

HB-2277-HD-1

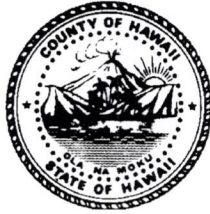
Submitted on: 2/17/2018 1:31:31 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
jewel dupre	DHS	Support	No

Comments:

Harry Kim
Mayor



Wil Okabe
Managing Director

Barbara J. Kossow
Deputy Managing Director

County of Hawai'i
Office of the Mayor

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February 20, 2018

Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Committee on Finance
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 308
Honolulu, HI 96813

Representative Ty J.K. Cullen, Vice-Chair
Committee on Finance
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 308
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chair Luke, Vice-Chair Cullen and Committee Members:

Re: HB 2277, HD 1 Relating to Child Welfare Services
Hearing Date: 02/21/18 – 2:00 pm; House Conference Room 308

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB 2277, HD 1.

My staff and I have been made aware of the critical need to improve child welfare services in Hawai'i County. While both of the State's East and West Hawai'i offices are suffering from a shortage of manpower, the initiative proposed in HB 2277, HD 1 recognizes the reality that it is in East Hawai'i where the State has the best chance to hire and retain the necessary personnel.

The caseload numbers that were presented at the first hearing on this bill varied a great deal, but it seems clear that the child welfare caseload in East Hawai'i is shocking and disturbing. Child welfare workers have so many clients that it would be considered unacceptable by national standards. Add to that the handicap of being asked to cover a huge geographic area, requiring a great deal of time-consuming travel, and it is no wonder that the community is begging for your assistance.

The positions and funding requested in HB 2277, HD 1 are for a "pilot project," and if that is determined to be the best way to give some relief to the East Hawai'i workers and the keiki they serve, then I defer to your wisdom on that matter. My main concern is that the workers and their clients get the relief called for, and the sooner the better.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Wil Okabe
Managing Director, County of Hawai'i



Hawai'i Psychological Association

For a Healthy Hawai'i

P.O. Box 833
Honolulu, HI 96808

www.hawaiipsychology.org

Email: hpaexec@gmail.com
Phone: (808) 521-8995

Testimony SUPPORTING HB2277_HD1
RELATING TO CHILD WELFARE SERVICES
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair
Rep. Ty J.K. Cullen, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 21 2018, 2:00 P.M
Conference Room 308
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

The Hawaii Psychological Association strongly supports HB2277_HD1 and applauds this effort to develop a pilot project in East Hawaii that would provide sufficient staffing to significantly lower the caseloads of Child welfare workers in this needy area.

In our work as clinical psychologists treating children and families in the aftermath of abuse and neglect, our members partner frequently with Child Welfare workers, and observe the struggles they are having trying to serve our neediest and most vulnerable children. This is due to the inherent difficulties of the demanding job, and particularly due to insufficient resources and high caseloads.

Improving the child welfare system is highly fiscally prudent! Psychological research over the past two decades on Adverse Childhood Experiences (Felitti et al., 1998) has demonstrated conclusively that abuse, neglect, separation from parents, and other traumatic early experiences play a major role in the development of substance abuse disorders and mental and physical illnesses, and can lead to early death for those impacted. Effective early support and intervention to help these children heal is extremely important. Having a caseworker who can pay attention and make sure their basic needs are met is an important foundational part of such efforts. This is a "pay me now or pay me later" situation. We can spend money on higher quality Child Welfare services now for these children or we can pay later for high-cost mental health treatment, healthcare costs for chronic illnesses, substance abuse programs, or prison.

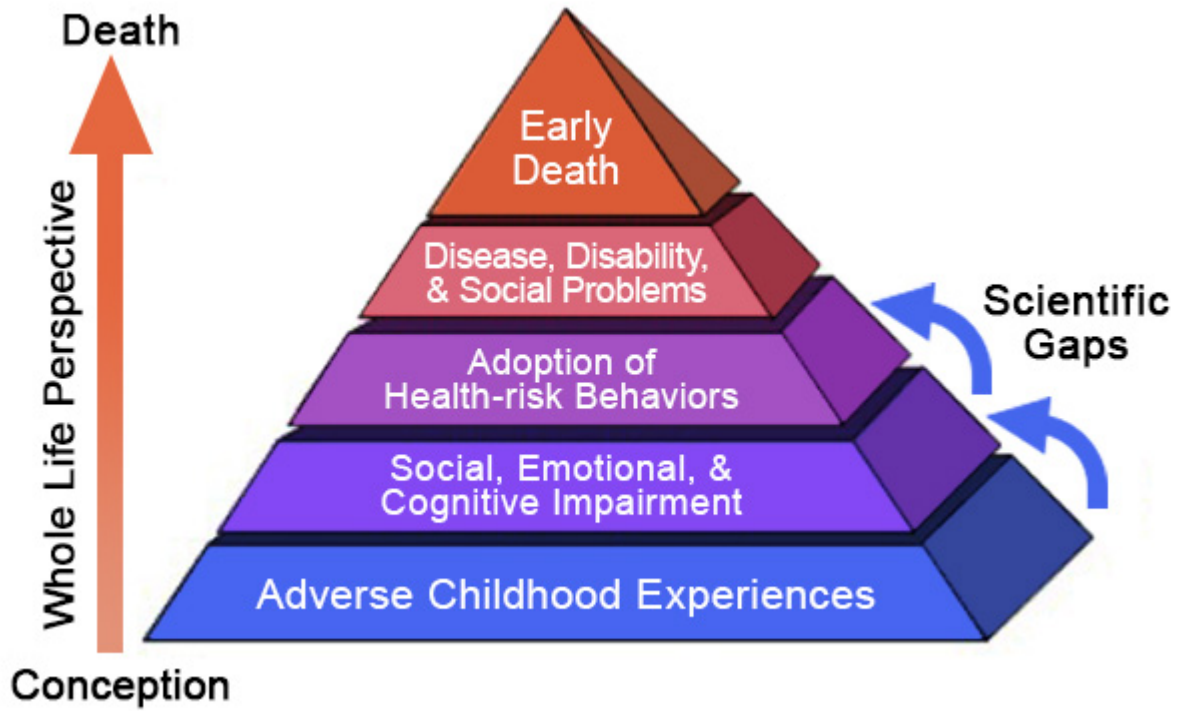
Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this important bill.

Respectfully submitted

Tanya Gamby, Ph.D.
2018 HPA President

Reference

Felitti VJ, Anda RF, Nordenberg D, Williamson DF, Spitz AM, Edwards V, Koss MP, Marks JS. Relationship of childhood abuse and household dysfunction to many of the leading causes of death in adults: the adverse childhood experiences (ACE) study. *Am J Prev Med.* 1998;14:245–258.



HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2018 11:53:58 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Joseph OConnell	East Hawaii Friends of Foster Families	Support	Yes

Comments:

Testimony in support of HB2277

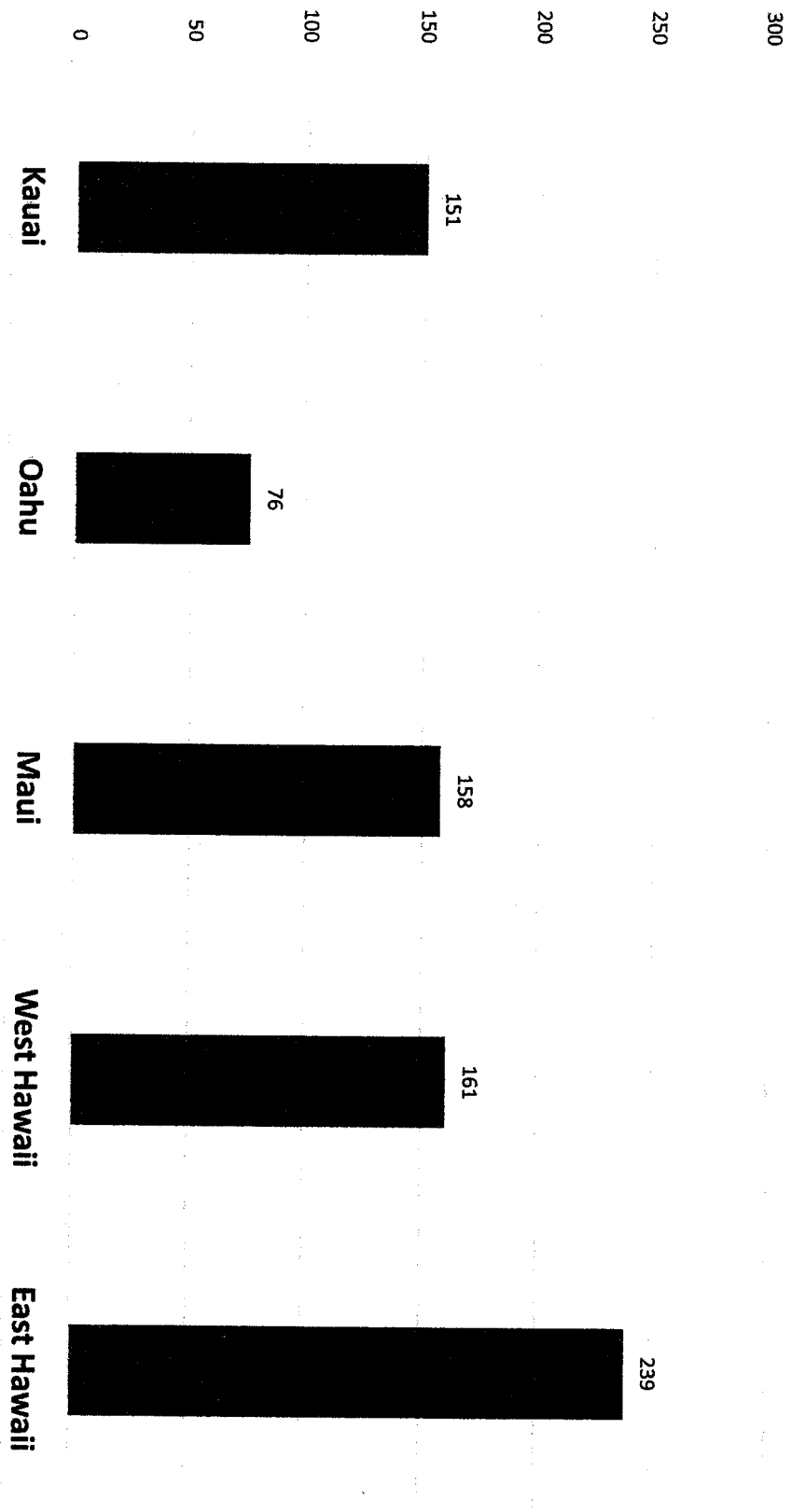
Thank you for this opportunity to testify. I am a former foster youth that grew up on Hawaii Island. I am able to submit testimony to you today because me and my siblings' lives were saved by CWS intervention and I am grateful for the vital work they do. Today I work for EPIC 'Ohana that amongst other things provides conferencing services to CWS and their clients. Additionally, I am a foster parent.

Within the last 10 years East Hawaii CWS has lost 19 positions, lost their Pahoia regional office, has increased its geographic coverage, and has to comply with more standards. CWS serves the outliers of our community. These children and families are the most vulnerable in our community and deserve better. To hear that each worker is carrying 45-55 children at any given time in unconscionable. When we fail our children we fail our community. East Hawaii CWS has consistently proven that when they have open positions they are able to fill them. They are the only section in the state that can say this. When the state is needed to step in for the immediate well-being of children they take on tremendous liability. It is in the state and community's best interest to give our social workers the necessary resources to do their job. Thank you again for this opportunity. Improving outcomes for our CWS children is my passion. Please contact at any time on this matter.

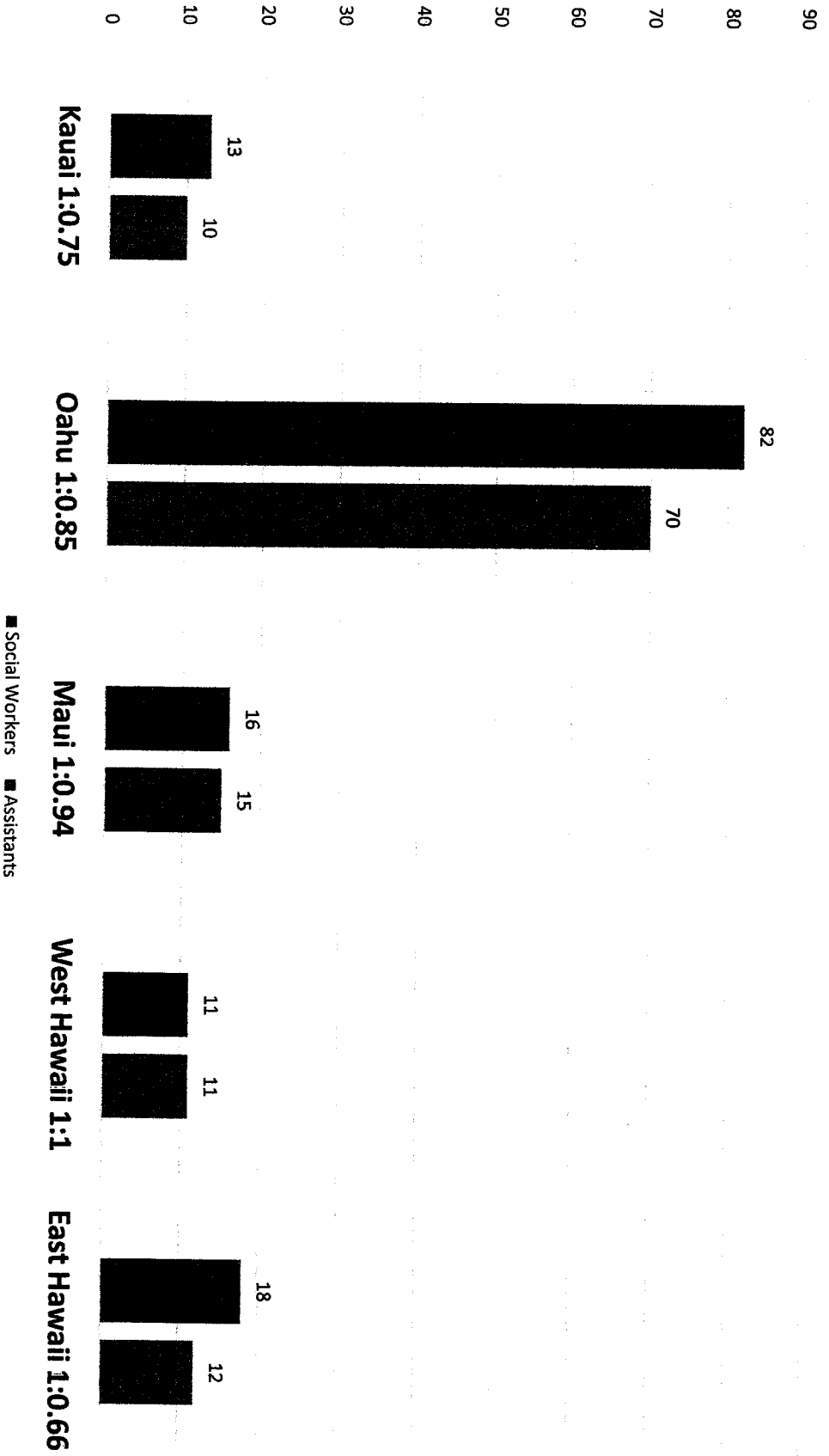
Respectfully Submitted,

Joseph OConnell
Friends of Foster Families
josephmoc@gmail.com
808-640-0905

Child Abuse Rate Per 100,000 Residents



CWS Staffing Positions w/ Ratios



The numbers represent the amount of positions available at each section. Assistants help the case managers with many tasks including supervising visits, transporting youth, and processing payments. Assistants are vital to a social worker being able to operate efficiently. As seen in this graph East Hawaii has the smallest ratio of support staff positions when compared to other sections.

Then & Now

East Hawaii CVS 2008:

- 56 Positions
- 2 Offices (Hilo and Pahoa)
- Covering North Hilo, South Hilo, Puna, and part of Hamakua and Ka'u.

East Hawaii CVS 2018:

- 37 Positions (34% Decrease)
- 1 Office (Hilo)
- Covering North Hilo, South Hilo Puna and ALL OF Hamakua and Ka'u.



ONLINE SUBMITTAL

Hearing on: Wednesday, February 21, 2018 @ 2:00 p.m..
Conference Room #308

DATE: February 19, 2016

TO: House Committee on Finance
TO: Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair
Rep. Ty Cullen, Vice Chair

FROM: Eva Andrade, President

RE: Support for HB2277 HD1 Relating to Child Welfare Services

Hawaii Family Forum is a non-profit, pro-family education organization committed to preserving and strengthening families in Hawaii, representing a network of various Christian Churches and various faith-based groups. This year we are celebrating 20 years serving the faith-based community in Hawaii. We support this bill that will create a pilot program on the big island to provide support for the social workers doing heroic work with an unrealistic caseload.

With the increase of children in foster care, lack of resources and overworked case workers, it is apparent that something needs to be done. Every child deserves to be in place where they are protected and free from abuse, neglect and abandonment. This bill is focused and specific, and it provides a response that is measurable and achievable. In fact, it will be great if this pilot program ultimately expands to all the islands.

Keiki in the foster care system are there by no choice of their own. Family circumstances create a wheel of uncertainty and families look to social workers for help navigating the system. Social workers become social workers because they care about families and want to do the best by them. This bill is a practical way to provide them with the support and resources they need to do exactly that.

Mahalo for your continued support of children in the foster care system, the families that are doing their best to support them, and the social workers who provide the glue to keep them together.



Friends of the Children's Justice Center of East Hawaii (FCJCEH)
P. O. Box 6908 ▲ Hilo, HI 96720
Bus: (808) 935-8755 ▲ Fax: (808) 935-8757
E-Mail: fcjceh@hawaii.rr.com / Web Site: fcjcEastHawaii.org

February 19, 2018

The Honorable Representative Sylvia Luke
 Finance Chair

Dear Representative Luke,

The FCJC understands that you will be reviewing HB2277 which address a possible pilot project for increased staffing within East Hawaii Child Welfare Services. We would appreciate your consideration of the information we have provided in this letter when you make your decision on HB2277. This letter is for informational proposes only.

As a well-respected non-profit in the East Hawaii community for 28 years, our mission has been to help sexually, physically, emotionally abused and neglected children. Our vision is to help abused and neglected children of today break the cycle of abuse tomorrow. We do this in partnership with the Children's Justice Center of East Hawaii, by providing funds and resources to support the needs of these children. Our non-profit offers hope, encouragement and opportunity for victims of child abuse.

One of the agencies that we have the opportunity to work with is the East Hawaii Child Welfare Services (CWS) units. We are an additional resource to children in foster custody, as our grants offer funding for emergency, special needs and enhancement items and services that are not available to foster children from any other community resource, or provided for by State of Hawaii funding. In 2016 and 2017 we averaged servicing approximately 600 documented abused and neglected children in East Hawaii, spending approximately \$100,000.00 each year.

In East Hawaii CWS workers can drive more than 112 miles round trip to conduct one home visit. CWS workers have disclosed to us that they are being forced to pick between going on a monthly home visit to see a child or complete paperwork, and that staff are being forced to forgo the non-mandatory parts of their position.

Over the last seven years we have observed CWS worker "burn-out", the lack of CWS manpower and time, and increased CWS work requirements and caseloads, all of which have contributed to the lack in submittal of requests to our organization for foster children. We feel strongly that the items and services provided to foster children by our organization are critical in helping them heal, and gives them the same opportunities as their peers. Please take a few extra minutes to view a video created by one of our board members, which highlights

FCJCEH
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PROGRAM CORDINATOR:

Robin Benedict

MISSION:

The mission of the Friends of the Children's Justice Center of East Hawaii

is to help sexually, physically, emotionally abused and neglected children.

We do this in partnership with the Children's Justice Center of East Hawaii, by providing funds and resources to support the needs of these children.

The "Friends" offer hope, encouragement, and opportunity for victims of child abuse.



the importance of our work, and gives a voice to former foster youth who are now young adults.

https://vimeo.com/243736373?utm_source=email&utm_medium=vimeo-cliptranscode-201504&utm_campaign=29220&email_id=#share

One of the most recent tragedies of 2017, in our East Hawaii community, was of a 9 year old Hilo girl who was starved to death, and had been on the Child Welfare Services radar. How could this have happened? Did the lack of CWS worker positions contribute to her dangerous situation falling through the cracks, and ultimately contribute to her death?

We hope the information provided in this letter will help you make an informed decision regarding HB2277.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Oshiro
Board President



Robin Benedict
Program Coordinator

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2018 9:01:48 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Puanani Kahai	DHS/EHCWSS	Support	No

Comments:

HB2277 would allow DHS/CWSS to complete work more efficiently. The current workload is nearly double (in our unit) and it is very difficult for each worker to manage such a load. Policies require monthly face-to-face visits with each child and parents which that alone is impossible. It then becomes a matter of "priority" (which every aspect of the process should be priority) and this is how things fall through the cracks. I've personally seen more success in cases that have more time put in to them. If the caseload is capped at 20, I can guarantee more effective results.

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2018 8:47:14 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Monica Crum	Catholic Charities Hawaii	Support	No

Comments:



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2277: Relating to Child Welfare Services

TO: Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair, Representative Ty Cullen, Vice Chair, and Members, Committee on Finance
FROM: Melisa Secola, Program Director, Catholic Charities Hawaii (Hawai'i Island)
Hearing: **Wednesday, 2/21/18; 2:00 p.m.; HSCR 413-18**

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, and Members, Committee on Finance:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony **in support** of HB 2277, which appropriates funds to establish a five-year pilot program to limit the number of children supervised by social workers in the East Hawaii Child Welfare Services (CWS) section to twenty or fewer in order to appropriately care for the safety and well-being of children who have been or are at risk of being abused or neglected.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i (CCH) is a tax exempt, non-profit agency that has been providing social services in Hawai'i for over 60 years. CCH has programs serving elders, children, developmentally disabled, homeless and immigrants. Our mission is to provide services and advocacy for the most vulnerable in Hawai'i. Our keiki deserve services that can protect them from harm and ideally prevent abuse and neglect.

Higher caseloads (40 – 50 per worker) are burdening CWS's ability to protect children as seen in high rates of child abuse and neglect as well as legal sanctions, claims, and settlements that have occurred when safety is compromised and court deadlines are unmet. Confirmed cases of child abuse and neglect in East Hawaii are documented at triple the rate of confirmed cases on Oahu. Since the great recession, the East Hawaii CWS section lost 19 out of 56 positions (a reduction in force of 34%). Further, the Child Welfare League of America recommends caseloads of no more than 15 children per social worker. Reviews conducted by the United States Department of Health and Human Services show that the more time a social worker spends with a child and a family, the greater the likelihood that protective factors are strengthened and safety risks are reduced. At current caseload numbers in East Hawaii, it is more than difficult for social workers to make monthly visits and assessments in a geographic area that ranges from Honokaa to Ocean View.

We support implementation of this five-year pilot program ASAP. We hope the Committee would make recommendations that include:

1. Adding eight full-time equivalent case managers and 15 full-time support staff positions.
2. Limiting the number of children supervised by each social worker to 20 or fewer.
3. Conducting annual evaluations of pilot program effectiveness including comparisons of outcomes, number and type of sanctions imposed by Family Court, number of legal claims and settlements, and feedback from stakeholders and other providers.

We urge you to pass HB 2277. Please contact me at secolam@catholiccharitieshawaii.org or at 961-7018, if you have any questions.



TO: Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Ty J. K. Cullen, Vice Chair
Committee on Finance

HEARING: Wednesday, February 21, 2018
2:0 PM
Conference Room 308

FROM: Esther B. McDaniel

RE: HB2277 – Relating to Child Welfare Services

Aloha Representatives:

Mahalo for this time to testify about this bill.

I am a licensed resource caregiver (AKA foster parent) and I support HB 2277. I'm very concerned about our keiki in foster care. I'm also concerned about our caseworkers who carry a huge responsibility in serving our most vulnerable children, serving us, the resource caregivers and serving birth families in trying to help them get healthy and reunified with their children. Our social workers in licensing, in-take, investigation and case management are our team members and some become our friends. Most do good work and some are exceptional in the work they do.

Our keiki are precious. Those who carry the hurt and pain of abuse and neglect can have hope and healing. A good caseworker can be the key for a hurting child and their family in turning their lives around. I've seen this firsthand with children who came into my home through foster care and are now healthy, productive adults, and whose parents are doing well also. In one mom's case, at first she didn't like the social worker, but through referrals and timely case management mom completed all services to get her life in order and was reunified with her 5 children in less than a year.

In the past I've participated in the federal review process of CWS as a community member. In reading the 2017 Final Report Hawaii Child and Family Services Review there are strengths in our foster care system and areas that need improvement.

“The CFSR identified cross-cutting practice concerns that affect the state's ability to meet safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes. The Children's Bureau encourages Hawaii, in developing its Program Improvement Plan, to focus on the following key cross-cutting priorities: conducting quality safety assessments, achieving timely permanency for children in foster care, engaging parents in quality caseworker visits, and strengthening the agency and contract case management workforce.” (page 3 of the 2017 Hawaii Final Report CFSR)

Again referring back to children in my home who were reunified with parents or other family members, these parents were in regular and direct contact with their case worker and the case worker was responsive and at times following up and/or looking for the parent or family member. I believe increasing the number of workers is a step towards helping our social workers achieve improvement goals in the foster care system.

Please give the support our social workers need in order to help and heal our children who are suffering the consequences of abuse and neglect. Large caseloads make it difficult for a caseworker to provide quality service. The Child Welfare League of America recommends that caseworkers carry 12 – 15 cases. This pilot program in East Hawaii would place a cap of 20 children per caseworker. It's a good start in enabling a caseworker to meet the individual and specialized needs of traumatized children and their families. According to the July 2016 Issue Brief of the Child Welfare Information Gateway it states that, “Manageable caseloads and workloads can make a real difference in a worker's ability to engage families,

deliver quality services, stay with the agency and ultimately achieve positive outcomes for children and families.”

I also work for a national organization that engages and empowers the faith community to support our foster/adoptive/hanai families. We come together and create free resources for our children and families. It's a broad spectrum of available services free of charge including evidence based, trauma informed parenting classes, Kokua Closet a free store in Wahiawa and Keiki Closet in Hamakua. Our group in Hamakua has taught us a lot about the needs of Hawaii Island and they have worked to increase the number of licensed resource caregivers in their community. We can and are filling in gaps, but we cannot fill in the gap of vacancies that need to be filled by capable social workers. Those gaps must be filled by CWS-DHS and the legislature can empower them to do so by supporting and funding this pilot program that needs to grow to serve families statewide.

Please invest in the lives of our keiki in foster care and help strengthen our families.

Thank you for your consideration and work on this issue.

Submitted with Sincere Aloha,

Esther B. McDaniel
Wahiawa, Hawaii

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2018 12:42:12 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Julissa Moeoge	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

As someone who has been apart of the Foster Care System since the day I was born, I have come to an understanding that our social workers were not there for us all the time and if they were, it was because their assistant came to our needs, but the fact that it was their assistant workers and not themselves, gave me a more harder time to cope because I wasn't too comfortable talking to new people; especially about my life situations and being in an abusive home. Consequently, I feel like there should be more Social Workers out in the field because that's what children and young dults out here need.

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2018 1:07:21 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
matthew magnuson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Having been a foster father and police officer for many years, I have witnessed first hand how vital social workers are to positive outcomes for families navigating their way through the child welfare system. Please do all you can to guarantee the passage of this bill which will assist East Hawaii in acquiring the help that they so desperately need in order to adequately help our island's children.

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2018 1:09:56 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Yvonne Tavares	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

It is with grave concern as a citizen that support be given to this bill HB2277 HD1. Please consider the urgency of this matter to provide adequate services that are needed to keep our Hawaii's children safe. A lack of sufficient work force puts an additional strain not only on our workers but our community at large. Children fall through the cracks. Proper and timely interventions become lacking. We look to those that we the people of Hawaii have put in office to be aware and attentive to this imperative bill. Please represent our voices through your actions and decision making.

Thank-you!

Sincerely,

Yvonne Tavares

Concerned Citizen

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2018 1:23:05 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
shannon magnuson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha-

In a climate of much need and strained resources, it can be tempting to turn a blind eye to the ongoing unmet needs. East Hawaii child welfare is and has been in great need of help. This unit is severely understaffed and their caseloads and geographic coverage areas more daunting than any other area. When children and their families are not provided the support and oversight necessary, tragedies can occur as a result. This is something that no one wants. We must put our money where our mouths are and provide the financial support necessary to provide children in the child welfare system the safeguard of a social worker with a hope of giving their wellbeing the proper attention it deserves. Our children are our greatest assets and we MUST pledge to support measures which will provide them the chance for success. Please vote compassionately and help the most vulnerable among us.

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2018 1:29:59 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jane Medeiros	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Our social workers are so overworked and need all the support and resources they can get! Thanks to them being dedicated and willing to work more than they are paid for, so many children who feel the world is against them at least have that one person on their side. We couldn't do it without our social workers! They are amazing! Let's give them the means to willingly stay in their jobs and be happy and continue the great work they are doing!

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2018 2:02:49 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
victoria McCraney	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I was in the foster care system. It is a very vulnerable time not having your family to look out for you. During this time a social worker steps in to help guide your life and to try to help you and make sure no more harm comes to you during this fragile time. The only way social workers can do their jobs is when they are given the help they need. If they have too many kids on their caseloads they can't pay attention to them all and make sure everything is okay. I'm writing this testimony because even though I'm no longer in the system, I still care about and want the best for other children and teens. I hope you do as well.

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2018 3:38:45 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kimberly Ferolino-Cantorna	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

To whom it may concern:

This letter is to express our strong support for Senate Bill 2276. We ask that our senators and representatives do what is necessary to protect the health and safety of our most vulnerable children in Hawaii.

Youth in foster care are the most vulnerable to needing guidance throughout their lives, it is important for CWS to be properly staffed to be able to assist these youth, birth families and resource caregivers in a fashion that will allow for timely and quality support.

Please do what is necessary to help our CWS workers be supported in a way that will bring us closer to national standards for child welfare workers. Please help these CWS workers and their assistants to do their jobs in a caring and reasonable fashion, with support and regulation.

We look forward to continuing our collaborative work.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Ferolino-Cantorna

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2018 3:54:28 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Connie Ichinose	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

To Whom It May Concern,

Children are our future and we need to protect them ALL! You can not expect CWS workers to do the best possible job if their hands are tied and are not given enough resources and are overloaded with work.

I am in strong support of this bill!

Sincerely,

K. Connie Ichinose

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2018 7:10:13 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
michelle starosky	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

As a cps social worker for over 8 years, with a caseload of over 40 children, and trying to do the best job I can, my health has finally taken a toll and I am now being treated for stage 3c ovarian cancer. As a result, because I have to take off work, my caseload has fallen on the shoulders of my supervisor, who has a caseload of her own, on top of her daily duties as a supervisor. This is the result of a severe shortage of social workers and support staff trying to do the best they can to keep our children safe. As a result, it is not surprising that there are many cases that do not get the attention and monitoring they deserve. I feel guilty for being sick and having to take care of myself which should not be the case. There should be many more positions available and ongoing active recruitment with adequate pay to compensate and retain good social workers and support staff if we are going to protect our most precious resource: our children.

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2018 9:24:24 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
kia-lyn.campbell	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2018 9:32:00 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jaymi Fischer	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I vote in support of the subject bill due to the woeful lack of human resources provided to the Child Welfare support agencies on the Big Island, specifically on the Hilo side. As a legal guardian of 3 Wards of the State, one of whom is just graduating High School and in the process of securing financial support for college, I can properly attest to the limited personnel staffing available on the east side of the island of Hawaii for Child Welfare support services. Please move this measure forward to provide the appropriate funding needed to care for the CWS children of our island.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THE TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2018

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair
Rep. Ty J.K. Cullen, Vice Chair

NOTICE OF HEARING

DATE: Wednesday, February 21, 2018
TIME: 2:00 P.M.
PLACE: Conference Room 308
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

Position: STRONG SUPPORT HB2277

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

I strongly support this bill: for some children foster care might be the best and for some, the only solution toward their predicament. Yet sadly in East Hawai'i Child Welfare Services staff have been inundated with calls for service and have a backlog of cases which diminish the services provided to the affect youth. Adequate staffing must be provided with investigating the notion of limiting caseloads per case manager and, additional staffing to deal with the backlogged cases. Please pass this bill "as is" or be certain that every amendment made is to strengthen this bill toward the betterment of servicing the youth in East Hawai'i.

Mahalo,

Ken Farm

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2018 10:48:53 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Timothy Kudo	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Madam or Sir,

As a school counselor on the Big Island, I can see firsthand the challenges our friends at the East Hawaii Child Welfare Services face in providing adequate care for our keiki. The social worker's caseloads are unacceptable if you want to provide services that protect the keiki. Large caseloads means that the social worker can only do quick touches with families and do not have the time to insure that our keiki have their basic needs met. Imagine what just one family in crisis will do to the attention given to the other 30 - 40 or more families under the one social workers purview. Dangerous and often life threatening situations (as seen in the recent Hilo girl's neglect by parents situation) may go undetected because of the overloaded caseloads. At the legislature, you can have heavy "caseloads" because you have colleague and aides to help with the legwork. Even if you are unsuccessful in meeting your goals, you can always attempt again at the next session. With social workers, we are talking about front line, direct services, child-welfare determining decisions that one person is doing, with no help AND often times, no second chances. Please consider this bill for the sake of our keiki and our communities future. mahalo nui

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2018 11:26:37 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Sherrie Galdeira	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

As a licensed foster care provider, I am in support of Bill No. HB2277. Foster youth/children who have been placed in my care and home have been negatively impacted as their social workers have been unable to keep up with the necessary demands and "requirements" of our foster children. Please help us to help our foster children receive the care and attention they deserve. Mahalo!

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2018 12:10:42 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
James R. Kennedy	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

IN SUPPORT: HB 2277

Aloha!

I strongly support House Bill 2277.

1. Far too often, we hear about failed, inadequate support for the protection of the health and safety of our most vulnerable children. This is a difficult, yet essential, task and there are dedicated people trying to meet these needs, but they do not have the necessary resources to do the job.

This is especially the case regarding children in foster care. It is important for CWS to be properly staffed to be able to assist these youth, birth families, and resource caregivers in a fashion that will allow for timely and quality oversight and general support.

Please do what is necessary to help our CWS workers in constructive ways that will bring us closer to national standards for child welfare workers.

Please help these CWS workers and their assistants to do their jobs in a caring and reasonable fashion, with support and regulation.

Sincerely,

James R. Kennedy, PhD

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2018 2:03:25 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Letha DeCaires	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Thank you for receiving my testimony in support of this measure that seeks to cut the case load for the Child Protective Workers on the Big Island. The children who are living from possible abuse to terrible abusive homes need case workers who have the time and energy to work with each family. It is imperative that we provide for the need of this community that suffers from much greater numbers of confirmed cases of abuse than on Oahu. Please fund and send this measure through.

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2018 6:16:21 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
KEVIN FLEMING	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2018 6:24:38 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
JUDY FLEMING	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2018 12:21:07 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Shandon Cuba	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Finance Committee,

My name is Shandon Cuba and I am 18 years old. Me and my three sisters spent three years in foster care. Due to the shortage of foster homes we were initially placed in three different homes. My older sister and I were in two different homes in Hilo and my two younger sisters were placed in a foster home in Ka'u. Ka'u is an hour and a half drive from Hilo and due to that distance I didnt get to see them for the first year of foster care. When I would ask my social worker to see my younger sisters they said they didnt have the time to make that happen. I later found out that not only family visits weren't happening but also CPS wasn't visiting them. My 2 and 5 year old sisters were being abused in that home and when it was finanally reported that foster home got shut down. 1 year of abuse could have been easily avoided if the monthly visits happened. Also if social workers had more time they could have arranged for family visits as well and me and my sister could have stay connected to them during that crazy part of our lives.

If CPS is going to continue to do this work of helping families they need the resources so they can actually help and do the job correctly. Please support HB2277 so this type of nonsense doesnt keep happening.

Mahalo,

Shandon Cuba

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2018 12:33:01 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kalani Pagan	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

TO: Finance Committee

FROM: Kalani Pagan

Im 17 and I have spent most of my life in foster care and have experienced many homes and social workers. Social workers are amazing people that fill the spot of your parent when your real parents can't. They make sure you stay on track with medical needs and in school, they ensure that your fister home is safe and supportive, they show up to youth circle and help plan life after 18 and so much more. I feel they need all the support they can get. Its sad to hear that they give each worker 45-55 kids. How can they fill that roll for all those kids? When promlems arise they need the time to be able to make a complete and accurate decisions. This cant happen when they have that many kids to watch over.

Please do evething you can to make sure that HB2277 makes it through the legislature.

Thank you,

Kalani Pagan

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2018 12:45:08 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Billie-Ann Bruce	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I have always believed that the largest down falls in the child welfare system is the staggering case load given to case workers . Obviously these individuals wanted to help these children or they wouldn't be in this line of work so it just doesn't make sense that they intentionally neglect these children but with case loads of 40-60 children I don't see how they could do everything . I truly believe this bill would greatly benefit current foster youth. I was put into care as an infant and then reunified with father and his wife who both alcoholics , both disturbed themselves, I endured 10 years of mental, verbal and sexual abuse before I reported them myself. I re-entered care at the age of 14 and saw my social workers about 4 times before I aged out at 18. I moved to countless foster homes and ultimately experienced the same trauma just now by strangers. I could never get in contact with my social worker , I would call for weeks and nothing . I believe a lot of trauma could have been saved if there was more time and energy to give each child.

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2018 2:12:51 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Daiquiri Miyasato	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

February 19, 2018

Representative John M. Mizuno, Chair

Committee on Health and Human Services

Re: HB 2277 Relating to Child Welfare Services

Dear Honorable Chair Mizuno and Members of the committee on Health and Human Services,

Thank you for the opportunity to give testimony on House Bill No. 2277. As a former foster youth, resource parent and now an agency case manager. I strongly support to establish a five-year pilot program in East Hawaii's Child Welfare Services section in Hawaii county that limits the number of children per social worker's case load to no more than 20 and to increase the amount of case managers and support staff needed to achieve this project.

We have done more with less for far too long at a cost to the youth and families we serve. It's time to support our CWS social works, giving them time. 20 to a case load allows time to continue the effective work with more positive impact for our youth and families.

Many times, our CWS social worker become that lasting connection for the youth, the one's foster youth build trust and relationships with. For me having an awesome social worker who made the time, played a huge role in my development. Hawaii's social worker are our front-line works, helping the healing of trauma and building resilience.

I could write about the negative outcome from the lack of time that social workers have due to an overloaded case load, but instead I will share with you my positive experiences. I spent 10 years in foster care before aging out without a permanent family, but my 10 years' in care weren't all bad. Thanks to my social worker's support. While in care he encouraged me to pursue my talents, and building my tool box of experiences, skills and education. If not for him my life would be very different today.

I will share a little more to help you understand why having sufficient time is so important for social workers. I am a 9 on the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Yes, I am a survivor of all types of abuse and according to my ACE's score I should be a mess. Again, thanks to my social worker I'm not. Just the opposite. I'm happy with my life and I love the

work I do. I devolved a passion for human serves at a young age and let my abuses not be in vein but the fuel to pay it forward and make a difference for youth in the foster care system.

Resilient yes, as of today I have fostered 10 youth and adopted two. I created and coordinated a program for high school seniors in out of home placements. Serving over 200 youth from 2009 - 2016 with 98 % graduating from high school and 95% being accepted to higher education.

Time is something you can never get back. It is also something that when used right can pays off in our futures. My social worker still has my trust, is still in my life as a friend and co-worker. I know I have a unique story, but it doesn't have to be. I urge you to pass HB 2277 so Hawaii's CWS social workers can have the manpower needed to successfully serve our youth and families. Please give our foster youth that fighting chance to build resiliencies.

Respectfully,

Jennifer Marie K. Carter

Jenncarter1415@gmail.com

(808) 896-3473

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2018 5:25:41 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Patricia	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I have worked with DHS/CWS/CPS families for approximately 15 years, and have noted significant changes in the CWS system. Staffing cuts and increasing social and economic issues have resulted in the fact that Social Workers and Social Services Assistants are overburdened with impossibly heavy case loads. I have observed that most workers do the best they can with minimal staffing, but they cannot do what is really needed. Social Workers must also contend with reviews which have high expectations to meet the "numbers" without adequate support and staffing; this is disheartening at best, and often results in a less than fully functional work environment. The "system" was created to provide for the safety of the children, and to nurture their well-being. It was also created to support families in gaining skills to provide safe and nurturing homes for the children. The success in these goals is severely compromised by the current situation in the CWS system. I strongly urge the committee to support this bill. By doing so, you will support the health and wellbeing of Hawaii's children and families, as well as the ripple out effect of supporting healthier communities. Mahalo, Patricia "Ricia" Shema Volcano Hawaii

Lesley A. Slavin, Ph.D.
317C Olomana Street
Kailua, HI 96734

Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT
HB2277 RELATING TO CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair
Rep. Ty J.K. Cullen, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 21, 2018, 2:00 P.M
Conference Room 308
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

I am a clinical psychologist working in Hawaii's public children's mental health system. In my work I partner frequently with Child Welfare workers, and I see the struggles they are having trying to serve our neediest and most vulnerable children. This is due to the inherent difficulties of the demanding job, and particularly due to insufficient resources and high caseloads. I am very excited to see this effort to develop a pilot project in East Hawaii where the needs are especially great. I know you will get a lot of testimony about the needs in this area, and I would attest to the truth of the problematic situations they are describing. I also would like to add another point to consider having to do with the financing of this project.

The public mental health system [the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division (CAMHD) and its contracted agencies along with MedQUEST, Office of Youth Services, School-Based Behavioral Health and other child-serving divisions of state government] spends a good deal of taxpayer money trying to help children who are suffering in the aftermath of abuse and neglect. Often, our efforts are made less effective by a lack of support for the child from their over-worked, over-extended Child Welfare caseworker. When children feel abandoned or ignored by their caseworker (their legal guardian) and they are separated from their birth parents, they have little hope for their future and they can't make the emotional investment needed to benefit from their mental health treatment and other programming. This is a "pay me now or pay me later" situation. We can spend money on higher quality Child Welfare services or we can pay later for high cost mental health treatment or prison. I feel sure that the proposed pilot project will be able to demonstrate cost savings in the long run and improvements in child outcomes that can lead to other savings for the state down the line.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this important bill.

Respectfully submitted,

Lesley A Slavin

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2018 6:26:39 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Virginia Magnuson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support having more social workers because it helps benefit children who are in need of help

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2018 6:45:04 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Melanie U. Bathe	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to express our strong support for House Bill 2277. We ask that our senators and representatives do what is necessary to protect the health and safety of our most vulnerable children in Hawaii.

We respectfully request that you mandate a cap of 20 children per Child Welfare Services caseworker in East Hawaii for five years as a pilot project to demonstrate that lower caseloads results in better outcomes for our children, and less abuse and neglect.

As youth in foster care are the most vulnerable to needing guidance throughout their lives, it is important for CWS to be properly staffed to be able to assist these youth, birth families and resource caregivers in a fashion that will allow for timely and quality support, which over time will ultimately result in decent, emotionally stable, progressive, contributing members to our society.

The downside is to do nothing and enable a whole new society of emotionally withdrawn and unstable individuals that will instead of contributing positively to our society will most likely increase the domestic violence rates, drug abusers, and homeless populations.

Please do what is necessary to help our CWS workers be supported in a way that will bring us closer to national standards for child welfare workers. Please help these CWS workers and their assistants to do their jobs in a caring and reasonable fashion for these children, with support and regulation that is effective in providing positive results in adult creation.

We look forward to continuing our joint work.

Best wishes!

Sincerely,

Melanie U. Bathe, Foster Parent

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2018 8:39:47 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Gerald De Mello	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Chairwoman Luke and Members of the Committee,

I testify in SUPPORT of HB. 2277...Personally knowing child welfare caseworkers on Hawaii Island it is evident that (they)caseworkers are overly burdened. Notably, in East Hawaii, caseworkers have seen an increase in their case loads but not increase in funding for staffing. In fact, data notes that in East Hawaii they have caseloads well above the national average of caseload management.

State budget cuts have been very harmful throughout the State but particularly harmful to the child welfare system on Hawaii Island.

On Hawaii Island the percentage of children on social welfare has increased and staffing has not kept up with their case load increase. Case workers face extreme challenges and great responsibility. They clearly need to have a manageable case load to monitor and protect children properly.

Regarding the homeless it is evident that in East Hawaii youth who age out of the foster care system will often experience homelessness. To have funding to increase case management staffing will reduce the numbers of youth who become homeless. Increasing professional staffing will be a state investment to help decrease homeless in the community.

Thank you,

Gerald De Mello

381 Haili St.

Hilo, Hawaii 96720

Phone-9612128

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2018 7:10:12 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kenneth Goodenow	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen and Committee Members:

I am very concerned about Child Welfare Services ("CWS") in East Hawaii. My work as a lawyer has involved me in many CWS cases, including service as a Guardian ad Litem for numerous children. I have seen first hand many of the problems facing the overburdened CWS office in East Hawaii.

While not meaning to sound dramatic, CWS in East Hawaii is at a crisis point. I am personally aware of three deaths last year involving placement of children already in the CWS system. More "Peter Boy Kema" cases can only result in greater expense to our state's tax payers. While helping children should be our main goal, House Bill 2277 may also save the state from litigation expenses and damages that can result from an overburdened system.

The Great Recession triggered deep cuts in Hawaii's already overburdened Child Welfare system. The long-term impact of those cuts on the safety and well-being of our most vulnerable children has been substantial. State budget cuts were particularly harmful to the CWS East Hawaii office. Layoffs caused the four CWS units that formerly operated in East Hawaii to be collapsed into three units. The East Hawaii licensing division, which is responsible for inspecting and certifying safe foster homes for abused and neglected children, was cut from three workers to two. Today, licensing functions with just one worker and caseworkers cope with impossible caseloads.

In all, the East Hawaii CWS office has lost 19 of the 56 positions it had in 2009, and that reduction in staffing has caused an increase in average caseloads. The higher numbers of caseloads increase the potential for harm to children at risk for further neglect or abuse. Caseloads in East Hawaii in October 2017 ranged as high as 55 children for one worker. Five workers had caseloads of more than 40 children. A crisis for a single child can easily consume a workday, and workers face extreme challenges as they attempt to track at-risk children and families; complete investigations and reports required by the Department and the courts; arrange services for children and families; and respond to new cases. Social workers, who by statute are required to visit foster children at a minimum of once per month, often must drive long distances and travel time alone can take hours.

East Hawaii social workers also face other special challenges: Hawaii County had 418 children confirmed for abuse or neglect in 2015, for a rate of 213 confirmed abused or neglected children per 100,000 residents. Oahu had a rate of 76 abused or neglected kids per 100,000 population, while Maui had a rate of 158 and Kauai a rate of 51 children per 100,000 residents. About one-third of the children in foster care in Hawaii live on Hawaii Island.

There is a precedent for capping workers' caseloads. Legislatures in Texas, Indiana, Delaware and Florida have all required that state and local jurisdictions assess workloads, meet standards, and implement specific strategies such as hiring additional staff.

My thanks to the Chair and Committee for hearing House Bill 2277. Thank you for your time and service to our community.

Aloha,

Kenneth Goodenow

(808) 961-5155

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2018 8:32:30 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Joni Chun	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2018 9:14:48 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Donna Eckersley	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please support this bill that establishes a pilot project that would benefit our families, especially the children, in need. Limiting the case load per staff will allow social workers to provide better services and ensure that matters do not fall through the cracks. Even teachers have limits on students per class. Can you imagine being a social worker having to juggle 20+ families and trying to change their lives for the better? There are so many issues they have to address; it's overwhelming just thinking about it. Please support this bill that will help the social workers to provide our families and children with all the help they need to live better lives.

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2018 9:29:03 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Melissa Kanemitsu	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2018 9:57:29 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lyndis Lott Farmer	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Our children are our future. Let's support them the best we can. I support CWS having lower case loads to better manage their cases and support the children the best they can.

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2018 12:02:09 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Raquel Gali	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

To Whom It May Concern,

I individually support HB2277 HD1 with reference to Child Welfare Services in East Hawaii. The passing of HB2277 will provide improved outcomes for youth in care in East Hawaii.

Respectfully,

Raquel Gali

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2018 12:03:09 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Allan Sebastian	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

To whom it may concern,

I'm in support of (HB2277 HD1) "Appropriates funds for DHS to establish a five-year pilot program in the east Hawaii child welfare services section in Hawaii county that limits the number of children per child welfare services caseworker to no more than twenty. Appropriates funds for additional case managers and support staff for the pilot program."

As a former case manager in the mental health field, I empathize and can only imagine what it is like having a very large caseload. At one point I was assigned to 25 to 30 cases and was somewhat manageable but to have 40 or more seems like a daunting and impossible task. Either administrative time or taking care of clients is going to be sacrificed. It seems impossible to maintain a level quality care and administrative responsibility when caseloads are high.

On a personal level, again speaking from experience, it takes a toll on one's physical and mental health plus quality time with your own family. "Burn out" seems to come to mind. "Self care" was always thrown out there by my colleagues to take time to take care of yourself but it seems impossible when you have a lot on your plate to be responsible for. I know I worry a lot thinking about my former clients, i.e.. "What is the next step or plan for my clients?" "Are they safe?" "Are they table?" "Will they be in a crisis?" etc. At the end of the day or work week, sometimes it can be difficult to go home and relax with family when those questions comes up.

In summary, I support HB2277 HD1. "Safety 1st." and children's safety should come first. Next, is the mental health of the workers. I'm no parent but I know we care about our family. Now just imagine if those children were part of your family, you would want the very best care for them-right? Thank you for your time.

Submitted with respect,

Allan.

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2018 12:03:45 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Joyce Memmer	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Today our East Hawaii workers have caseloads of 40 to 50 children, or more. That is far above national standards for caseloads, and it is putting our at-risk kids in even greater jeopardy.

We are asking the Legislature to fund a five-year pilot project to cap the number of children per caseworker at 20 children each in East Hawaii, and to provide enough money to hire the staff that CWS needs to properly protect our children from abuse and neglect. This will insure that children put in my home for foster care will have adequate help in getting services needed to make these children thrive and survive.

In turn, this will most likely save the state money on future law suits because of case workers missing evidence of child abuse and neglect and even possibly death.

Please allow these funds to be returned. They were taken away during a time the state cut the budget and haven't been renewed. We are playing catch up on the Big Island and it is only hurting those that need it most.

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2018 12:37:34 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Terri Lynn Lum	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of HB2277 to fund a five year pilot project for Child Welfare Services (CWS) in East Hawai'i. I have worked as a social worker in various agencies serving abused and neglected children and their families/foster families in East Hawaii for over 20 years. Historically, our community has had some of the highest, if not **the** highest rates of negative social indicators such as homelessness, domestic violence and poverty in the state. The fact that our children and families are at high risk for child abuse and neglect is clearly documented in the data that shows that East Hawaii has nearly triple the amount of cases per capita than O'ahu. When budget cuts were required in 2008 -09 due to the downturn in the economy, East Hawaii's CWS units were drastically reduced, without taking into account the high levels of negative social indicators, the sheer size of the service area, and lack of transportation and other resources. **The land mass of Hawai'i County is equal to or greater than all of the other islands combined. As a result, our CWS workers contend with higher caseloads with less resources, and are required to travel the greatest distances to locate and serve their clients.**

If the State of Hawai'i really cares about our children being our future, then clearly we must do all we can to ensure their safety and support them in becoming productive citizens of our community. We must break the cycle of abuse by helping and nurturing child victims so that they flourish and do not become the parents in the CWS system in the future. I urge you to fund this pilot project and help us to find effective solutions to reducing child abuse and neglect.

Sincerely,

Terri Lum

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2018 12:54:51 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jasmin Wamar-DePonte	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Working for a non-profit Social Services organization in Hilo & contracted with the Department of Human Services, I, Jasmin Wamar-DePonte, testify in full support of this bill for the main concern of the safety and well-being of the children in our community.

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2018 1:16:53 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Maile pavao	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

He lei poina 'ole ke keiki.

A child is a gift that should be cherished and never forgotten.

Hawai'i Island has the highest rate of abused or neglected children in the state – nearly triple the rate on O'ahu.

Hawai'i County had 418 children confirmed for abuse or neglect in 2015, for a rate of 213 children per 100,000 residents. For every 100,000 residents, Maui had 158 abused or neglected children, Kaua'i had 151, while O'ahu had 76. Caseworkers also report cases on Hawai'i Island characterized by more severe levels of drug abuse than is generally observed in cases elsewhere in the state.

We Have Seen A Dramatic Increase in the Number of East Hawaii Foster Children.

Department of Human Services reports a 56 percent increase in the number of children in foster care in East Hawaii from Fiscal Year 2014 to Fiscal Year 2017, which is double the increase seen in the state as a whole.

Child welfare caseworkers on Hawai'i Island are burdened with caseloads well above national recommendations.

State Department of Human Services caseworkers are responsible for tracking at-risk children and families, completing reports, and arranging services for children and families. The Child Welfare League of America recommends that caseworkers manage a caseload of 12 to 15 children.¹ In East Hawai'i, our caseworkers are regularly carrying 19 or 20 cases that involve 40 to 50 children.

State budget cuts were particularly harmful to the child welfare system on Hawai'i Island.

East Hawai'i Child Welfare Service lost 19 of 56 total positions since 2009, causing the four units that formerly operated in East Hawai'i to be collapsed into three units. The East Hawai'i licensing division, which is responsible for inspecting and certifying safe foster homes for abused and neglected children, was cut from three workers to two.

Today, licensing functions with just one worker, and caseworkers cope with impossible caseloads.

The people protecting our children need help.

Child welfare caseworkers face extreme challenges as they are given more and more responsibility to care for the most vulnerable children in our community. We are asking the Legislature to undertake a pilot project to cap the number of children supervised by each caseworker. State data suggests the Hawai'i Island in particular faces special challenges, and we therefore ask that this pilot project be launched on Hawai'i Island.

Link to homelessness

Studies show that 25-30% of youth who age out of the foster care system will experience homelessness, but increased case management and support for these youth reduces the numbers who become homeless.

Let's not be penny wise and pound foolish.

Apart from our moral obligation to protect our children, we understand legislators are frustrated with the large sums of money paid out each year for legal claims and settlements. We ask that the Legislature consider how tragedies in the child welfare system have contributed to these claims in recent years. There is precedent for this approach – legislatures in Texas, Indiana, Delaware and Florida have all required that state and local jurisdictions assess workloads and implement specific strategies such as hiring additional staff.²

Our community deserves better.

This effort is being led by caseworkers, family court lawyers, staff with non-profit organizations, foster parents and public officials from Hawai'i Island. We interact with the child welfare system each day, and see an urgent need to act.

Help the people who protect our children!

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2018 1:28:56 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kalani Spain	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Legilators,

I support HB2277 and believe children are at risk and the DHS foster care system on Hawaii Island deperately needs additional staff in order to keep children safe. I know the money is tight in our state but what price do you put on preventing a child from being negelcted or abused because the system did not respond to their call for help.

Aloha,

Kalani Spain

TESTIMONY OF TIFFANY BADER
HILO, HAWAI'I - EPIC 'OHANA RECORDER
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
REGARDING HOUSE BILL NO. 2277
RELATING TO CHILDWELFARE SERVICES

FEBRUARY 20, 2018

Chair Luke and members of the House Committee on Finance, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill No. 2277. The purpose of this bill is to establish the East Hawai'i Child Welfare Services Section Pilot Project within the Department of Human Services to increase the amount of staff and reduce the caseloads in the East Hawai'i Child Welfare Services Section.

Child Welfare Services' mission is to ensure, in partnership with families and communities, the safety, permanency, and well-being of those children and families where child abuse and neglect has occurred or who are at high risk for child abuse and neglect. Bill No. 2277 will not only support Child Welfare Services' mission, but also enhance it by adding more Social Worker positions to reduce the number of caseloads.

These additional positions will provide major support to the crucial areas that affect our children's safety such as: providing services to maintain safety in the family home, maintain safe and appropriate family and community connections while in foster care, and support children's participation in 'Ohana Conferences, Youth Circles, and Family Court Hearings.

Child abuse is one of the biggest challenges Hawai'i island faces with the community. Our hope is that the passage of this measure will increase the number of Social Workers to better serve the needs of the children and decrease the number of caseloads in Child Welfare Services.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and support of House Bill No. 2277.

TESTIMONY OF STEWART MAEDA
HILO, HAWAI'I - EPIC 'OHANA FACILITATOR
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
REGARDING HOUSE BILL NO. 2277
RELATING TO CHILDWELFARE SERVICES
FEBRUARY 20, 2018

Chair Luke and members of the House Committee on Finance, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill No. 2277. The purpose of this bill is to establish the East Hawai'i Child Welfare Services Section Pilot Project within the Department of Human Services to increase the amount of staff and reduce the caseloads in the East Hawai'i Child Welfare Services Section.

Child abuse and neglect is a major issue in our community. There are many news articles regarding children being neglected and abused on the Hawai'i island. As a professional working in this area, I know this is only the tip of the iceberg and there are countless cases that the media is unaware of.

One way to start addressing this issue is to increase the number of Social Workers in Child Welfare Services. Child Welfare Services Social Workers protect the most vulnerable in our community, the children. We need to help them, help the children.

Our hope is that the passage of this measure will increase the number of Social Workers to better serve the needs of the children within the community and decrease the number of caseloads in Child Welfare Services.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and support of House Bill No. 2277.

LATE

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2018 3:38:44 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Norman Arancon	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

To Whom It May Concern

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 2276. I ask that our senators and representatives employ every vital measure to protect the health and safety of our most vulnerable children in Hawaii.

I have personally witnessed how youth in foster care are the most vulnerable to needing guidance throughout their lives, it is important for Child Welfare Services (CWS) to be properly staffed to assist substantially these youth, birth families and resource caregivers in a fashion that will allow for timely and quality support.

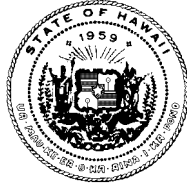
I implore your care and support to our CWS workers so that we can alleviate the poor conditions of our youth and bring about development that would elevate us closer to national standards for child welfare workers. Your support would enable our CWS workers perform their jobs that is reflective of a caring community where children are well cared for.

I look forward to continuing our collaborative work.

Sincerely your,

Dr. Norman Q. Arancon

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



PANKAJ BHANOT
DIRECTOR

CATHY BETTS
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

LATE

February 20, 2018

TO: The Honorable Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
House Committee on Finance

FROM: Pankaj Bhanot, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 2277 HD1 – RELATING TO CHILD WELFARE SERVICES**

Hearing: Wednesday, February 21, 2018, 2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 308, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this bill and offers the following comments.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to appropriate funds to establish a five-year program in the East Hawaii, Child Welfare Services (CWS) Section, in Hawaii County that limits the number of children per child welfare services caseworker to no more than twenty and funds additional case managers and support staff positions.

The notion of a five year pilot program is intriguing as DHS continues to examine ways to improve our services and response to families in crisis. DHS acknowledges an increase in children in foster care; the total number of children in foster care statewide has increased 23% from State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2014 to SFY 2017. The highest increase has been in the East Hawaii section, where we have seen a 56% increase of children in foster care over that same period. Preliminary data indicate parental substance abuse as the precipitating factor, resulting in these increased Child Welfare Services cases in East Hawaii. Fortunately, CWS - East Hawaii has experienced a low vacancy rate (currently, all caseworker positions are filled in East Hawaii) and maintains a relatively stable workforce.

In SFY 2016, the confirmation rate for child abuse and/or neglect allegations in East Hawaii was the same as the statewide confirmation rate of 40%. Based on November 2017 data, the average caseload per worker in East Hawaii was slightly lower (25 cases) than the average caseload statewide (26 cases). The Department agrees that support is needed to reduce caseloads and increase the Child Welfare workforce, however, that need is not greater in East Hawaii than in other areas of the State.

As is well established, poverty, child abuse and neglect, and family violence, are results of complex social, economic and environmental factors, and we welcome the legislature's partnership to improve the child protective response system on the Big Island and throughout the state. However, in considering the suggested cap to worker caseloads, in addition to investment in child welfare services, any pilot must include equal or greater emphasis and investment to support and improve capacity of prevention and other services that strengthen families by addressing protective factors that when present in the home, reduce the risk and incident of abuse and neglect in the first place.

In 2017, DHS and Social Services Division (SSD) leadership have taken a number of steps to examine and address the needs of SSD and Branch staff. DHS Director and SSD Administrators visited offices throughout the state and met with staff to share the vision and opportunities for change and improvement. DHS and SSD leadership listened to the voices of our staff to hear their concerns, needs, and ideas for solutions.

DHS initiated a number of efforts to transform the way we do this most sensitive work. Structurally, to improve case practices, SSD separated policy from operations allowing Child Welfare Services Branch (CWSB) to focus on improving its case practice while the Division will provide the support services (training, policy clarification, collaborative efforts with other DHS divisions and external partners). In 2017 the legislature supported this change and transferred 10 positions from CWSB to the Division to provide these support services to staff that provide direct services to children and families.

SSD is also engaged in the development of its IT application to the DHS Integrated Enterprise System. Once the IT platform is fully developed, departmental service and data integration will improve access by SSD to relevant information of the Med-Quest and Benefit, Employment, Support Services Divisions. Eventually, it is envisioned that external state and

non-profit partners may also be linked. The investment in our technology systems to share data and streamline processes, improves access to services and information by clients and staff, improves efficiency and response time, and will support staff morale and mobilize our workforce.

‘Ohana Nui, the DHS multigenerational framework to end poverty, is a transformative challenge to provide integrated and comprehensive services to families to end the cycle of poverty, abuse, and neglect. Commenced in 2016, ‘Ohana Nui is already yielding promising collaborations between divisions, public and private agencies that provide critical services to vulnerable populations, as we strengthen families and sustain positive change. Hawaii County has invested in a web-based resource that puts community resources at the fingertips of service providers, and DHS Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and SSD's Adult Protective Community Services Branch have become high users and appreciate the community's ability to collaborate. Further, an ongoing pilot of DHS and the Department of Health is currently underway to build a more robust state home visiting program, recognizing the importance of prevention and intervention without duplicating services.

DHS also restarted its collaboration with the University of Hawaii to build workforce capacity and support our staff's professional development. The Hawaii Child Welfare Education Collaboration (HCWEC) with the University of Hawaii, School of Social Work, is a valuable staffing resource, graduating masters of social work scholars every year. The first graduating class prepared eight scholars in 2017. These graduates became social workers placed within vacancies on O‘ahu, West Hawai‘i, and Kaua‘i. We anticipate another eight scholars entering the CWSB workforce in June 2018. With limited state funding, CWSB will continue this capacity building program, which is currently eligible for federal reimbursement funds.

CWSB is also in the process of a reorganization and is examining ways to maximize vacant positions by moving positions within the Branch. Workload and staffing patterns are being analyzed to make the most prudent decisions with existing staffing resources.

Staff retention is a critical factor in addressing the vacant positions. In the past four years, CWSB has invested efforts to strengthen the leadership team. The Branch developed supervisor training curriculum, tested, and modified it with input from CWS supervisors. The

first cohort is currently participating in the nine-session training program with an additional coaching support.

With the support of Casey Family Programs, the CWSB executive leadership has been participating in a leadership strengthening program. CWSB has quarterly statewide supervisor training and management leadership team meetings to provide peer support, conduct problem-solving discussions, and discuss opportunities for targeted in-service training.

CWSB staff consistently report that insufficient resources and prevention programs are needed to better serve families. Early childhood and early learning opportunities for children and parents, residential substance abuse programs that allow children to be placed with parents, resources to address economic and health issues, limited transportation resources, and an aging state vehicle fleet are examples of needs identified by staff. To address one of these needs, in SFY 2018, CWSB is identifying funding to purchase new vehicles for three of the Sections without motor pool services.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

LATE

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2018 5:36:13 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Melissa Mayo	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

My name is Melissa Mayo and I am from the east side of Hawaii Island. I first entered foster care at the age of 13 when it was discovered that I was living in an abusive situation with inadequate food, water, and shelter. During the next 5 years I lived in 7 different foster homes and attended 3 different schools. Each move meant I had to adjust to a new set of rules and make new friends. During this time I also had 3 different social workers, all of which are truly amazing people. These workers consistently went above and beyond. They each visited me far beyond their working hours, seeing me in the evenings and even on weekends to ensure that I was doing okay and to see if I needed anything. They filled out the necessary paperwork to ensure I could get a computer, attend prom, have proper clothes for sporting activities etc. When my foster parents would not pay for a field trip fee or a school uniform they would take money out of their own pockets to ensure that this could be done. When a child enters foster care, they lose everything from family to friends to community. The case manager takes on a huge role by doing everything in their power to promote and supply as many "normal" experiences as possible. When I saw two of my case managers move on to other positions due to being overwhelmed it was devastating. I wondered "Why aren't they being supported?" "Does no one see they importance of the work they are doing?" "What if my next case manager doesn't like me?" Thanks to the amazing support I received from our Child Welfare Social Workers I am currently a Freshman at UH Hilo and I plan to be a nurse one day.

I sincerely ask the legislature to allocate the appropriate resources to our child welfare social workers to ensure they supported in serving most vulnerable children.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Melissa Mayo

LATE

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2018 10:44:54 PM
Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Sharon Dillard	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

To whom it may concern:

I have recently resigned as a case manager for EHCWS due to being unable to adequately carry out my work duties and maintain my own physical and mental health. I fully support the proposed increase in staffing that would allow a case manager to spend quality time with the children on his or her caseload, as well as the valuable people that support them. It is important that positions are not only filled, but staff retention takes place. The children and youth in care experience so many changes, having a consistent social worker offers some stability. I fully support this proposal.

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2018 8:31:39 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kehaulani Delostrico	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am a foster parent. Although my social worker is very hard working, she does not have the time to give focused attention to each child.

TO: House of Representatives, Committee on Finance
Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Ty J.K. Cullen, Vice Chair



HEARING: Wednesday, February 21, 2018
2:00 PM
Conference Room 308

FROM: Sharla-Ann Fujimoto

RE: In SUPPORT of HB2277 - Relating to Child Welfare Services

My name is Sharla-Ann Fujimoto. I am a resource caregiver, I work in the human services field for EPIC 'Ohana, Inc., and I am also the advisor for the HI H.O.P.E.S. Initiative's Youth Leadership Board in West Hawai'i, which is a local and national effort to create and support successful outcomes for transitioning foster youth. I am also a second-year graduate student of the Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work.

I would like to submit testimony in strong support of House Bill 2277 and its intent to establish the East Hawai'i Child Welfare Services Section Pilot Project within the Department of Human Services to increase staff and reduce caseloads in the East Hawai'i Child Welfare Services Section.

Foster youth are amongst the nation's most vulnerable population—they come into the system by no fault of their own, and they are left without the much needed support and social capital, which leads them to face poor outcomes as adults. Additionally, the parents involved in the foster care system are left trying to navigate this complex system on their own without any help from their social worker. Parents, resource caregivers, and foster youth have lodged complaints to Section Administrators because they can't reach their social worker and because they haven't seen nor heard from their social worker in months and have no idea what is happening with the case.

As a resource caregiver, my job is to provide a safe and stable home for the youth in foster care. To continue to do this, social workers must connect with us and the children in our homes. Sometimes the children in foster care have needs greater than what resource caregivers are able to provide. Resource caregivers need the extra support and resources from the social worker to sustain these placements and keep the resource caregivers from experiencing burn out as well. It is frustrating as caregiver when you reach out to the social worker a month in advance to approve something, but don't get any return phone calls or e-mails. The only person that suffers is the foster youth.

I have been working in the field for almost ten years. In that time, I have seen horrific amounts of injustice and harm done to our extremely vulnerable foster youth, which is partially due to the lack of support and staffing within Child Welfare Services. I have worked with many foster youth that have been in care for over a year, and they report seeing their worker only once or twice in the last eight months. The youth has had to fend for themselves to get the things they need, or they just settle to "go without," which is something that no young person should have to experience. Other youth have been horribly mistreated in their resource homes, and when the youth was calling and calling to reach out for help, the only thing they could do was leave a voicemail on an already overloaded answering machine. It is very clear: the foster youth need their social worker.

The role of the Child Welfare Services Social Worker is not an easy one—they are expected to be ever present for everyone and connect to the many individuals and systems involved in the case. I've seen the social workers in Kona do the best that they can with each case, but the truth is that they just don't have enough time to see parents and children when they have over 150 people they have to see face-to-face each month. Some workers are too busy that they don't get to check their voicemail for over a month because they're out in the field. The high demands and stress of this job leaves our social workers vulnerable to burn out.

As an aspiring social worker, I want to be there to help the youth and parents involved in the system. I want to be the type of worker that commits to seeing the children and parents monthly, as is mandated by the law. However, I'm terrified of the overwhelmingly high caseload that will be looming over my head, and the number of children and parents that will be negatively affected, simply because there isn't going to be enough time and support for me to work on all of my cases.

As a professional that works with current and former foster youth and as the resource caregiver of several foster children, I believe that this bill supports the federal mandate to ensure that children do not "linger" in the foster care system. By mandating a limitation on the number of cases that social workers must take and providing funding to increase the staff and staff support, it will not only retain the workers we have, but it will lessen the amount of burn out these workers have faced from carrying a high and unmanageable caseload.

My hope is that the success of this pilot project will inspire the citizens of West Hawai'i to fight for this much needed support. In closing, I strongly encourage this committee to support the passage of HB2277.

With my sincerest gratitude,

Sharla-Ann Fujimoto

LATE

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2018 9:30:52 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Delorese Gregoire	Winners' Camp Foundation	Support	Yes

Comments:

I am a survivor of thirteen foster homes and endured eight years of physical and sexual abuse. I can testify to the importance of having a case/social worker available to young people in foster care.

During the eight years of my first foster home, I never saw a social worker until one glorious day Mr. Oliveira came to visit me and I was able to tell him what was happening after he finally built trust with me. Because of the eight years of abuse and neglect, I was never able to build relationships with other foster families and therefore was continuously bounced around.

To this day, I still cannot secure trusting personal relationships. I have succeeded in creating a leadership program for teenagers called [Winners' Camp Hawai'i Leadership Academy](#). Through Winners' Camp I am able to work with many foster kids. They trust me because they know I've been through it all. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of having constant regular visitations by social/case workers so that foster kids can expose abuse and confide in a trustworthy adult.

Please support this bill.

-Delorese Gregoire, Founding Director Winners' Camp Foundation

LATE

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2018 11:09:31 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Joy Hohnstine	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

LATE

HB-2277-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2018 1:32:40 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/21/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Victoria Mse	Individual	Support	No

Comments:



HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION
AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

RANDY PERREIRA, Executive Director • Tel: 808.543.0011 • Fax: 808.528.0922

LATE

The Twenty-Ninth Legislature, State of Hawaii
House of Representatives
Committee on Finance

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association

February 21, 2018

H.B. 2277, HD1 – RELATING TO CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO supports the intent of H.B. 2277, HD1 which seeks to establish a pilot project and appropriate funds for the Department of Human Services to increase staff and reduce caseloads in the East Hawaii Child Welfare Services Section.

The reports of insufficient resources, overburdened staff, and lack of prevention programs in the Child Welfare Services Section are alarming. Coupled with the unique challenges of servicing a large geographic area, particularly in East Hawaii, we must be willing to consider practical solutions to ensure that our state agencies are adequately staffed and prepared to safeguard these vital services for the safety and well-being of at-risk children and families in our communities. Therefore, we strongly support the concept of a pilot project which will provide the necessary resources and oversight of these programs in order to better serve our communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of H.B. 2277, HD1.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira
Executive Director