



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

April 5, 2018

TO: The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Merton Chinen, Executive Director

SUBJECT: HB 2169 HD1, Relating to Youth Suicide Prevention

LATE

Hearing: Friday, April 6, 2018, 11:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 211

OFFICE'S POSITION: OYS supports the measure. Suicide is a serious community and public health problem. Prevention of suicide requires ongoing awareness, education, and training to provide multiple-tools for Hawaii's people to prevent suicide. Youth at-risk are vulnerable to suicide and require a caring network of responsive adults and peers to act in a timely manner to connect appropriate services to assist and intervene. OYS defers to the Governor's Executive Budget request for appropriations and personnel priorities.

As a member of the Prevent Suicide Hawai'i Taskforce, we were guided by four core values related to suicide prevention—Aloha, Ola, Connectivity, and Culture. *Aloha*, is essential for all relationships and imperative to suicide prevention. *Ola* refers to life, health, hope, healing, contentment, and peace after a struggle, creating both a personal and spiritual sense of connectedness to others and place. Connectivity in times of need is frequently expressed by those who have attempted suicide, as well as by those dedicated to preventing suicide in our communities. Culture refers to the values, traditions, and practices, of any group and is an important consideration in suicide prevention, particularly with our diverse communities. The Hawai'i Suicide Prevention Strategy recognizes that suicide prevention should be woven into all aspects of our lives.

The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz

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PURPOSE: The purpose of the measure is to appropriate funds to support youth suicide early intervention, prevention, and education initiatives in Maui County.



ONLINE SUBMITTAL
Submitted: April 5, 2018

HEARING: April 6, 2018 11:00 in room #211

TO: Senate Committee on Ways & Means
Sen. Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Sen. Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

LATE

FROM: Eva Andrade, President

RE: Strong Support for HB2169 HD1 Relating to Youth Suicide Prevention

Hawaii Family Forum is a non-profit, pro-family education organization committed to preserving and strengthening life, family and religious freedom in Hawaii. This year we celebrate 20 years of serving the faith-based community! We support this bill that provides necessary funding for youth suicide early prevention, intervention and education.

We are committed to defending the sanctity of human life from conception until natural death, and everything that comes between. Many people in our community are concerned about suicide, because it affects the vulnerable people in our community, especially our youth and elderly.

In Hawaii, suicide was the most common cause of fatal injuries among Hawaii residents between 2010 and 2014, accounting for one-quarter of all fatal injuries and experts point out that one person dies by suicide in Hawaii every two days. Recent testimony has said that is one suicide every two days. This is heartbreaking and something we absolutely need to change! Several of our pastors have dealt with this very issue over the past few months.

Experts rightly point out that suicidal behaviors, for people of any age, are usually rooted in many different factors, with mental health issues playing an important role in the overall mix. It is a "perfect storm" of emotional issues and the only way to begin making a difference, is by identifying and treating each person. And the good news, is that it is fixable by awareness and treatment.

If this bill is passed with the appropriate funds necessary, Maui youth will have resources that may very well save their life. Protecting these precious lives are an outcome that is one upon which everyone in the community will agree. Funding for these types of services, we hope, will also be extended to each of the other islands.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support.