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**TESTIMONY FOR SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 136/SENATE  
RESOLUTION 57, ENCOURAGING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION,  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES,  
DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, AND JUDICIARY TO  
INCORPORATE RESEARCH AND STRATEGIES REGARDING ADVERSE  
CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES INTO THEIR WORK WITH CHILDREN  
SUFFERING FROM TRAUMA**

**Senate Committee on Human Services  
Hon. Josh Green, Chair  
Hon. Stanley Chang, Vice Chair**

**Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor  
Hon. Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair  
Hon. Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair**

**Wednesday, March 29, 2017, 2:45 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 016**

Honorable Chair Green, Chair Keith-Agaran, and committee members:

I am Kris Coffield, representing IMUAlliance, a nonpartisan political advocacy organization that currently boasts over 350 members. On behalf of our members, we offer this testimony in support of SCR 136/SR57, encouraging the Department of Education, Department of Health, Department of Human Services, Department of the Attorney General, and Judiciary to incorporate research and strategies regarding adverse childhood experiences into their work with children suffering from trauma.

IMUAlliance is one of the state's largest victim service providers for survivors of sex trafficking. Sex traffickers prey on our state's school children, often hovering around public school campuses to target our children. Traffickers are experts in observing and selecting their victims, and often infiltrate public schools by using students to recruit their peers. One of the largest child sex trafficking rings discovered on Hawai'i's shores was unearthed in 2014. It included 16 students, most whom were students at Mililani High School and Moanalua High School, two of our

state's top performing schools. Currently, IMUAlliance is involved in investigations at seven schools facing trafficking problems, all of which were initiated this year.

Over the past 10 years, we have provided comprehensive direct intervention services to 130 victims, successfully emancipating them from slavery and assisting in their restoration, while providing a range of targeted services to over 1,000 victims in total. We are also a leading provider of anti-sexual-exploitation education, teaching over 10,000 students each year about the perils of sex trafficking and the commercial sex trade. When we provide anti-trafficking instruction in the Department of Education schools, students report that themselves or someone they know are being or at risk of being trafficking at a 2:1 ratio—two victims for every class we teach. Teachers, in turn, frequently request information and assistance in meeting the needs of traumatized students and preventing their children from being ensnared by our state's prolific slave trade. Each of the victims we have assisted has suffered from complex and overlapping trauma, including post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and anxiety, dissociation, parasuicidal behavior, and substance abuse. Trafficking-related trauma can lead to a complete loss of identity. A victim we cared for in 2016, for example, had become so heavily bonded to her pimp that while under his grasp, she couldn't remember her own name.

Sex trafficking is a profoundly violent crime. The Average age of entry into commercial sexual exploitation is 13-years-old, with 60 percent of sex trafficked children being under the age of 16. Approximately 150 high-risk sex trafficking establishments are operational in Hawai'i. An estimated 1,500-2,500 women and children are victimized by sex traffickers in our state annually. Over 110,000 advertisements for Hawai'i-based prostitution are posted online each year, a number that has *not* decreased with the recent shuttering of Backpage.com's "adult services" section. More than 80 percent of runaway youth report being approached for sexual exploitation while on the run, over 30 percent of whom are targeted within the first 48 hours of leaving home.

With regard to mental health, sex trafficking victims are twice as likely to suffer from PTSD as a soldier in a war zone. Greater than 80 percent of victims report being repeatedly raped and 95 percent of report being physically assaulted, numbers that are underreported, according to the United States Department of State and numerous trauma specialists, because of the inability of many victims to recognize sexual violence as such. As one underage victim—now a survivor—told IMUAlliance prior to being rescued, "I can't be raped. Only good girls can be raped. I'm a bad girl. If I *want* to be raped, I have to *earn* it."

To stop slavery in Hawai'i, we must incorporate evidence-based, trauma-informed practices and training into all agencies that work with at-risk or victimized children. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this resolution.

Sincerely,  
Kris Coffield  
*Executive Director*  
IMUAlliance