

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
**OFFICE OF YOUTH SERVICES**  
1010 Richards Street, Suite 314  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

January 29, 2018

**TO:** The Honorable John M. Mizuno, Chair  
House Committee on Health and Human Services

**FROM:** Merton Chinen, Executive Director

**SUBJECT: HB 1716, Relating to Youth Commission**

Hearing: Wednesday, January 31, 2018, 9:30 a.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 329

**OFFICE'S POSITION:** OYS supports the intent of the measure but requests that any appropriation not affect the priorities in the Executive Biennium Budget. There are currently youth driven advisory boards or councils in the community that focus on areas pertinent to their specific interests, such as the HI HOPES Youth Advisory Council that aims to educate, advocate, and collaborate with the Department of Human Services, Child Welfare Services, to improve the child welfare system, including foster care. Another example is the Teen Link Hawaii Youth Advisors sponsored by the Coalition for a Drug-Free Hawaii that provides valuable input regarding youth perspectives on living a substance-free lifestyle. OYS believes the youth voice should be recognized and included in determining policies and recommendations on important matters impacting their lives. OYS has the following additional comments on coordinating and sustaining an effective youth advisory commission:

- Members should be diverse, including a strong representation of youth at risk
- Adequate funding for coordinating, training and implementation is critical for success
- Recognize youth have busy schedules, need flexible options for meetings, and should be compensated accordingly for their valuable participation

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the measure is to establish a youth advisory commission within the Office of Youth Services to advise the Governor and Legislature on issues relating to youth. Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.

# HAWAII YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

677 Ala Moana Boulevard, Suite 904 Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Phone: (808) 489-9549

Web site: <http://www.hysn.org> E-mail: [info@hysn.org](mailto:info@hysn.org)

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

January 26, 2018

To: Representative John Mizuno  
And members of the Committee on Health and Human Services

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

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

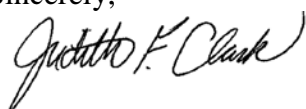
The Office of Youth Services needs input from the population it serves – youth. It will inform needs assessment, planning and evaluation of services for youth involved in the juvenile justice system and those who are at risk of juvenile crime, substance abuse, and homelessness. And there are many benefits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

# COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

P.O. Box 37158, Honolulu, HI 96837-0158

Phone/E-Mail: (808) 927-1214 / [kat.caphi@gmail.com](mailto:kat.caphi@gmail.com)



## COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Rep. John Mizuno, Chair

Rep. Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair

Wednesday, January 31, 2018

9:30 am

Room 329

### STRONG SUPPORT - HB 1716 - YOUTH ADVISORY COMMISSION IN OYS

Aloha Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Kobayashi 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 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.

Community Alliance on Prisons is in strong support of HB 1466 that establishes a youth advisory commission within the office of youth services to advise the governor and legislature on issues relating to youth.

We respectfully ask that the committee consider adding language that ensures that some of the youth have experience in the juvenile justice and/or foster care systems to provide a broader perspective for policymakers on the needs of our youth.

We see this Commission as an important way to engage a broad cross-section of our youth, especially those who have been involved with the juvenile justice system, have been run-aways, homeless and in foster care. Their experiences can help frame policy issues that would be so much better informed if we involved the youth who have been through these struggles.

### THE BENEFITS OF INVOLVING YOUTH IN DECISION-MAKING<sup>1</sup>

Recognizing and involving youth in a community's decision-making processes is about more than engaging young people for the sake of inclusivity. It's about recognizing the measurable benefits youth offer to organizations and whole communities.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Benefits of Involving Youth in Decision-making.

<http://www.peernetbc.com/benefits-of-involving-youth-in-decision-making>

Youth need meaning, control and connectedness to thrive in an adult-youth partnership. Youth must feel like they are involved in something important, have a valued say in what happens and the opportunity to work with other youth and adults in the community.

*How adults benefit from involving youth in decision-making:*

- Adults begin to see youth as contributors, and stereotypes are broken down.
- Adult levels of commitment, attachment and energy for an organization often increase when they gain an opportunity to work with youth.
- Adults gain a better understanding of young people; a fresh perspective; a bridge to other youth; enthusiasm, creativity, flexibility and pro-activeness.

*How organizations and communities benefit from involving youth in decision-making:*

- Involving youth is a human rights issue! Involving young people fulfills the right to be involved in decision-making and recognizes full citizenship.
- Engaging youth encourages young people to become active community members who will be more likely to vote and be engaged in the democratic process.
- Young people are given the opportunity to assume leadership roles and gain skills and practical experience leading to more effective decision-making in the future.
- Granting youth control over decisions affecting their lives builds capacity in young people to take ownership for their lives and their communities.

## **ADDRESSING THE INTERSECTIONS OF JUVENILE JUSTICE INVOLVEMENT AND YOUTH HOMELESSNESS<sup>2</sup>**

A very powerful study was recently released by the Coalition for Juvenile Justice<sup>2</sup> that listed Principles for Change.

“A young person’s involvement with the justice system can increase their likelihood of later experiencing homelessness for many reasons, including the fact that educational disruptions and juvenile delinquency records can make it harder to obtain employment. Youth experiencing homelessness may also be swept into the juvenile justice system through laws that prohibit simply being in public spaces, such as juvenile curfews, or anti-sitting or sleeping ordinances. Both juvenile justice involvement and youth homelessness have long-term negative consequences.

---

<sup>2</sup> ADDRESSING THE INTERSECTIONS OF JUVENILE JUSTICE INVOLVEMENT AND YOUTH HOMELESSNESS: PRINCIPLES FOR CHANGE <http://juvjustice.org/sites/default/files/ckfinder/files/FINAL%20Principles%20.pdf>

The Principles in Part I of this document provide a roadmap for communities to help young people avoid experiencing juvenile justice system involvement and/or youth homelessness. This includes doing the following:

Principle 1: Ensure that the laws and policies in your jurisdiction do not lead youth experiencing homelessness to be cited, arrested, or charged for survival acts or “quality of life” offenses.

Principle 2: Ensure that young people are diverted from juvenile justice system involvement whenever possible, and that any diversion programs or services are appropriately tailored to meet the needs of youth experiencing homelessness.

Principle 3: When juvenile justice system involvement cannot be avoided, ensure that comprehensive transition planning begins immediately after – and continues throughout – a youth’s confinement or probation supervision.

Principle 4: Ensure your community has both long- and short-term safe housing options available for youth who are, or have been, involved with the juvenile justice system.

Principle 5: Ensure your community provides youth and their families with related services and supports that can help them obtain and keep safe and stable housing.

Principle 6: Ensure that youth, and their families, are not kicked out of their homes or denied housing because the youth have been arrested or adjudicated for a delinquency offense.

Principle 7: Ensure youth help lead and shape the identification and implementation of policy and practice solutions to address the connections between juvenile justice and youth homelessness.

Principle 8: Ensure efforts prioritize lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth, gender non-conforming (GNC) youth, youth of color, and other over-represented populations to address and reduce the disproportionalities that exist in the populations of youth experiencing homelessness and/or involved with the juvenile justice system.

Principle 9: Ensure that law enforcement, courts, schools, and service providers employ gender-responsive and age- and culturally-appropriate trauma-informed responses when working with youth.

Principle 10: Undertake and fund research to help better understand the issue of youth homelessness and identify solutions.

Part II of this document includes specific resources and examples to guide communities as they work to put Principles for Change into practice. We also encourage you to engage with the Collaborating for Change project at [www.juvjustice.org/homelessness](http://www.juvjustice.org/homelessness) as we continue to develop new resources on these issues.”

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!

Mahalo for hearing this important bill. We urge the committee to pass it. Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

*The youth is the hope of our future.*

*Jose Rizal*

**HB-1716**

Submitted on: 1/29/2018 7:46:42 AM

Testimony for HHS on 1/31/2018 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Melodie Aduja	OCC Legislative Priorities	Support	No

Comments:

**PRESENTATION OF THE  
OAHU COUNTY COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES  
DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAII  
TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE  
REGULAR SESSION OF 2018  
Wednesday, January 31, 2018**

9:30 a.m.

Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 329

**RE: Testimony in Support** of HB1716, RELATING TO A YOUTH COMMISSION

To the Honorable John M. Mizuno, Chair; the Honorable Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice-Chair and Members of the Committee on Health & Human Services:

Good morning, 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, relating to the establishment of a youth commission within the Office of Youth Services. The OCC Legislative Priorities Committee is in favor of House Bill No. 1716 and support its passage.

House Bill No. 1716, 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. Youth, under the age of eighteen, should have access and input to the legislative policymaking process. Issues such as affordable housing, jobs, and education, primarily affect youth. Youth need places to live, depend on good employment to support themselves and their families, and seek quality education for their children, if any.

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 gives the youth better representation in the legislative policymaking process on legislation that affects this protected group, 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](mailto:legislativepriorities@gmail.com), Tel.: (808) 258-8889

Aloha Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Kobayashi,

Members of the Health and Human Services Committee. My name is Jun Shin. I am 18 years old, a freshman at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, and a board member at-large for Young Progressives Demanding Action – Hawaii. I am writing this bill in strong support of HB1716 which is due for a hearing on Wednesday, January 31, 2018 at 9:30 AM, in regards to the creation of a youth commission in the State of Hawaii and ask it to be advanced through this committee.

I want to personally emphasize how important this commission will be to individuals under the age of the majority, in the youth commission's case, 14-17 year olds. Although they are not eligible to vote, here are some of the things that you as a 14-17 year old can do in the State of Hawaii:

14 year olds: **You can start getting employed and work.**

15 year olds: **By 15 ½, you can begin to drive a learner's permit and even get married with the permission of your parents/guardians.**

16 year olds: **Legally can have sexual intercourse, have a provisional license.**

17 year olds: **You can have a full on unrestricted driver's license, and donate blood with the proper permission from your parents/guardians.**

And as TurboTax pointed out in an article before tax reform took place in our national government, "The Internal Revenue Service requires all taxpayers, regardless of age, to file a tax return and pay the appropriate income tax in any year their gross income exceeds certain levels. This requirement extends to the children you claim as dependents. However, unlike adult taxpayers, children have more flexibility in choosing how to comply" (<https://turbotax.intuit.com/tax-tips/family/tax-filing-requirements-for-children/L8ice6z0K>).

With these individuals already living as unofficial adults or having the potential to access these rights and responsibilities, is it not right to allow them to have a voice on the issues that will affect them and the families that they may have already started, such as a affordable housing, homelessness, tax reform, healthcare costs, paid family leave, etc? We have immense voter apathy and so that is why through this bill, we have the ability to personally engage the next generation of voters. We can help them to see how important politics is in their lives. By allowing young people access to government, allowing them personal interaction with our decision makers, and sending them out to the community to form connections and to hear the voices of their peers, we can immensely transform Hawaii for generations to come.

Thank you for your hard work and deliberation on this issue,

Jun Shin,  
Board Member At-Large  
YPDA Hawaii  
1561 Kanunu St. Honolulu, HI 96814  
Cell: 8082556663  
Email: junshinbusiness729@gmail.com

**HB-1716**

Submitted on: 1/30/2018 2:09:28 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/31/2018 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support this bill as a high school teacher who sees both the need for youth input on policy and valuable young talent to be brought to the table.

**LATE**

**HB-1716**

Submitted on: 1/30/2018 9:07:05 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/31/2018 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Richard Mizusawa		Support	No

Comments:

Dear Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Kobayashi and Esteemed Members of the House Committee on Health & Human Services,

My name is Richard Mizusawa and I support this bill to establish a Youth Commission. There have been many elected officials, community leaders, and most importantly, young people, who have worked tirelessly to get a youth commission established in our state for the past several years. Having this platform for our youth to be a voice in government and to have a say in the issues that matter to them and their future is key to ensuring all voices and perspectives are heard, and a true investment into developing the leaders of tomorrow. I was actively involved in student governance, from high school to my college years, and being a voice for my peers was probably the highlight of my time as a student. I hope this same experience can be felt and provided to others who want to also be a voice and advocate on issues that matter most for the youth of Hawaii. I ask for your support and encourage your colleagues in the Legislature to come together to make this happen. Mahalo for your time and consideration of my testimony.

Richard Mizusawa, M.Ed.

**LATE**

**HB-1716**

Submitted on: 1/30/2018 6:15:01 PM  
Testimony for HHS on 1/31/2018 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments: