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**Sent:** Wednesday, February 1, 2017 6:05 PM  
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**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for SB517 on Feb 2, 2017 13:15PM\*

**SB517**

Submitted on: 2/1/2017

Testimony for PSM on Feb 2, 2017 13:15PM in Conference Room 229

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Joy Marshall	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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No. \_\_\_\_\_

**TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 517  
RELATING TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

by

Nolan P. Espinda, Director  
Department of Public Safety

Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs  
Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair  
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

Thursday, February 2, 2017; 1:15 p.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229

Chair Nishihara, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Public Safety (PSD) appreciates the intent of Senate Bill (SB) 517, which mandates that all state and county agency employees whose duties require or may require intervention in a domestic abuse situation receive fifteen (15) hours of domestic abuse intervention training, and would like to offer the following **comments**.

PSD expresses concern over the mandated fifteen (15) hours. PSD understands the importance of such training and has already incorporated such training into our recruit academy curriculum. Our PSD Academy has incorporated 24 hours of domestic violence training into our Law Enforcement Recruit Course (LERC) for deputy sheriff recruits. 32 of our most recently graduated deputies completed LERC October 2016 and have received 24 hours of domestic violence curriculum.

Regarding our Corrections Division adult correction officers, our PSD Academy has incorporated six hours of responding and investigating domestic violence training into our Basic Corrections Recruit Course (BCRC). 79 of our most recently graduated correctional officers have received this domestic violence curriculum in the last two BCRC classes.

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Last year, 51 deputy sheriffs attended a three hours domestic awareness training as a step toward building our 16 hours of domestic violence in-service training for our current deputy sheriffs. Our PSD Academy is also developing an 8 hour domestic violence training for our non-uniformed staff. We understand the important of domestic violence intervention training and have taken steps to train our employees.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.

Will Caron  
Young Progressives Demanding Action  
SB517: Domestic Abuse Intervention Training  
Testifying in strong support.

Dealing with a domestic abuse situation can be extremely tricky to navigate, and yet some public personnel, such as police officers, must routinely deal with such situations. Officers who receive good training are more likely to have a positive impact on the situation.

The primary area of training should be aimed at officer and victim safety. Learning and being able to apply specific field strategies and techniques will ensure safety, as well as the perpetrator's arrest. It is also important for officers to understand that simply responding to domestic violence calls has an impact on the circumstances. Police may have a positive impact through proper documentation and consistent responses to domestic violence calls. Officers should be informed during training that their procedures have an impact in three areas: They increase the chances of successful prosecution, they decrease possible repeat calls, and they provide closure for the officers themselves.

Consistent with the training focus on ensuring officer and victim safety as well as arresting the offender, training topics should include: the approach, identifying the aggressor, police report/identifying evidence, victim protection, and victim resources. Proper training in these topics will ensure a decrease in domestic violence repeat calls.

Training law enforcement to execute a proper approach that will ensure officer and victim safety involves officers obtaining all prior information on the call's location before making contact. The information includes mental health issues affecting the parties, the level of violence, the number of people involved, and the culture of the parties. Another important factor is entry into the premises. It is sometimes necessary for officers to determine the proper tactical approach to the call before entering the premises. Officers should be trained to visually observe the location's surroundings, stand to the side of the door, listen at the door before knocking, and identify him/herself as a police officer. Upon entering the premises, officers should be trained to ask for, visually scan for, and take possession of any weapons as well as immediately attempt to locate/ identify the aggressor. Officers should be trained to subsequently locate any other parties involved. To establish control of the situation, the responding officer separates all parties involved; maintains a watchful eye on all persons concerned; determines the aggressor, if not already identified; and removes the alleged assailant from the presence of the victim. It is important for the officer to prevent eye contact between all parties, as the aggressor could be controlling the victim's statements in this manner.

Many jurisdictions include training on domestic violence within their police academy curriculums. However, there is much left to be done. Law enforcement agencies and institutions responsible for advanced training of law enforcement officers need to continue to focus their efforts on ensuring that all officers understand the dynamics of domestic violence. This in turn will lead to more protection for its victims.



To: Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair  
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

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

Re: Testimony in **Support, SB 517** Relating to Domestic Violence

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in **strong support of SB 517** relating to domestic violence training. The Hawaii State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (HSCADV) is a statewide partnership of 25 domestic violence programs and shelter providers across our Hawaiian Islands. We would like to thank you all for your ongoing efforts to work towards ensuring victims of domestic violence in Hawaii are safe.

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. **SB 517** 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.

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.

Respectfully,

Marci Lopes  
Executive Director [mlopes@hscadv.org](mailto:mlopes@hscadv.org)

*Together we can do amazing things*