Ways and Means Committee,
Senator Donovan Dela-Cruz, Vice-Chair, Senate WAM Committee
Hawaii State Capitol,
Honolulu, Hi 96813

Re: SB 499, Relating to the Hawaii Zero to Three Court

Dear Senators Tokuda, Dela-Cruz and Members of the Senate WAM Committee

I am Gail Breakey, Director of the Hawaii Family Support Institute, testifying in support of SB 499, which would provide funding support for the Hawaii Zero to Three Court within the Family Court. The Hawaii Zero to Three Court was established by the Family Court in 2007, in collaboration with the national ZERO TO THREE organization's model Babies Court initiative in order to (1) improve outcomes for maltreated infants and toddlers and (2) reduce re-occurrence of substantiated abuse and neglect of infants and toddlers in the courts jurisdiction.

Why important?

- Infants under age one comprise the largest age cohort (271 infants) of child protective service cases in Hawaii, followed by children aged one, two and three (DHS report, 2015)
- Abuse and neglect has been linked with serious developmental consequences for infants and toddlers, including attachment disorders and developmental delays.
- These negative consequences can be further exacerbated in a foster care system with infrequent visitation, multiple placements changes and delays in achieving a permanent home.
- However developmental neuroscience demonstrates that appropriate early intervention and child welfare policies can help infants and toddlers overcome the negative consequences stemming from maltreatment.
- Recognizing this the national ZERO TO THREE organization created and piloted the Safe Babies Court Teams, a project rooted in developmental science which seeks to : (1) Increase awareness among those who work with maltreated infants and toddlers about the negative effects of abuse and neglect upon young children, and (2) Change local systems to improve outcomes and present future court involvement in the lives of very young children

What is Hawaii Zero to Three Court?

- The Zero to Three Court Team is composed of a lead family court judge and designated guardians ad litem, parents' counsel, deputy attorneys general, and Department of Human Services social workers. Community coordinator, a case manager, a lead family court judge, a DHS case worker, and the assigned Guardian ad Litem.
- The team conducts monthly case conferences for each family and also monthly court hearings (compared with traditional practice of hearings every six months)
- The project trains court and community professionals on early child development and the unique needs of infants and toddlers issues by bringing in national Zero to Three trainers, coordinates appropriate existing community services for families, increasing parent child visitation contact, engages parents in mental health and substance abuse treatment services and monitors placement stability. emergency or transitional housing, tailored parenting services, and enhanced visitation in a family-like, nurturing setting,

Evaluation:

In addition to positive evaluation results of Court Teams at the national level, several evaluations have been conducted for the Hawaii Court, including the most recent study by the UH Department for Developmental Disabilities Studies. This study found positive results as follows:

- Reduction of parental alcohol or drug use
- Improve reunification outcomes for families
- Decrease the length of stay in foster care and number of placements
- Increase visitation frequency
- Ensure timeliness of service availability
- Increase access to services

Funding:

In 2013, the Honolulu Zero to Three Court lost its funding through the national ZERO TO THREE. The Court was however committed to continuing to provide intensive services to infants and families and transferred the program to the Family Drug Court with a dedicated case coordinator. The Drug Court successfully applied for a SAMHSA grant which included funding for the Zero to Three Court and continued its association with and technical support from the national ZERO TO THREE. However, this

grant will end in summer, 2017. Stable funding is needed to maintain services and resources of the Hawaii Zero to Three court team.

\$ 279,430 is requested to support the current level of services provided by the Zero to Three Court.

The requested funds should not supplant the Judiciary's existing funding or 2017 legislative budget request, and is intended to provide needed services to support families with infants and toddlers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

Error! Objects cannot be created from editing field codes.

Gail Breakey, RN, MPH, Executive Director,

Hawaii Family Support Institute

Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work, University of Hawaii at Manoa

February 27, 2017

Senator Jill Tokuda, Chair, Senate Ways and Means Committee,
Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair, WAM Committee
Hawaii State Capitol,
Honolulu, Hi 96813

Re: SB 499 Relating to Zero to Three Court

Dear Senators Tokuda, Dela Cruz and Members of the Judiciary Committee

I am Joey Keahiolalo, Past-President of the Hawaii Association for Infant Mental Health testifying in support of SB 499, which would provide funding support for the Early Court within the Hawaii Family Court. The Hawaii Early Court was established by the Family Court in 2009 in collaboration with the national ZERO TO THREE organization in order to (1) improve outcomes for maltreated infants and toddlers and (2) to reduce there-occurrence of substantiated abuse and neglect of infants and toddlers in the courts jurisdiction.

Infants under age one comprise the largest age cohort (271 infants) of child protective service cases in Hawaii, followed by children aged one, two and three (DHS report, 2015) Abuse and neglect has been linked with serious developmental consequences for infants and toddlers, including attachment disorders and developmental delays. These negative consequences can be further perpetrated in a foster care system with infrequent visitation, multiple placements changes and delays in a achieving permanent home.

The Zero to Three Court Team is composed of a lead family court judge and designated guardians ad litem, parents' counsel, deputy attorneys general, and Department of Human Services social workers. Community coordinator, a case manager, a lead family court judge, a DHS case worker, and the assigned Guardian ad Litum.

- The team conducts monthly case conferences for each family and also monthly court hearings (compared with traditional practice of hearings every six months)
- The project trains court and community professionals on early child development and the unique needs of infants and toddlers issues by bringing in national Zero to Three trainers, coordinates appropriate existing community services for families, increasing parent child visitation contact, engages parents in mental health and substance abuse treatment services, monitors placement stability, advocates for emergency or transitional housing, provides tailored parenting services, and enhanced visitation in a family-like, nurturing setting,

Evaluation: In addition to positive evaluation results of Court Teams at the national level, several evaluations have been conducted for the Hawaii Court, including the most recent study by the UH Department for Developmental Disabilities Studies. This study found positive results as follows:

- Reduction of parental alcohol or drug use

- Improve reunification outcomes for families
- Decrease the length of stay in foster care and number of placements
- Increase visitation frequency
- Ensure timeliness of service availability

SAMHSA grand funding which has sustained the program over the past 3 years will terminate in summer, 2017

\$ 279,430 is requested to support the current level of services provided by the Zero to Three Court.

The requested funds should not supplant the Judiciary's existing funding or 2017 legislative budget request, and is intended to provide needed services to support families with infants and toddlers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this initiative.

Sincerely,

Joey Keahiolalo, President,
Hawaii Association for Infant Mental Health



Hawaii Chapter

February 27, 2017

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on SB 499 relating to Zero to Three.

The Hawaii Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) strongly supports SB499 which provides funding for staff and services for the Zero to Three Court.

The Hawaii Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics is a voluntary organization of over 200 pediatricians in Hawaii. Our mission is to attain optimal physical, mental, and social health and well being for infants, children, adolescents and young adults in Hawaii.

As pediatricians, we have seen firsthand the problems that toxic stress causes in early childhood. We recently had Dr. Andrew Garner who is a national expert from Ohio talk to stakeholders in early childhood about raising resilient children. In this talk, he stated that early childhood adversity leads to physiologic stress, which in turn leads to damage of the developing brain. Therefore, the child's first years of life is critical for future development and learning.

The Zero to Three Court was established in 2009 to support maltreated children. However, in 2012, this Court has lost its national funding. A study done from 2013 to 2016 showed that this program was very successful "in meeting the objectives of reducing parental alcohol or drug use, improving reunification outcomes for families, decreasing the length of stay if foster care and number of placements, increasing visitation frequency, ensuring timeliness of service availability, and increasing access to services."

Therefore, we ask this committee to support funding for the Zero to Three Court in terms of staffing and services to help these children in the most fragile time of their lives.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide this testimony. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Mae Kyono, MD
President, American Academy of Pediatrics, Hawaii Chapter

AAP - Hawaii Chapter

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**February 28, 2017 at 1:35PM
Conference Room 211**

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

To: Senator Jill N. Tokuda, Chair
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair

From: Michael Robinson
Vice President – Government Relations & Community Affairs

Re: Testimony in Support – SB 499, Relating to the Zero to Three Court

My name is Michael Robinson, Vice President, Government Relations and Community Affairs at Hawai'i Pacific Health (HPH). Hawai'i Pacific Health is a not-for-profit health care system, and the state's largest health care provider and non-governmental employer. Hawai'i Pacific Health is committed to providing the highest quality medical care and service to the people of Hawai'i and the Pacific Region through its four hospitals, more than 50 outpatient clinics and service sites, and over 1,600 affiliated physicians. Hawai'i Pacific Health's hospitals are Kapi'olani Medical Center for Women & Children, Pali Momi Medical Center, Straub Clinic & Hospital and Wilcox Memorial Hospital.

I write in support of SB 499 which appropriates funds to continue and expand the Hawai'i Zero to Three Court. Children under the age of three comprised nearly twenty-five percent of all children in Hawai'i's foster care system in 2016. Infants and toddlers suffer particularly serious developmental consequences from abuse and neglect, such as attachment disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, and developmental delays. These negative health outcomes can be exacerbated in a foster care system with infrequent visitation and multiple placement changes.

An evaluation of the Hawai'i Zero to Three Court concluded that the program reduces parental alcohol or drug use, improves reunification outcomes for families, decreases the length of stay in foster care and number of placements, increases visitation frequency, and increases access to services.

SB 499 would provide funding to continue to improve the foster care system which touches the lives of so many keiki at a critical age.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 499.



**In Affiliation with the Hawaii School of
Professional Psychology at Argosy University**

250 Vineyard Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Telephone: 808.223.8483

To: WAM
Fr: Steven J. Choy, Ph.D.
Clinical Psychologist
Associate Professor, HSPP at Argosy University, Hawaii
Director, HSPP Clinical Psychology Doctoral Internship Consortium
Director, Family Strengthening Center at Family Programs Hawaii
RE: SB 499

I am writing in support of SB 499 regarding the funding of Zero-to-Three Court. I have been a clinical psychologist for over 40 years and have specialized in the assessment, treatment and prevention of child maltreatment. Although the effects of child maltreatment on the development of children can be very devastating, we have found that early identification and intervention of child maltreatment is by far the best way to prevent serious psychological problems in children and their families. Over 20 years ago, when we decided to make servicing families with children from birth to 3 years of age a priority, it was a very innovative movement. We discovered that 80% of the brain development of children occurred by age 3 years and thus, healthy development of children were critical during the first 3 years of life. While this was supported by the medical and mental health community, funding has been very difficult. During the last 4 years, the Family Strengthening Center through the partnership with the Hawaii School of Professional Psychology at Argosy University has been providing mental health services to the Zero-To-Three at a dramatically reduced cost through the Federal Grant. However, the grant was completed in August 2016, and there were no funds to continue mental health services, which is a critical part of the ZTT Court program. Through an arrangement with Argosy University, we have been able to continue our mental health services for the next year without any cost to the State of Hawaii, but this is a short term solution and more permanent funding is necessary to sustain this critical program. I have seen the significant differences this program has made in the lives of children and their families. Without this program, many families would not have been able to care for their children or their children would remain in limbo without any permanency. With this program we have been able to safely reunify families at a much quicker pace than the regular court system or we have been able to provide permanency to infants to prevent the psychological ramifications of lingering in foster care. I believe that we can develop the best possible program to address the needs of these families but the ZTT court program have been mainly funded through start-up federal grants that required us

to develop a sustainability plan for the program. This included a private-government partnership and there have been several attempts at including this specialty court program in the overall judicial budget. Unfortunately Hawaii as well as the Nation has suffered from several years of budgetary restraints that have prevented long term funding of this very important program. At the same time, research has shown that it will cost well over 300 billion dollars a year for our Nation to address the significant medical, psychological and social problems not to count the severe human suffering that will occur if we are unable to provide early intervention services to prevent re-abuse and neglect. The ZTT Court program will not only help families and reduce the risk for child maltreatment, but it ultimately will also save the State of Hawaii millions of dollars each year by providing healthy environment for our children. It is for this reason that I strong support and recommend the passage of SB 499.

Thank you for allowing me to present this testimony. If you have any question, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven J. Choy, Ph.D.", written in a cursive style.

Steven J. Choy, Ph.D.
Clinical Psychologist, HI Lic PSY170
Nationally Credentialed Health Care Psychologist
Associate Professor, Argosy University, Hawaii
Director, HSPP Internship Consortium
Director, Family Strengthening Center at Family Programs Hawaii



Hawaii
Children's Action Network
Building a unified voice for Hawaii's children

February 25, 2017

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

LATE

From: Deborah Zysman, Executive Director
Hawaii Children's Action Network

Re: **SB 499 – Relating to the Zero to Three Court**
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 211, February 28, 2017, 1:35 PM

On behalf of Hawaii Children's Action Network (HCAN), we are writing to support SB 499 – Relating to the Zero to Three Court.

The Zero to Three Court program started in Hawaii in 2009 and has had amazing results over the years by assisting children receive vital services, reconnect with family, and overcome negative consequences of maltreatment during vital development at ages one to three years old. Additionally, according to a program evaluation from August 2013 to July 2016 conducted by the University of Hawaii's Center on Disabilities, the families have seen overall benefits from reducing parental alcohol or drug use, decreasing the length of stay in foster care and number of placements, increasing visitation frequency, and increasing access to services.

With the loss of national funding in 2012, the Zero to Three Program has had a level of insecurity and the inability to grow. By providing this stable source of funding for staff, the program will better be able to serve the children and families of Hawaii.

For these reasons, HCAN respectfully requests that the committee pass this bill.

HCAN is committed to building a unified voice advocating for Hawaii's children by improving their safety, health, and education. Last fall, HCAN convened input in person and online from more than 50 organizations and individuals that came forward to support or express interest for a number of issues affecting children and families in our state that resulted in the compilation of 2017 Hawai'i Children's Policy Agenda, which can be accessed at <http://www.hawaii-can.org/2017policyagenda>.



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(808) 521-9531

FamilyProgramsHawaii.com

TO: COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Senator Jill N. Tokuda, Chair
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair

HEARING: Tuesday, February 28, 2017
1:45 PM
Conference Room 211

FROM: Judith Wilhoite - Family Advocate - Family Programs Hawaii

RE: SB499 RELATING TO THE ZERO TO THREE COURT

My name is Judith Wilhoite. I am the Family Advocate for Family Program Hawaii's *It Takes An Ohana* (ITAO) program and a resource caregiver. We strongly support SB499.

When looking at today's cutting edge research, it is clear that abuse and neglect of children, if left untreated, can lead to everything from mental health problems to anti-social behaviors¹. The good news is that effective intervention in the early years of a child can change the life outcomes of these children from being a drag on our community resources and possibly a danger to themselves and others to being productive, contributing members of our island home.

Part of the excellence of the ZTT program is that it addresses the trauma of the children while they are young and it addresses the issues of the children's parents. When the parents' needs are addressed *plus* the parents are educated on the child's developmental needs, the biological parents are better equipped to parent ALL the children in their home, including future children.

Providing funds to pay for the Case Manager position is crucial for the continuation of this important work. It is also an extremely effective use of public funds, helping to create better outcomes for families, thus creating better outcomes for the community at large. If additional funds are not easily available, however, it may be appropriate to consider pooling resources from other departments that share responsibility for ensuring positive outcomes for the same families.

Thank you for allowing me to voice strong support for SB499.

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/>

We help kids

Statement in Support of S.B. No. 499 To Hawaii Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Matthew E. Melmed, Executive Director



ZERO TO THREE
Early connections last a lifetime

LATE

February 28, 2017

On behalf of ZERO TO THREE, I strongly endorse *Senate Bill No. 499: A Bill for an Act relating to the Zero to Three Court*. It presents an opportunity to continue potentially life-saving work led by the Honorable Paul Murakami and his predecessors of the District Family Court of the First Circuit (island of O'ahu). The Zero to Three Court focuses on infants and toddlers in foster care, shortening their time in foster care, ensuring they get needed services, and helping their parents gain the skills they need to safely care for them—or the wisdom to recognize that they cannot care for their children and to relinquish them to loving members of their extended family.

Founded 40 years ago, ZERO TO THREE is a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to ensure that all babies and toddlers have a strong start in life. We translate the science of early childhood development for parents, practitioners, and policymakers. We work to ensure that babies and toddlers benefit from the family and community connections critical to their wellbeing and healthy development. Nowhere are these connections that are essential to early brain development more important than for babies in the child welfare system. Over the last decade, we have worked particularly to bring the science of early brain development to courts and communities around the country.

Honolulu's Zero to Three Court is one of 19 courts in 13 states that ZERO TO THREE has worked with to implement the Safe Babies Court Team approach. This approach has been demonstrated to significantly improve the experience of infants and toddlers in foster care. To date, three evaluations have been completed. The first study was based on an analysis of 186 cases at three sites.ⁱ The findings indicate that our approach promotes better long-term developmental outcomes for maltreated infants and toddlers:

- **Achieving the federal mandate for meeting children's medical and mental health needs:** 97% of the identified service needs of infants and toddlers served by the Court Teams had either been fully met or were in process with progress being made.
- **Timely permanency:** Timely permanency was achieved in 95% of closed Court Team cases (n=88) with more than 50% achieving permanency within 12 months of cases opening.
- **Frequent parent-child contact:** Very young children need to see their parents multiple times each week to develop a trusting relationship for reunification purposes. But, in fact, most children in foster care see their parents less than once each week. Court team sites were managing daily parent-child contact in nearly 32% of the cases, from 3-6 times per week in 13% of the cases, and twice weekly in 11% of the cases.
- **Placement stability:** More than two-thirds (72%) of children remained in 1 or 2 placements whether they were in out-of-home care for less than 12 months, between 12-24 months, or longer than 24 months.
- **Positive safety outcomes:** 99.05% of the infants and toddlers served were protected from further maltreatment.

The second study examined the effect of the Safe Babies Court Team approach had on how quickly children achieve a permanent home.ⁱⁱ Researchers used data on children in the four original Safe Babies sites (n=298) and compared them to a nationally representative sample of young children in foster care from the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being (n=511).

- **Expedited permanency:** Children served by the Safe Babies Court Teams exited the foster care system approximately 1 year earlier than children in the comparison group.
- **Keeping children with family members:** Reunification was the most common type of exit for Court Team children (38%), while adoption was the most typical for the comparison group (41%). If kinship families were included, 62.4% of the Court Teams children ended up with family members while only 37.7% of the comparison group did.

The third study looked at the cost effectiveness of the SBCT approach, after determining the average direct cost of SBCT participation.ⁱⁱⁱ The evaluators found the costs to be at the low end of similar early childhood interventions (e.g. Nurse Family Partnership, Early Head Start) at \$10,000 per child.

- Earlier exits from foster care reduced costs by an average of \$7,300 per child.
- **More than 70% of the direct costs of SBCT participation are recouped in the first year alone.**
- If the children's placements truly are permanent—and they remain outside of the child welfare system—these savings will accumulate and pay for the entire program.

There is increasing pressure on programs to demonstrate an evidence base. The Safe Babies Court Team has been recognized by the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare as being highly relevant to the child welfare context and demonstrating promising research evidence. The Honolulu Zero to Three Court team has continued to accumulate local evidence of efficacy, as highlighted in Section 1 of S.B.No.499.

While there are an increasing array of specialty courts vying for funding, the Zero to Three Court is different: by melding their work with families with a reflective focus on making procedural, policy, regulatory, and legislative changes, they will improve the child welfare court process for all families. What makes our approach unique is our constant willingness to rethink the best ways to improve outcomes for infants and toddlers in foster care. We never expect to reach a point where the problem is "fixed." There will always be better ways to support families involved in the child welfare system. The Zero to Three Court is positioned to continue to make those incremental enhancements over time.

In Section 2, the legislation specifies funding for two positions, training, and supports to families. It would thus provide an adequate level of dedicated staffing, which is critical to ensure the various stakeholders in the program, including the parents and children, all work together in a concerted fashion. Training and professional development, particularly in understanding early development and how it should guide decision making as well as the impacts of maltreatment, lack of consistent caregiving, and the impact of parents' own previous trauma, are at the core of helping families progress and children achieve both permanency and wellbeing. Supports provided with the funding would help both improve parents' ability to nurture their children's development and increase family stability.

The Honolulu Zero to Three Court has been an important partner in developing an innovative and game-changing approach to child welfare practice. I hope to continue our collaboration on behalf of the most vulnerable infants and toddlers in the U.S.

Submitted by:

Matthew E. Melmed, Executive Director
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ⁱ Hafford, C., McDonnell, C., Kass, L., DeSantis, J., & Dong, T. (2009). *Evaluation of the Court Teams for maltreated infants and toddlers: Final report*. Submitted to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice by James Bell Associates, Arlington, VA.

ⁱⁱ McCombs-Thornton, K. L. (2012). The effect of the ZERO TO THREE Court Teams initiative on types of exits from the foster care system—A competing risks analysis. *Children and Youth Services Review* 34, 169–178.

ⁱⁱⁱ Foster, E. M., & McCombs-Thornton, K. L. (2012). Investing in our most vulnerable: A cost analysis of the ZERO TO THREE Safe Babies Court Teams Initiative. Birmingham, AL: Economics for the Public Good, LLC.

LATE



TO: Chair Tokuda, Vice Chair Dela Cruz, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means
FROM: Ryan Kusumoto, President & CEO of Parents And Children Together (PACT)
DATE/LOCATION: Tuesday, February 28, 2017; 1:35 p.m., Conference Room 211

RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 499 – RELATING TO ZERO TO THREE COURT

We support SB 499 – Relating to Zero to Three Court. Early childhood neuroscience is clear that the first 1,000 days of each life provides the foundation for future development. Working with parents and their keiki at an early age to promote healthy child development, school readiness, nurturing parenting skills, and reduce toxic family stress is critical for future success. Access to programs at an early age will also help early identification of developmental, social-emotional, and early learning issues. Parents And Children Together supports more early intervention and learning opportunities for our keiki, especially to the most vulnerable families in our community. Participation in early learning and development programs for future success have immediate and long-term benefits that include higher levels of educational achievement, reduced homelessness, reduced crime, reduced substance abuse, improved health, and overall better social and economic well-being.

We support the Zero to Three Court as it facilitates the necessary processes to support a family with young children deal with their current issues. This court addresses the immediate needs of the child during difficult family times that could occur through complicated legal proceedings. It is of crucial importance that we invest in our keiki. **Children in Hawaii, no matter what their circumstance, deserve a chance.** This is also a key component to our war on intergenerational poverty as it addresses issues early on providing the child with an opportunity to succeed.

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 **support of SB 499**, please contact me at (808) 847-3285 or rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org if you have any questions.

Kristina Moore, PsyD

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February 25, 2017

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Sen Jill Tokuda
Sen Donovan Deal Cruz

Re: SB 499 RELATING TO HZTT COURT

Hearing Date February 28, 2017

Dear Senators and Committee Members,

I am writing this letter in support of further funding for the HZTT Court. I have been a practicing psychologist in Hawaii since 1999, have had specialized training and extensive therapy experiences with the zero to three population, with substance abusing parents of these very young children, and with the foster and adoptive families of these children. My professional background also consists of working with the juveniles at the Hawaii Correctional Facility and the Detention Home, and interacting with Family Court, the Department of Education, and the Department of Health. My professional research has been in the multisystemic factors in the development of juvenile offenders.

The HZTT Court provides the early intervention, oversight, and team approach needed to assist these extremely young children in establishing healthy attachments, developing on a normative path, and overcoming the effects of early trauma, neglect, and exposure to substances. The monthly court reviews help to ensure that these children don't languish in limbo, encouraging their biological parents to gain the necessary information and skills to

effectively parent their children and regain custody, and when not possible, for them to be placed in loving supportive homes that will support their healing and development.

The financial resources spent on the HZTT Court will most likely prevent many more resources spent in the future, as these children are helped to overcome their early challenges and develop along more normative paths. I often tell foster and adoptive parents that when these children are provided with the appropriate services when they're three and under, that by the time they enter elementary school, you'd never know what early experiences they've overcome. Their ability to focus on age appropriate activities, such as education, self care, moral development, family attachment, and social interaction is positively affected when the court makes a decision in a timely matter, whether it's reunification with parents who have gained new skills, or with adoptive families who have been trained to meet their special needs. This leads to significant future cost savings in the areas of education, health, and judicial involvement.

I humbly ask that you support the passing of SB499 to support these youngest among us in overcoming early challenges and developing the skills to lead productive lives in their families and community.

Aloha

Kristina Moore, PsyD

February 27, 2017

TO: COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Senator Jill Tokuda, Chair
Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair

HEARING: Wednesday, February 28, 2017, 1:35 p.m.
Conference Room 211

FROM: Faye Kimura
Specialist, Child Welfare Project, William S. Richardson School of Law

RE: SB 499 RELATING TO ZERO TO THREE COURT – STRONGLY SUPPORT

I strongly support SB 499, which will provide needed funding for the Hawaii Zero to Three Court for the next two years.

There is no population more at-risk for failure than infants and toddlers in the child welfare system. In 2016, children age 0-3 comprised the largest age cohort of child welfare service cases in Hawaii.

Abuse and neglect has been linked with serious developmental consequences for infants and toddlers, including attachment disorders and developmental delays. Fortunately, research confirms that *the early years present an unparalleled window of opportunity to effectively intervene* (Heckman, Grunewald, Reynolds, 2006). Research-informed decision-making, combined with developmentally appropriate services for the children and sensitive responses to the trauma histories of their parents, can change the odds for these at-risk babies and toddlers. To be effective, interventions must begin early and be designed with the characteristics and experiences of these infants, toddlers, and families in mind.

The Hawaii Zero to Three Court is an example of an effective intervention that provides developmentally appropriate services for infants and their parents who are involved in child abuse and neglect.

- The Hawaii Zero to Three Court Team is composed of a lead family court judge and designated guardians ad litem, parents' counsel, deputy attorneys general, and Department of Human Services social workers.
- The team conducts monthly case conferences for each family and monthly court hearings (Note: H.R.S. 587A requires that review hearings occur at least every six months).
- The project trains court and community professionals on early child development and the unique needs of infants and toddlers by bringing in nationally recognized ZERO TO THREE experts, coordinates appropriate community services for families, increases parent child visitation contact, engages parents in mental health and substance abuse treatment services, monitors placement stability, and provides tailored parenting services and enhanced visitation in a family-like, nurturing setting.

Intervening in the early years can lead to significant cost savings over time through reductions in child abuse and neglect, criminal behavior, public benefits dependence, and substance abuse. It also has the potential to reduce or eliminate educational disparities when these children reach school.

I have been involved in implementing this Court since 2008 and have seen the positive effects of having an experienced, trained, and interpersonally skilled staff intensively working with our families utilizing the resources provided through SAMHSA. Losing staff and resources due to the termination of grant funding in July 2017--and not replacing them--would be a tragic setback for the families and most importantly, the babies, for whom we all have a duty to provide optimal care when we intervene in their lives.

The requested funds should not supplant the Judiciary's existing funding or 2017 legislative budget request.

Faye Kimura, J.D.
Specialist, William S. Richardson School of Law

TO: COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Senator Jill N. Tokuda, Chair
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair

LATE

HEARING: Tuesday, February 28, 2017
1:45 PM
Conference Room 211

FROM: Kim Chang

RE: SB499 - Relating to Zero to Three Court

The Hawaii Zero to Three Court (“HZTT”) began operating in 2009, funded through federal earmarks that were followed by a grant from HMSA and more recently has been supported by a Family Drug Court SAMHSA grant, which expires in July 2017. SAMSHA funding ends in July, thus funding is critically needed to ensure continued and enhanced services and resources and maintain the capacity of the Hawaii Zero to Three court team.

I am part of the HZTT team, serving as one of the Guardians Ad Litem (“GAL”) since the outset of this specialty court. It would be my wish for all Child Welfare Services (“CWS”) cases to have this type of support and monitoring in place. It would serve every child’s best interest to obtain permanency (regardless with a parent or other caretaker) sooner rather than later and not languish in foster care. However, since funding is limited, the focus should be on children ages zero to three as they have the smallest voice but the system can have the biggest impact on their social and emotional growth at this age. The science has shown over and over that these first years of life – the attachment babies and toddlers need - forms their ability (or lack of) to trust, which leads to how these young people learn and adapt to living in our society, our community.

I am not only part of the HZTT team but also serve as a GAL for other CWS cases and can testify to the unfortunate fact that families *NOT* involved with HZTT receive less support (no HZTT Court Case Manager who also helps with transportation for families and housing assistance), is it common services are delayed (HZTT has partnerships with Argosy University and other community partners to provide timely services and visits), more judicial oversight (HZTT is monthly as other cases are usually every 6 months) and there is no parent incentive program (which gives an opportunity for the team to applaud a successful parent). It is also vital that all system participants – the judiciary, the attorneys, the social workers and community providers re-evaluate procedures annually to ensure it still works positively for the child and family, which the HZTT Court Program Manager role could help to keep the system moving forward.

Please consider supporting SB499.

Thank you,

/s/ Kim Chang

Kim Chang

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Mililani, HI 96789