

# COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

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## COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair

Rep. Ty Cullen, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 28, 2018

12:00 noon - FIN #2

Room 308

## STRONG SUPPORT FOR HB 1716 HD1 - YOUTH COMMISSION

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen and Members of the Committee!

My name is Kat Brady and I am the Coordinator of Community Alliance on Prisons, a community initiative promoting smart justice policies in Hawai'i for more than two decades. This testimony is respectfully offered on behalf of the families of **ASHLEY GREY, DAISY KASITATI, JOEY O'MALLEY, JESSICA FORTSON AND ALL THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE DIED UNDER THE "CARE AND CUSTODY" OF THE STATE** as well as the approximately 5,500 Hawai'i individuals living behind bars or under the "care and custody" of the Department of Public Safety on any given day. We are always mindful that approximately 1,600 of Hawai'i's imprisoned people are serving their sentences abroad thousands of miles away from their loved ones, their homes and, for the disproportionate number of incarcerated Kanaka Maoli, far, far from their ancestral lands.

This Commission is a great way to engage our children and youth in civic issues and to help them understand the broader reach of policymaking.

We urge the committee to pass this bill and help our children and youth become active participants in civic issues. These are our future leaders and our greatest treasures!

Mahlo for hearing this important bill. We urge the committee to pass it so it can cross over to the Senate.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

*The failure to invest in youth  
reflects a lack of compassion and a colossal failure of common sense.*

*Coretta Scott King*

# HAWAII YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

677 Ala Moana Boulevard, Suite 904 Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Phone: (808) 489-9549

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Rick Collins, President

Judith F. Clark, Executive  
Director

Bay Clinic

Big Brothers Big Sisters of  
Hawaii

Bobby Benson Center

Child and Family Service

Coalition for a Drug Free Hawaii

Domestic Violence Action Center

EPIC, Inc.

Family Programs Hawaii

Family Support Hawaii

Friends of the Children of  
West Hawaii

Hale Kipa, Inc.

Hale 'Opio Kauai, Inc.

Hawaii Children's Action  
Network

Hawaii Student Television

Ho'ola Na Pua

Kahi Mohala

Kokua Kalihi Valley

Maui Youth and Family Services

P.A.R.E.N.T.S., Inc.

Parents and Children Together  
(PACT)

Planned Parenthood of the  
Great Northwest and  
Hawaiian Islands

PHOCUSED

Salvation Army Family

Intervention Services

Sex Abuse Treatment Center

Susannah Wesley Community  
Center

The Catalyst Group

February 26, 2018

To: Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair  
And members of the Committee on Finance

## **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1716 HD 1 RELATING TO A YOUTH COMMISSION**

Hawaii Youth Services Network (HYSN), a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, supports HB 1716 HD 1 Relating to a Youth Commission.

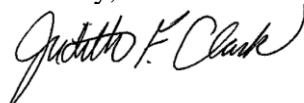
The Office of Youth Services needs input from the population it serves – youth. It will inform needs assessment, planning and evaluation of services for youth involved in the juvenile justice system and those who are at risk of juvenile crime, substance abuse, and homelessness. And there are many benefits for the youth who participate on the advisory commission as well.

The children and youth of Hawaii are our future. The way we treat them today, the opportunities we provide them and the investments we make in their development will influence the kind of adults they will become. Children and youth live and participate in our communities. We must recognize and value them as community assets. We need to include young people in decisions that affect their lives in communities, school systems, churches and in our public policy decision making.

Youth civic engagement leads to reduced risky behavior, increased success in school and leads to greater civic participation later in life. Civic engagement provides young people with opportunities to gain work experience, acquire new skills, and to learn responsibility and accountability—all while contributing to the good of their communities. “

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Judith F. Clark, MPH  
Executive Director

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Schools Our  
Keiki Deserve

808-351-0980  
808-627-0193

1488 Glen Ave.  
Wahiawā

**RE: SUPPORT OF HB 1716  
RELATING TO YOUTH COMMISSION**

Dear Chair Luke and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of HB 1716. There are solid educational and public policy reasons to support the creation of a Youth Commission. It will provide a site in which specific dispositions can be cultivated, and a model at the state level that can be duplicated at the local and school levels, so that young people can develop critical dispositions necessary for effective civic engagement, through practice and modeling.

The first important disposition is a willingness to use political participation through legal channels to raise questions about social problems and to achieve justice. This kind of experience can illuminate the structures and purposes of different types of political practices, and help young people practice strategies for gathering information and evaluating that information using basic principles of statistical, historical, and public policy analysis.

Second, young people need to develop the disposition to engage in public reasoning in a spirit of mutual respect and willingness to listen. If political debates in bodies like a Youth Commission involve disagreements about how to interpret pertinent values, how much weight to give them, and how to institutionalize them, young people should be able to develop the critical skills that enable them to reflect rationally on political debate and simultaneously to connect with others empathetically.

Sincerely,

Dr. Amy Perruso

Executive Director



david.miyashiro@hawaiikidscan.org  
hawaiikidscan.org

David Miyashiro  
Executive Director

February 27, 2018

Committee on Finance  
Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair  
Rep. Ty J.K. Cullen, Vice Chair

State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen and Members of the Committee,

HawaiiKidsCAN supports HB 1716 HD 1, which establishes a youth commission within the Office of Youth Services to advise the Governor and Legislature on the effects of legislative policies, needs, assessments, priorities, programs and budgets relating to youth; and appropriates funds to accomplish this important work.

Founded in 2017, HawaiiKidsCAN is a nonprofit organization committed to ensuring that Hawaii has an excellent and equitable education system that reflects the true voices of our communities and, in turn, has a transformational impact on our children and our state. HawaiiKidsCAN is a branch of 50CAN: The 50-State Campaign for Achievement Now. We believe a successful education system is one that puts Hawaii's children first by prioritizing what students need to succeed, thrive and grow into our local and global leaders. We believe that real and lasting change toward an equitable education system will only occur when communities and kids themselves are deeply engaged, supported and heard.

Across our state and nation, adults continually wring our hands at the lack of youth participation in essential civic activities like of voting, yet we don't create ample opportunities for that generation to engage in our democracy through advocacy and policy making. When we make the times, locations and structures of our policymaking institutions inaccessible, we too often send the message to young people that their involvement, and their voices, do not matter. On the other hand, we recognize more each day their power and value when they demand to be heard, most recently on the national stage from the survivors of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting.

A local youth commission would establish a structured and direct line of communications between our policymakers and our youth regarding key issues that impact our communities. HawaiiKidsCAN strongly encourages diverse and underrepresented voices to receive the earnest consideration they deserve in the pool of potential appointees. This representation is critical right now and for the future of our democracy, because it will immediately elevate the invaluable perspectives these youths can provide and create an ever-widening source of new role models and leaders across our communities.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,



David Miyashiro  
Founding Executive Director  
HawaiiKidsCAN

**HB-1716-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2018 9:06:05 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 12:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Melodie Aduja	OCC Legislative Priorities Committee, Democratic Party of Hawai'i	Support	No

Comments:

**PRESENTATION OF THE  
OAHU COUNTY COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES**

**DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAI'I**

TO THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

REGULAR SESSION OF 2018

Tuesday, February 27, 2018

12:00 P.M.

Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 308

RE: Testimony in Support of HB **1716 HD1**, RELATING TO A YOUTH COMMISSION

To the Honorable Sylvia Luke, Chair; the Honorable Ty J.K. Cullen, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Committee on Finance:

Good afternoon, my name is Melodie Aduja. I serve as Chair of the Oahu County Legislative Priorities Committee of the Democratic Party of Hawaii. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on House Bill No **1716 HD1**, relating to the Youth Commission; Office of Youth Services; and an appropriation.

The OCC Legislative Priorities Committee is in favor of House Bill No. **1716 HD1** and support its passage.

House Bill No. **1716 HD1**, is in accord with the Platform of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i ("DPH"), 2016, as it establishes a youth commission within the Office of Youth Services to advise the Governor and Legislature on the effects of legislative policies, needs, assessments, priorities, programs, and budgets relating to youth, and appropriates funds.

The DPH Platform provides that "[w]e believe that all families should have an equal opportunity to build their assets and become self-sufficient, and we support a strong safety net of programs that will afford them the opportunity to do so. We must protect our children, our future, from violence and neglect and provide them with a safe and healthy environment in which to grow and thrive.

We support initiatives that enhance access and equity in education, employment, and business opportunities intended to lift families and individuals out of poverty and remove existing barriers to equal opportunity in our communities." (Platform of the DPH, P. 4, Lines 184-191 (2016)).

Given that House Bill No. **1716 HD1** establishes a youth commission within the Office of Youth Services to advise the Governor and Legislature on the effects of legislative policies, needs, assessments, priorities, programs, and budgets relating to youth, and appropriates funds, it is the position of the OCC Legislative Priorities Committee to support this measure.

Thank you very much for your kind consideration.

Sincerely yours,  
/s/ Melodie Aduja

Melodie Aduja, Chair, OCC Legislative Priorities Committee

Email: legislativepriorities@gmail.com, Tel.: (808) 258-8889





1130 N. NIMITZ HWY, SUITE C-210, HONOLULU, HI 96817  
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## **House Committee on Finance**

From: **Delia Ulima, Statewide Initiative Manager**  
HI H.O.P.E.S. Initiative, EPIC 'Ohana, Inc.  
Re: **In SUPPORT of HB 1716**

Aloha! My name is Delia Ulima and I am a Statewide Initiative Manager for the HI H.O.P.E.S. Initiative. We are the local site for the national Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative/Annie E. Casey Foundation and EPIC 'Ohana is the lead agency for this work in Hawai'i. The Initiative works with systems, such as the Department of Human Services-Child Welfare Services, Family Court and other service providers and partners within the public and private sector to create opportunities and support transitioning foster youth to successfully move into adulthood and become a contributing part of our community.

I would like to submit testimony in support of House Bill 1716, which establishes a youth advisory commission within the offices of youth services to advise the governor and legislature on issues relating to youth.

One of my primary roles with the HI H.O.P.E.S. Initiative at EPIC 'Ohana is to oversee the work of the HI H.O.P.E.S. youth leadership boards. These boards are made up of current and former foster youth between the ages of 14-26 and there are five boards; on O'ahu, Kaua'i, Maui and East and West Hawai'i. Their roles are to educate others about the needs and experiences of foster youth, advocate for policy and practice improvements, and collaborate with key stakeholders to create opportunities and supports for young people so they can thrive and become successful adults. These boards have been in existence since March 2010 and have made a tremendous impact on making positive changes within the child welfare system and collaborating with the community to improve outcomes for foster youth. Some of their legislative achievements include championing the efforts to extend voluntary care to age 21, Medicaid to 26 for former foster youth before the Affordable Care Act became law and a normalcy and prudent parenting law that encourages social development and protects caregivers, signed into law on June 29 of 2016. This year, they are championing a bill that provides foster youth in care with clear rights. Their voices are powerful and they are resilient, passionate individuals who have overcome enormous challenges and yet still choose to have hope and to serve their foster brothers and sisters. They are leaders and serve with purpose and vision. Many of them have gone on to college, graduate school, have families and are serving in various capacities throughout the community.

It is for this reason that I support the creation of a committee that will allow young people to have a voice and the ear of the governor and the legislature. When we listen to young people about what is important to them and about those things that impact their lives, we all win as a community. I give this support, however, with some well-intentioned recommendations. I think we, as adults, often want to include the youth voice and may create groups or committees thinking that it will yield the outcomes that we're hoping for, but that is not always the case. In my experience overseeing the work of several youth boards over the course





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of the last several years, a strong and effective youth board/committee that practices authentic youth engagement will ideally have the following: structure, guidance, support, and opportunity. There has to be an adult leader/s to guide, mentor, support and train them. There needs to be youth-friendly and age-appropriate guidelines and expectations. There has to be training, support, preparation, compensation for their time and the opportunity to practice, present, participate, advocate and collaborate. It takes time, dedication, the right skill set and tools to encourage and develop youth engagement and leadership, the right people and a budget to adequately run youth boards or advisory councils in an efficient manner, in a way that is beneficial for the intended purpose and for the personal and professional development of the young person.

This is an amazing opportunity for young people and for the State. I support HB 1716 and am excited for the prospect of a youth advisory council for the State of Hawaii.

Mahalo Nui Loa,

Delia Ulima





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Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen and members of the House Committee on Finance,

The Young Progressives Demanding Action – Hawai‘i, representing nearly 600 registered members, **strongly supports** HB1716. As students and young people, our organization represents the future of a politically active and engaged citizenry. Our generations—Gen Y and Gen Z—will be the generations to solve climate chaos; to figure out how to feed the Earth's rising population sustainably; to ensure that every human has access to the resources they need to survive and thrive; to end war. We have to be, because if we don't it seems unlikely that we, as a species, will be able to continue our existence on this planet, at least as we have come to understand existence in the 21st century. In the spirit of that lofty goal, we believe it is imperative for your people to be stepping up in leadership positions early, and to be given a seat at the table to express the positions, ideas and drive that young people possess, and that can help lead our state, our country, and the whole world, toward a brighter era of justice, equity and sustainability.

Mahalo for your support,

Will Caron  
Social Justice Action Committee Chair  
8083874920

**HB-1716-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2018 2:32:59 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 12:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
E. Ileina Funakoshi	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

**HB-1716-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2018 12:42:15 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 12:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
John Bickel	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

As a teacher, I see great value in the both quaaality of ideas in our youth leaders as a value to aall of us and in the value to them in having a greater part in public pohlicy. This bill supports both goals.

**HB-1716-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2018 6:42:14 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 12:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
chelsea pang	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support youth commission funding

**HB-1716-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2018 10:29:21 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 12:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Erica Scott	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

**HB-1716-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2018 8:13:44 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 12:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Teri Heede	Individual	Support	No

Comments:



**HB-1716-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2018 7:30:30 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 12:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Barbara Polk	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I SUPPPORT HB1716 to give youth a stronger voice in policy making and encourage active participation in the political process in the future.

**HB-1716-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2018 10:35:32 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 12:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
rachael yergan	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

This bill is an integral part of helping the youth become productive citizens

**HB-1716-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2018 10:22:14 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 12:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Javier Mendez-Alvarez	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

**HB-1716-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/26/2018 2:44:39 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2018 12:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

As a long time educator, it is great to see that others are finally recognizing the knowledge that our youth hold and are willing to share. I support truly giving youth a voice to which we listen and encourage them. Too many times, the "commissions" are in name only, for picture taking opportunities etc. It makes so much sense since they are the ones truly being affected strongly by our current world.