



The Judiciary, State of Hawai'i

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

Tuesday, April 3, 2018 10:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 211

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

by

Lester Oshiro

Chief Court Administrator, Third Circuit

Bill No. and Title: House Bill No. 2277, H. D. 1, S. D. 1, Relating to Child Welfare Services.

Purpose: Establishes 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. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/3000. (SD1)

Judiciary's Position:

The Judiciary supports the intent of House Bill No. 2277, H.D. 1, S.D. 1 Relating to Child Welfare Services and respectfully offers the following comments.

This bill proposes to appropriate funds for the Department of Human Services to establish a five-year pilot program in the East Hawai'i Child Welfare Services Section to create an additional eight full-time equivalent (8.0 FTE) case managers and fifteen full-time equivalent (15.0 FTE) support staff positions for the pilot program. Creating these new positions will undoubtedly result in the filing of new cases, which may be due to their current backlogs. The increase in case filings will result in the necessary appointment of Guardians ad Litem (GAL) and court-appointed legal counsel for the minors and their parents.

GAL/attorney fees are based on the appointment of one (1) GAL for the minor, one (1) attorney for the mother and one (1) attorney for the father in each case. The cost for these appointments in the first year of the case is \$7,740 per case. With the addition of eight (8) new case workers, it is logical and foreseeable that there will be an increase in case filings. We conservatively expect that each new case worker would generate 3 cases due to backlogs or 24



Senate Committee on Ways and Means
House Bill No. 2277, H.D. 1, S.D.1, Relating to Child Welfare Services
April 3, 2018, 10:00 AM
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additional cases in the next budget period. Assuming this increase in caseload, we anticipate the need for \$185,760 to cover the costs of these new cases in the next budget period. Cases normally will continue for 3 to 4 years and with each year that passes, we would need additional funding to pay for the GAL and attorneys assigned in those cases.

The Judiciary respectfully requests that should this bill pass, additional funding for these added GAL/court-appointed legal counsel be appropriated for the Third Circuit.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

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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March 29, 2018

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Committee on Ways and Means
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 211
Honolulu, HI 96813

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice-Chair
Committee on Ways and Means
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 211
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Keith-Agaran, and Committee Members:

Re: HB 2277, HD 1, SD 1 Relating to Child Welfare Services
Hearing Date: 04/03/2018 – 10:00 am; Conference Room 211

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

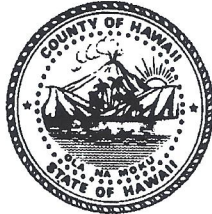
The positions and funding requested in HB 2277, HD 1, SD 1 are for a "pilot project." If that is determined to be the best way to give some relief to the East Hawai'i workers and the keiki they serve, then I defer to your wisdom on that matter. My main concern is that the workers and their clients get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

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Harry Kim
Mayor, County of Hawai'i

VALERIE T. POINDEXTER
Council Chairwoman & Presiding Office
Council District 1



Phone: (808) 961-8828
Fax: (808) 961-8912
Email: vpindexter@co.hawaii.hi.us

HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL

*County of Hawai'i
Hawai'i County Building
25 Aupuni Street, Suite 1402
Hilo, Hawai'i 96720*

March 29, 2018

Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

Email: sendelacruz@Capitol.hawaii.gov
Email: senkeithagaran@Capitol.hawaii.gov

Subject: Testimony Supporting HB2277 HD1 SD1, Relating to Child Welfare Services
Hearing: April 3, 2018, 10:00 a.m., Room 211

Aloha Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chairperson and Members of the Ways and Means Committee:

On behalf of myself and the constituents of Council District 1 in Hāmākua, County of Hawai'i, I would like to express our support of HB2277 HD1 SD1.

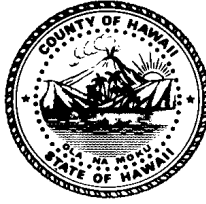
This bill establishes the East Hawaii Child Welfare Services Section Pilot Project within the Department of Human Services to increase staff and reduce caseloads in the East Hawaii Child Welfare Services Section and appropriates funds.

I strongly urge the enactment of HB2277 HD1 SD1. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Valerie T. Poindexter
Hawai'i County Council Chairwoman
District 1, Hāmākua

From the office of -
Council Member
District 3



Office: (808) 961-8396
Fax: (808) 961-8912
Email: sue.leeloy@hawaiicounty.gov

SUSAN L.K. LEE LOY

25 Aupuni Street, Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
And members of the Committee on Ways and Means

March 29, 2018

Dear Chair Dela Cruz and Committee Members,

I thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony supporting and commenting on HB 2277 HD1, as amended to SD1. Although East Hawai'i Island is far from the only area in our State that could benefit from the proposed pilot program to reduce the number of children assigned to each case worker, this is a good place to start. Nowhere else in Hawai'i do the conditions of poverty, abuse, and neglect exist in conjunction with the lack of access to critical services as a result of the wide geographical displacement of lots in the Puna district, an area almost the size of O'ahu. But Puna is just one area of East Hawai'i, which also includes Hāmākua, North Hilo, South Hilo, and Ka'ū.

Less attention spent on abused and neglected children will have a detrimental effect on their growth, health, and well-being. The annual required evaluation as proposed in this bill will determine the effectiveness of a reduced caseload on the social workers' effectiveness in helping our most vulnerable citizens. Targeted early interventions such as this can break the cycle of failure and result in major savings in social services in the long term.

The loss of 19 of the 56 positions within the East Hawai'i Child Welfare Services section has resulted in social workers taking in far more cases than they can reasonably handle with the professionalism that the children deserve. Funding for the eight FTE case managers and the 15 FTE support staff positions as proposed in HB 2277 HD1 SD1, will help. We can do better, and this bill is a vehicle for it to happen.

Again, I thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2277 HD1 SD1, and I ask for your approval.

Aloha Piha,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sue Lee Loy".

Sue Lee Loy
Council Member, District 3

WINNERS' CAMP

HAWAII LEADERSHIP ACADEMY
LIFE SKILLS TRAINING FOR TEENAGERS
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Emma Pavich
Pam Chambers
Positive Connections
Robbins Research International
Bobbie Sandoz
Alan Silva
Sam Slom
Koana Smith

Turning Point for Teachers
Marshall Thurber

ORGANIZATIONS

Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development
Coalition for a Drug Free Hawai'i
Friends of the Children's Advocacy
Friends of the Children's Justice Center - East and West Hawai'i
Girl Scout Council of Hawai'i
Kamehameha Schools, Character Education
MADD & SADD
Merimed Foundation
New Horizons
Rotary Club of Honolulu
Rotaract – Interact – RYLA
Shannon Smith Scholarship Fund
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Winners' Camp is among the most effective business-supported education improvement projects in the nation.

-The Conference Board

March 29, 2018

Testimony regarding Bill SB2277
Relating to Child Welfare Services

Aloha

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. Mahalo, malama pono,

Delorese Gregoire, Founding Director Winners' Camp Foundation



Delorese Gregoire
& Winners' Camp Foundation Board of Directors
winnerscamp.com



"I heartily endorse this...program as a critical step in stopping the deterioration of family life and community that is presently threatening so many families and youths in Hawai'i."

-Dr. Neal Mazer, past Chief of the State's Child and Adolescence Mental Health Department

EAST HAWAII FRIENDS OF FOSTER FAMILIES

April 3rd, 2018

**The Honorable Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Way and Means
Hearing at 10:00am in Conference Room 211
Testimony in SUPPORT of HB2277 HD1 SD1**

This is testimony in strong support of HB2277 and the Child Welfare pilot project that it establishes. Child Welfare has consistently faced alarming challenges and this is a fresh approach with a proven track record of success. We have also listed some suggested amendments to the bill that we will enhance the feasibility and success of the pilot.

CURRENT SITUATION:

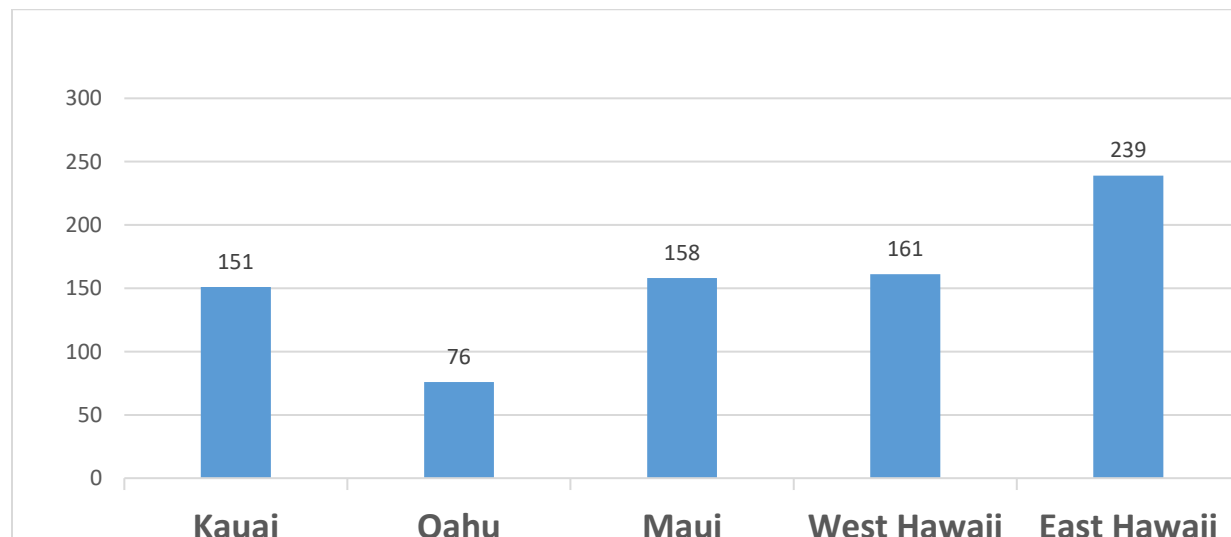
The federal government recently evaluated Child Welfare Services and found no improvement from the last evaluation in 2009. In all seven outcome categories reviewed, the state failed to be in *substantial conformity* in all seven, the same as the review that eight years ago. This bill addresses the concerns identified in the federal review to improve the current crisis in the East Hawaii Section. The East Hawaii Section is still suffering from the consequences in the *reduction in force* (RIF) that occurred in 2009-10 during the Lingle Administration. East Hawaii Section is still down 19 positions and the Pahoia regional office from the cuts that took place 9 years ago. This now leaves the East Hawaii Section with only 37 positions and 1 office to serve a vast geographic area (the size of all the other islands combined). Additionally, in 2012 East Hawaii Section's service area was redrawn to match court districts. This increase the Section's service area to include all of Ka'u with no additional resources allocated. To compound this situation East Hawaii Section has seen a **55% increase of foster children** in care since fiscal year 2014 and has received no additional staff (Table 1).

Table 1. Number of children in care per fiscal year for the East Hawaii Section

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017
Number of Children	332	414	515	514

East Hawaii has the highest Child Abuse Rate in the state. Approximately 3 times the rate of Oahu.

Figure 1. 2015 child abuse rate per 100,000 residents



CASE LOADS:

Child Welfare League of America recommends social workers carry a caseload of no more than 12-15 children. Currently East Hawaii Workers carry an average of 40. These high caseloads have severely negative consequences. For the state to remain eligible and compliant for federal IV-E funds social workers are required to do monthly face-to-face visits with the child(ren) and parent(s). In 2014 Child Welfare Services did a staff survey of reasons behind missed visits (Figure 2). When answers are grouped the survey found that only 26% of these missed visits were unavoidable where as 74% were due to workload/oversight/scheduling/unknown. Unknown because either there was no documentation that a visit took place for that month, or the worker could not confirm that a visit occurred, or the worker had left employment with no further information obtainable.

Figure 2. Examination of reasons behind missed visits



Data Source: Statewide Random Sample Surveys

STAFFING:

East Hawaii Section is the candidate for this pilot project because they have a relatively stable workforce and they are THE ONLY SECTION in the state that can consistently fill open positions. When Social Worker positions open they start off at level IV or III and then lower to level II or I if not filled. East Hawaii has no level II or I social workers because the positions are filled before they have a chance to lower. Every other section throughout the state has positions that have been unfilled since 2011.

Table 2. Child Welfare Section staffing vacancies

CWSB Staff Positions and Vacancies						
	June 2010	June 2011	April 2012	May 2013	May 2014	May 2015
Total Number of CWSB Staff Positions	Over 500	444	417	428	411	409
Number of Vacant CWSB Positions	unknown	91	103	94	93	72
Percentage of Vacancies	unknown	20%	25%	22%	23%	18%

Data Sources: DHS Directories, Past APSRs, April 2012 CWSB Workforce Survey, May 2014 CWSB Workforce Survey, June 2015 CWSB Workforce Survey, and direct staff inquiries

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

This bill is about doing the job right the first time and spending money on salaries not settlements for tragedies. When social workers' caseloads are brought to national standards we can expect this investment at minimum pay for itself. This pilot will examine if the following outcomes are attainable when appropriate resources are allocated:

- More-thorough investigations that result in less removals and investigators having more time to focus on family strengthening
- Shortened time-in-care for children that do enter
- Increased reunification rates
- More-supported and happier foster parents that results in greater retention and easier recruiting
- Improved social worker job-satisfaction that results in less turnover
- Less-burdened court system with fewer sanctions ordered
- Better outcomes for our children

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS:

#1: Currently this bill requests \$2,633,231 in appropriations. The benefits of this bill can be achieved with far less. The positions and infrastructure needed for a successful pilot can be fully achieved with \$910,000. \$660,000 for staffing and \$250,000 for infrastructure. This major cost-reduction was achieved by obtaining the cost of the additional office space needed at \$8000/mo. and by DHS transferring some of their currently funded and unfilled positions to East Hawaii. For the pilot to be successful there needs to be the appropriate amount of support staff, supervision, and front-line workers. DHS Director Bhanot has submitted testimony that DHS will be transferring some of the consistently vacant positions to East Hawaii Section to assist.

#2: The caseload cap of 20 children per worker is essential to the success of this pilot and to the well-being of foster children. The states of Indiana, Florida, Delaware and Texas have put similar measures into effect with great success. However, we recommend that the cap be enforced 6 months into the pilot to ensure DHS has time to hire and train new staff. This will ensure the department is adequately prepared to implement the policy.

THE ASK:

We humbly ask you to pass and fund this bill. This effort was passionately organized by concerned community members, resource caregivers, therapists, current and former foster youth, Guardian Ad Litem (GAL), social workers and so many more. This matter is important to our community and we want to see our state do better in this area. As one of our GAL's puts it:

By definition, the most important adults in foster children's lives have already failed them. When we entrust their care to a state agency without the means or the staff to meet their needs, we send a powerful and damaging message about their worth.

Thank you for scheduling this hearing and giving us the opportunity to testify,

Joseph O'Connell
East Hawaii Friends of Foster Families
808-640-0905
PO Box 11058
Hilo HI 96721



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Supporting HB 2277 HD1 SD1 – Relating to Child Welfare Services
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Scheduled for hearing at on Tuesday, April 3, 2018, 10:00 AM, in Conference Room 211

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in SUPPORT of **HB 2277 HD1 SD1**, which would establish the East Hawaii Child Welfare Services Section Pilot Project within the Department of Human Services to increase staff and reduce caseloads in the East Hawaii Child Welfare Services Section.

Over seven years ago, Hawai'i Appleseed released our first policy brief on the state of support for our foster youth. In the creation of the report, we talked with and learned from dozens of community members with direct legal experience and knowledge of youth in foster care and the impacts of delayed and inadequate services for youth in foster care.

We have continued to focus on the plight of these vulnerable children, most recently advocating in the legal system for foster parents to receive payments adequate to cover the expense of caring for their foster children.

As the preamble of this bill states, the Child Welfare League of America recommends that social workers carry caseloads of no more than fifteen children. Hawai'i should strive to bring our caseloads to this level, in order to ensure that the health and well-being of these children are being properly safeguarded while they are part of our foster care system.

Starting with a five-year pilot project that would limit caseloads to 20 children is a prudent and reasonable first step towards that goal. That timeframe will allow policy makers to determine if this level of reform has measurable effects. If it does prove successful, we hope that this pilot will serve as a model for statewide policy.

We appreciate your consideration of this testimony.

The Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice is committed to a more socially just Hawai'i, where everyone has genuine opportunities to achieve economic security and fulfill their potential. We change systems that perpetuate inequality and injustice through policy development, advocacy, and coalition building.

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2018 8:07:53 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Shellie Niles	Testifying for Catholic Charities Hawaii	Support	No

Comments:

Re: Support for our child welfare system

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.

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.

Best wishes!

Sincerely,

Shellie Niles



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: fcjceh.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

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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



Live the life you want.
Tuesday, April 3, 2018
10:00 A.M.
Conference Room 211
Hawaii State Capitol

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

Position: Supporting HB 2277 HD 1, SD 1, but also Requesting Amendments

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committee:

We support this bill. Foster care is an important service. Yet, sadly, in East Hawaii, Child Welfare Services has been flooded with calls for service and is backlogged, which diminishes the services provided to the affected 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. We also respectfully request an amendment to strengthen this bill by adding a section to improve service to youth statewide.

One statewide problem in Child Welfare Services is the risk that a parent's or prospective parent's blindness can be used as a reason to remove a child from their home or deny or restrict participation in foster care or adoption. The reality is that blindness does not inherently impair anyone's ability to take care of himself, herself, or his or her child. Just because many sighted people do not know the alternative techniques that we use to accomplish the tasks of daily life does not mean that we do not have them or that they are not effective. A child is not at any inherent risk by being in the care of a blind parent. We would like to respectfully request that clarity be provided in the law so that blindness cannot be used as a reason for Child Welfare Services to remove a child from the home of a perfectly capable parent.

We had a bill, Senate Bill 2208, which was passed by the Senate Committee on Human Services but was not scheduled for a hearing in the Senate Committee on Judiciary in time for crossover. Some people contended that we needed to extend these protections to all types of disabilities. We are not aware of any interest from any other disability group, but, if they want the protection to include any type of disability, that still covers us. We would be happy to support language protecting children of all parents with disabilities.

If you could please amend this bill to include an additional section with the language from SB 2208, we would be eternally grateful. If you wish to replace "blind" with "disabled" and "blindness" with "disability," we would also be equally grateful. Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to provide written testimony.

Justin M. Salisbury, MA, NOMC, NCRTB, NCUEB
Legislative Committee Chair, Honolulu Chapter
National Federation of the Blind of Hawaii
1617 Kapiolani Boulevard, Unit 1402
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2018 8:08:19 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lawrence Kalani	Testifying for Resource Care Giver	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Committee members and mahalo for allowing me to testify in favor of HB 2277. I have been a Resource Care Giver for close to 10 years. I have taken in many young children into my home. Not only have I gotten to know these young people over that period of time, but i've also gotten to know their workers and the constraints they have to work under. During this time, I've witness the stresses, low morale and poor work environment these dedicated social workers and aides has to work under and still expected to come up with miracles.

I strongly support HB 2277 and the expected positive contributions this bill will impact on not only young people and families, but towards the general community. We recognize fully that DHS-CWS needs to make vital improvements and the current problems that exists will not just resolve itself and go away. Passing HB 2277 will be able to make needed vital improvements and resolve many of the problems that exist today. Once expected successes are measured, it will be the model towards improving the foster care system state-wide. Mahalo.

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2018 12:36:44 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Melodie Aduja	Testifying for Oahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i	Support	No

Comments:

To the Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair; the Honorable Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee on Ways and Means:

Good morning. My name is Melodie Aduja. I serve as Chair of the Oahu County Committee ("OCC") on Legislative Priorities of the Democratic Party of Hawaii ("DPH"). Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on **HB2277 HD1 SD1** relating to the Department of Human Services; Child Welfare Services; East Hawaii Service Section; Caseload;and an appropriation.

The OCC on Legislative Priorities is in support of **HB2277 HD1 SD1** and is in favor of its passage.

HB2277 HD1 SD1 is in accord with the Platform of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i ("DPH"), 2016, as it establishes the East Hawaii Child Welfare Services Section Pilot Project within the Department of Human Services to increase staff and reduce caseloads in the East Hawaii Child Welfare Services Section; and appropriates funds, effective 7/1/3000.

Specifically, the DPH Platform provides that "[w]e believe all families should have an equal opportunity to build their assets and become self-sufficient, and we support a strong safety net of programs that will afford them the opportunity to do so. We much protect our children, our future, from violence and neglect and provide them with a safe and healthy environment in which to grow and thrive." (Platform of the DPH, P. 4, Lines 184-187 (2016)).

Given that **HB2277 HD1 SD1** establishes the East Hawaii Child Welfare Services Section Pilot Project within the Department of Human Services to increase staff and reduce caseloads in the East Hawaii Child Welfare Services Section; and appropriates funds, effective 7/1/3000, it is the position of the OCC on Legislative Priorities to support this measure.

Thank you very much for your kind consideration.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Melodie Aduja

Melodie Aduja, Chair, OCC on Legislative Priorities

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

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2018 10:46:55 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2018 6:55:32 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

As a recipient of CWS services in East Hawaii (Puna), I can authoritatively attest to the understaffed condition of the operations assisting us here. Please move this bill through the Legislature to properly direct funds to where they are direly needed!

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2018 8:19:05 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
barrilyn kamalii	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I have been in foster care for 18 years, when I was growing up I was lucky enough to have a case worker who would visit monthly with my foster parents and I, she would make sure that we as a family were ok and always asking questions about school, home life and my personal life. I have met many children in the foster care system who have not had the same opportunity that I have had. They could never reach there case/social worker because of the case workers work load. They have so many other children that they can't spend that one on one time with three children. It has help me that my case worker had time to spend with me because I had a wonderful relationship with her. Even now that I aged out of the system my case/social worker still keeps in touch with me. It is important for this bill to pass because every child in the foster care system deserves to be heard and have a relationship with an adult figure. Some children won't trust adults but with that one on one time that trust will start building and the child will know who they can turn to for help.

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2018 8:39:14 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jan-Marie Osorio	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

Please support SB2276. Through my work, passion for working with foster youth, and recently becoming a foster parent, I have had the honor of working with our East Hawaii Child Welfare Services. These dedicated workers are under-staffed and over-worked for a highly demanding job. The reality of what they deal with on a daily basis is often overlooked, but I see the looks on their faces, how tired they are, and how disturbing the work can be.

Supporting this pilot project will not only improve the selfless work they provide to ensure the safety and welfare of our keiki, but also the care they give to children and families whose lives have just turned upside down. This pilot project will also improve the work and relationships they have with service providers and resource caregivers that they are required to work with as well. Please support this bill for our communities, our families, and most importantly... for our keiki. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2018 9:17:35 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
theresa martinson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2018 9:53:22 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dawn Lee	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please support and fund this measure. Foster children should be served properly by our State workers. And it's not possible with the current case loads. Please help.

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2018 10:08:17 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Wilma Friesema	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha. My name is Wilma Friesema, and I work at a non-profit agency that contracts with CWS, but I am not speaking on my agency's behalf. For the past 10 years I have worked alongside social workers as we try to reconnect the children and youth in foster care to their biological families. I have witnessed, first hand, the workers' intense caseload and the toll it takes on them.

Social workers are trying to help families in crisis; they want to understand the issues and find effective solutions. But it's hard to reach that understanding and find those solutions when conversations have to be cut short because so many families need to be seen that day, or when promises are not followed up on because another family's crisis got in the way, or when a youth is left waiting for a response that comes weeks late. Helping people when they're most vulnerable requires trust -- parents and children need to be able to *trust* their social worker in order to accept help and make the hard changes they need to make. Without it, they just see the social worker as someone who is out to control them or, worse, tear their family apart.

Having a realistic caseload would enable social workers to deliver better service and, I believe, will prove to be more cost effective. Social workers would have more time and emotional bandwidth to get to know the families, to partner with them and engage the families' strengths to help them address their own problems. I believe, this collaborative approach would result in more successful resolutions which, in turn, would reduce the long-term costs of foster care. It would be a win-win, and would likely help stabilize CWS's workforce as well.

We need to support our social workers. They step into the ground zero of a family's pain every day, and they do so with great heart and courage. Please pass this bill so we can find out if there's a better way for them to care for Hawaii's children and families.

Mahalo for your time,

Wilma Friesema

Kaneohe, HI

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2018 9:43:13 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2018 10:44:41 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

I have worked with families and individuals involved in the child welfare/child protective services system for close to 20 years. During that time, I have observed that the "system" has never functioned as well as it should, and families and children have "fallen through the cracks," but the current situation with CWS is the worst I have seen. The long term effects of untreated child abuse and neglect are significant, and the cost to society itself is much greater than the cost of providing adequate and appropriate services to the children and families. The caseloads are overwhelming and there is no way that a CWS worker can do what is needed. Please pass this bill, as it is a substantial step in supporting child safety, as well as stronger and healthier families and communities.

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2018 2:33:12 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Annette Clay	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Senator Dela Cruz and Finance Committee,

Thank you for scheduling this hearing. Hawaii Child Welfare is one of only 15 states that completely failed the federal review two periods in a row. I know we can do better for Hawaii's Keiki than that. HB2277 is a very common sense approach to making the situation better. I don't like seeing workers removing kids just because they don't have the time to investigate properly and truly help the family stay together. Why do our workers have 45-55 kids when the national standard is 12-15? Please let this bill be one of the fruits of the 2018 legislative session. The stronger and more supported our families the better Hawaii's future.

Annette Clay

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2018 7:43:11 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Delia Ulma	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2018 8:07:59 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
kristen Thario	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please pass this bill! As a social worker I was constantly overwhelmed. Please help make the system better!!

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2018 3:48:26 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
John Honda	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,
Please support this bill. It would mean a lot for the community.
Thank you for the opportunity to testify!

Mahalo!

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2018 6:50:31 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
margarita ramos	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2018 7:38:15 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2018 9:16:41 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kauilani Perdomo	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

As a daughter, mother, aunty, teacher and leader in our community I can testify with great confidence that OUR children need as much support and attention as we can possible give them. As a compassionate community contributor that focuses on human services this bill speaks volumes to how we must come together as a people to care and love for our children and families that are in need of more support and guidance. It would be nice if this world came with a user's guide, but it doesn't and unfortunately parenting isn't taught in our education systems unless you go specifically for that degree.

Our social service organizations and professionals are in dire need of our help and we need to hear and take action in regards to their cries. With this bill we can at least support their efforts to alleviate the over stressed and over load of cases per case manager. This will allow them to spend more time and energy to help and give assistance to their individual clients (children) that are in desperate need of their attention.

Thank you for hearing our cries and thank you in advance for your support by taken action.

March 29, 2018

Senator Donovan Dela Cruz

Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 211

Hawai'i State Capitol Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: SB 2277 – Relating to Child Welfare Services

Dear Senator Green and Committee members:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB2276. As an East Hawaii resident, I have had multiple relationships with individuals connected in some way to the Child Welfare Services. East Hawaii, not unlike much of the state of Hawaii, has an interconnecting web of relationships to which most residents have some connection to the foster care program. My experience with persons affiliated, have ranged from children in early transition to workers employed by the state of Hawaii.

Throughout the years, I have seen not only poor examples of fostering, but outstanding parents as well. It is my opinion that these poor examples are due to two reasons. First, these foster parents are not receiving the proper education and support that should be given to deal with the multiple issues children placed in homes have experienced. Second, improper screening and follow-up have allowed adults to enter into the program as caregivers, which are not only unsupportive of these children, but are actually causing harm. Both situations are an effect that is caused by lack of support to the staff of the Child Welfare Services. I have also been witness to care providers that are an outstanding example of what the end result of the fostered children should be. This result, is ultimately achieved by the combined characteristics of the parents, which includes individual ethics, responsibility both as an individual and parental, and a desire to see the children succeed. These parents are not receiving the proper support and are, in fact, supplementing extra time and funding beyond what is given. But what of the children who are not fortunate enough to be placed in these caring homes?

I cannot imagine the logic in why an organization that is established solely to serve our community and protect its children, has to beg for assistance to do its job. Please not only take consideration of this bill but enact it to assist a community in dire need.

John F. Kennedy once said, “Children are the world's most valuable resource and its best hope for the future.” Take time to consider, if the children are our future and for many that future is dim, society will see the ultimate effects. Are your children not part of that same society?

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Heather Palama

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2018 7:56:00 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mandy Jimenez Casian	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2018 7:59:11 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Alyx Kelii	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2018 8:08:42 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Cynthia L Riley	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am submitting a testimony on behalf of the children that need social services in the State of Hawaii. They are our future and it is my belief and hope that this Bill is pushed through in support of these children and social service workers; they are overwhelmed and over-worked. It is necessary for the success of the wellness of these children.

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2018 8:12:35 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
samantha welt	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2018 8:17:50 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Tiffany Darragh	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2018 8:35:53 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
blanca merced	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2018 10:25:46 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jessica Fulkerson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2018 10:28:13 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Savannah Mariani	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support bill HB2277 as a former foster youth of the Hawaii Foster care system. I first hand experienced how case overload for social workers can result in neglect of youth in care. My needs and concerns were often overlooked and neglected as I would go months with never seeing my worker. I am in full support for bill HB2277 as I believe it will significantly improve the child welfare system providing children and youth with better care and ensuring their needs are met.

MADLINE M. REED
ATTORNEY AT LAW



March 29, 2018

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Committee on Ways and Means
Hawai'i State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair
Committee on Ways and Means
Hawai'i State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: HB 2277, HD 1, SD 1 Relating to Child Welfare Services
Hearing Date: 4/3/18 - 10:00 AM; Conference Room 211

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Keith-Agaran and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT** of HB 2277, HD 1, SD 1. I have practiced Child Welfare Law here on Hawai'i Island since 2010. Over the past eight years I have represented many children and parents involved with East Hawai'i Child Welfare Services.

During that time I have seen firsthand how social workers are forced to triage their caseloads. In my experience, handling emergencies takes up the vast majority of their energy and leaves little time to manage the needs of the rest of the children and families in their care. Social workers are often difficult to reach and many are not conducting their minimum monthly face-to-face visits. It may seem like a small thing, but is hard to put into words how deeply unfair this is to foster children. By definition, the most important adults in their lives have already failed them. When we entrust their care to a state agency without the means or the staff to meet their needs, we send them a powerful and damaging message about their worth.

Please listen to the testimony provided by mental health professionals about the downstream costs of failing to properly care for foster children. Moreover, it is ultimately our state's moral obligation to care for the most vulnerable members of our society. I believe capping social worker caseloads and adding staff has the potential to dramatically improve the lives of foster children and to benefit our community as a whole.

I urge you to pass HB 2277.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Reed', written over a horizontal line.

Madeline M. Reed, Esq.

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2018 11:04:32 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Uilani Dasalla	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2018 11:05:14 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha WAM committee,

My name is Melissa Mayo I am a former youth from East Hawaii . 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 extra curricular 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 social worker 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 social workers 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 social worker 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.

I sincerely ask the legislature to allocate the appropriate resources to our child welfare social workers to ensure they are supported in serving the most vulnerable children in our community. Please support the passage of this bill. Thank you

Sincerely,

Melissa Mayo (Fomer Foster Youth)

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2018 11:06:50 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Leila Chee	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha WAM committee,
I sincerely ask the legislature to allocate the appropriate resources to our child welfare social workers to ensure they are supported in serving the most vulnerable children in our community. Please support the passage of this bill. Thank you

Sincerely,

Leila Chee

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2018 11:13:05 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kelsea Young	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha WAM committee,
I sincerely ask the legislature to allocate the appropriate resources to our child welfare social workers to ensure they are supported in serving the most vulnerable children in our community. Please support the passage of this bill. Thank you

Sincerely,

Kelsea Young

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2018 11:28:35 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Richelle Evangelista	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha WAM committee,
I sincerely ask the legislature to allocate the appropriate resources to our child welfare social workers to ensure they are supported in serving the most vulnerable children in our community. Please support the passage of this bill. Thank you

Sincerely,

Richelle Evangelista

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2018 11:37:55 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Joseph Borer, M.D.	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Lawmakers,

I am writing in support of HB2277. As an emergency physician in Hilo, Hawaii, I have seen the terrible consequences of child abuse and neglect. It is devastating to children, families, and the community. East Hawaii is terribly stressed by this and our CWS workers are the first line on defense for our children.

Currently our Child Welfare Workers are over stressed, overworked and are not able to do their jobs the way they need to and want to. They just do not have the manpower to protect the children and work with families in need of support.

We all want to protect these children and give these families the opportunity to either care for their children or find foster families that can. What I fear is seeing the next child who has been shaken, or beaten or worse. I have seen all these things in Hilo and I pray we can prevent the next terrible tragedy from ever occurring.

Please support HB2277 allowing funding for more welfare workers and help our community keep our children safe.

Aloha

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2018 12:00:55 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Daynon Ramos	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha WAM committee,

I sincerely ask the legislature to allocate the appropriate resources to our child welfare social workers to ensure they are supported in serving the most vulnerable children in our community. Please support the passage of this bill. Thank you

Sincerely,

Daynon Ramos

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2018 12:13:24 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Emme Furuya	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha WAM committee,

I sincerely ask the legislature to allocate the appropriate resources to our child welfare social workers to ensure they are supported in serving the most vulnerable children in our community. Please support the passage of this bill. Thank you

Sincerely,

Emme Furuya

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2018 12:33:52 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Taylor Hiraki	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha WAM committee,

I sincerely ask the legislature to allocate the appropriate resources to our child welfare social workers to ensure they are supported in serving the most vulnerable children in our community. Please support the passage of this bill. Thank you

Sincerely,

Taylor Hiraki

JUDITH WILHOITE · KAILUA · HAWAII · 96734

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

HEARING: Tuesday, April 3, 2018
10:00 A.M.
Conference Room 211

FROM: Judith Wilhoite

RE: HB2277

Aloha,

My name is Judith Wilhoite. My husband and I have been foster parents for over 20 years. I thank you for this opportunity to voice very strong support for HB2277.

Over the past two decades, I have seen firsthand the difference DHS social workers can make in the lives of Hawaii's families, thus creating a better community for all of us. Their work includes helping families heal and become stable enough to regain custody of their children. This is not a job for the faint hearted, as often both the birth parents and the foster children have suffered severe trauma in their lives, creating physical and psychological issues for all members of the family. It is imperative that these issues are addressed in a healing, thoughtful way, if we want to see this family become strong again.

At the same time, the case workers must support and respond to the needs of the resource caregivers currently taking care of the children, for children who have trauma in their past often present extremely challenging behaviors. A social worker getting needed support to the resource caregiver in a timely matter means the child is also getting what he or she needs to learn, heal, and be resilient. It can also "save the placement", meaning the resource caregiver has the support and tools they need to keep the child in their home, instead of asking the child be removed to yet another home.

If we want to see significant improvement of our child welfare system, we must provide the brave souls who embark on a career in child welfare with healthy, supportive working conditions. Giving workers a manageable case load is a good place to start.

I thank you for hearing this bill and strongly support its passage.

TESTIMONY OF STEWART MAEDA
HILO, HAWAI'I - EPIC 'OHANA FACILITATOR
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
REGARDING HOUSE BILL NO. 2277 (HD1 SD1)
RELATING TO CHILDWELFARE SERVICES
MARCH 29, 2018

Chair Dela Cruz and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill No. 2277 HD1 SD1. 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 HD1 SD1.

TESTIMONY OF TIFFANY BADER
HILO, HAWAI'I - EPIC 'OHANA RECORDER
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
REGARDING HOUSE BILL NO. 2277 (HD1 SD1)
RELATING TO CHILDWELFARE SERVICES
MARCH 29, 2018

Chair Dela Cruz and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill No. 2277 HD1 SD1. 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 HD1 SD1 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 HD1 SD1.

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2018 12:49:33 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Daniel Lindsey	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha WAM committee,

I sincerely ask the legislature to allocate the appropriate resources to our child welfare social workers to ensure they are supported in serving the most vulnerable children in our community. Please support the passage of this bill. Thank you

Sincerely,

Daniel Lindsey

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2018 2:31:14 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Elizabeth Pelanca	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2018 3:13:39 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Sofia Hergenrader	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2018 7:42:20 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2018 5:17:26 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Sharla-Ann Fujimoto	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2018 5:43:12 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Sacarias Somalinog	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha WAM committee,
I sincerely ask the legislature to allocate the appropriate resources to our child welfare social workers to ensure they are supported in serving the most vulnerable children in our community. Please support the passage of this bill. Thank you

Sincerely,

Sacarias Somalinog

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2018 5:46:05 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha WAM committee,

I sincerely ask the legislature to allocate the appropriate resources to our child welfare social workers to ensure they are supported in serving the most vulnerable children in our community. Please support the passage of this bill. Thank you

Sincerely,

Kia-lyn Campbell

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2018 5:49:22 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
kawai saniatan	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha WAM Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill 2276. I ask that our Senators and representatives do what is necessary to protect the health and safety of our most vulnerable children in Hawaii.

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. With more support and resources come a higher outcome of positive, safe and cared for youth.

I believe that foster youth that are able to get the proper care and assistance in their lives, will not only benefit themselves, but will relay that same positivity and care to others and back to the community. Please help these CWS workers and their assistants to do their jobs in a caring and reasonable fashion, with support and regulation.

Thank you,

Kawai Saniatan

Current Resource Caregiver

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2018 6:04:31 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

My name is Kerry Perez, and I am a social worker with CWS in West Hawaii. I am writing in support of HB2277 and of my fellow social workers and Hawaii families who will benefit from the passage. High caseloads and staffing issue plague every section of CWS, and I personally have experienced the difficult decision of which family, which children, are the priority, knowing I will fail to reach them all. I support this bill because I believe every child should be a priority. I support this bill because I have seen what a difference can be made in the life of a child who, sometimes for the first time ever, gets to experience safety and security. I support this bill as a social worker, a member of this community, and a parent. Thank you for considering this testimony.

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2018 8:22:41 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha WAM committee,
I sincerely ask the legislature to allocate the appropriate resources to our child welfare social workers to ensure they are supported in serving the most vulnerable children in our community. Please support the passage of this bill. Thank you

Sincerely,

Sharelle Poulsen

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2018 8:53:38 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Chris Madsen	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I have lived all across this state. No area needs more services than East Hawaii. There is still some major depravity here that needs to be dealt with. Some of it is locally grown, but I've also personally witnessed some of it from people from far away islands that try and bring very unacceptable behavior here.

What is more obvious is the widespread animal abuse that goes on here. That is a good indicator because anyone that has no problem abusing an animal would have no problem abusing a child.

Honestly, if at all possible some appropriate true positive culture needs to interjected as well. That type of learning is then self-perpetuating. Hawaii is rich in culture and teachings. Use what is appropriate in each case and I believe you will then end up with people in the future that will need less government intervention. But in the meantime, I have no doubt that these services are needed.

Mahalo,

Chris Madsen

PO Box 6659

Hilo, HI. 96720

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2018 11:22:03 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Crystal Brown	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2018 5:26:30 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kathryn york	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please pass this crucial bill to support our keiki.

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2018 6:09:34 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Carlene Greenlee	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support bill HB2277

i am a retired Social Worker from The Department of Human Services, Child Welfare Services. I was an assessment worker, in "the trenches" for over fifteen years. I'm proud to know that I saved some children's lives and hopefully helped many others. I support this bill because I had the opportunity to have MSww students, case aides , 98 day hires, and volunteers working with me, individually. This was very helpful to me. That person was invaluable to me. They knew the case, the dynamics of that case and equally important my determinations, reasoning, and rhythm. Mahalo you time, Carlene Pratt Greenlee

THE SENATE
THE TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2018
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

NOTICE OF DECISION MAKING

DATE: Tuesday, April 3, 2018

TIME: 10:00 A.M.

PLACE: Conference Room 211

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

Position: **STRONG SUPPORT HB2277 HD1, SD1**

Chair **Dela Cruz**, Vice Chair **Keith-Agaran** 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-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2018 7:39:20 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Bryan Dorn	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2018 11:38:03 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Dear Senator Dela Crua and Members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee,

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.

I urge you to support and adequately fund HB 2277. Making a positive difference in the lives of children today will make a difference for generations to come. 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. Thank you for considering this innovative solution to effectively responding to child abuse and neglect in our community.

Sincerely,

Terri Lynn Lum, LSW

March 30, 2018

RE Bill HB 2277 East Hawaii Child Welfare Pilot Project

I am involved in a case regarding a child in protective custody (grandparent). I was shocked and horrified to hear from a worker that he/she has 50 children to care about. This social worker has spent hours on “my” case, and has worked hours and nights both on weekdays and weekends to help the child related to me. To know that this person has 50 children to worry about really made an impact on me. I know, just logically, that it is not possible for someone to do a job and do it well with that many children to be responsible for. I also believe it is not ethical to give people more worrisome work than they are humanly capable of doing.

The case that comes to my mind, and I am sure to the minds of many others, is Peter Boy. I am sure you agree with me that we must be sure this never happens again.

I ask that you please fund and enact the East Hawaii Child Welfare Pilot Project. I want to thank the authors and persons involved in the creation of this bill. Again, please help make our society better in East Hawaii by ensuring the funding and passage of HB2277.

Re:

RELATING TO CHILD
WELFARE SERVICES.

Report Title: Department of Human Services; Child Welfare Services; East Hawaii Service Section; Caseload; Appropriation (\$)

Description: Establishes the East Hawaii Child Welfare Services Section Pilot Project within the Department of Human Services to increase staff and reduce caseloads in the East Hawaii Child Welfare Services Section. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/3000. (SD1)

Companion:

Sincerely,

Patrice Lei Belcher (consumer of CWS services)

P O Box 7310 Hilo Hawaii, 96720 home phone (808) 935-3939
pbelcher@hawaii.rr.com

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2018 7:15:50 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lee Lord	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

From: Lee Lord

Date: 3/30/2018

Re: Support for our child welfare system

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to express my 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.

I 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.

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.

I look forward to continuing our collaborative work.

Best wishes!

Sincerely,

Lee Lord

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2018 2:48:58 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Tony Borer	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

My mom is a caseworker in East Hawaii Child Welfare Services. She has 25 cases involving 50 children when the national recommendation is a cap of 15 children. The geographic area for her cases are from Honoka'a to Nalehu. I see her struggling to maintain the quality services consistently despite her strong work ethic. She works weekends, holiday and evenings but struggles to complete all the tasks asked of her. I see her health impacts, such as increasing blood pressure and lack of time for self care such as exercise. Not only does this impact her personally and our family in general, but ultimately, and most importantly, it puts the children at risk for abuse and weakens our community.

I would like this to be passed to help the children my mom services but also to improve the wellness and work conditions for my mother and her colleagues.

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2018 3:15:03 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kathy Borer	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

This bill is near and dear to my heart. As a private citizen, it is important that we back our commitment to 'Ohana, as a Hawaiian value, with concrete action. Sometimes it seems as if the outer islands are often left out of the discussion when it comes to financing the services and service providers on the front line to strengthen families. This is one of those times. East Hawaii Child Welfare workers have extraordinary and unrealistic expectations given their high caseloads. With caseloads over double the national average, paired with a large geographic spread, there is no way to complete face to face visits with every child, resource provider and parent every month. When case managers cannot visit children directly, they are not able to assess for continuing problems and will not be able to make the appropriate referrals for additional services, such as mental health. When case managers are not able to meet with resource providers regularly and provide them with additional support in caring for our foster youth, it increases the chances of burnout for resource parents, which has the high potential of increase the number of resource homes a foster youth may be placed in which causes higher stress and increase the risk of long-term persistent mental health issues. When case managers are unable to maintain regular and steady contact with parents, they are unable to catch them if they should slide away from healthy habits that increase their likelihood of reunification which results in broken families, hopelessness, and likely contributes to attachment issues for foster youth. Attachment is a critical factor in healthy adult relationship, impacting mental health and wellness. Healthy families contribute positively to society and can support children in becoming participating members of society.

In addition to meeting with the foster youth, resource parents and families directly; case managers are also responsible for communicating with various service providers, including the Courts. They must be knowledgeable of the services available in the community to address the needs of the family including: parenting, substance abuse and domestic violence treatment, mental health services, housing, medical and transportation. Following all of that, they must maintain accurate documentation including, reports to the court and referrals to service providers, to support their decision-making process and to document the progress of families. It's too much given the caseload which average 15-25 active cases involving 20-50 children.

This bill has broad bi-partisan support and the Governor has indicated he will find funding for this pilot study. Let's see what this 5-year commitment can provide in long

term yield. Support our workers and show them you are serious about your commitment to families and our children.

Mahalo Nui-

Kathy Borer, R.N., LCSW

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2018 6:55:52 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

TO: Ways and Means Chair Donavan Dela Cruz

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 foster home is safe and supportive, they show up to youth circles 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 problems 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-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2018 6:58:03 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Ways and Means,

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 were family visits not 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 sisters could have stayed connected 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 proper support can be given where its truly needed.

Mahalo,

Shandon Cuba

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2018 7:00:14 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kekoa Abellarra	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

As a former foster youth I STRONGLY support this bill. Please please please supprt this.

Mahalo,

Kekoa Abellera

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2018 9:25:46 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ashley Albelo	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha WAM committee,
I sincerely ask the legislature to allocate the appropriate resources to our child welfare social workers to ensure they are supported in serving the most vulnerable children in our community. Please support the passage of this bill. Thank you

Sincerely,

Ashley Albelo

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2018 11:41:06 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Zashalyn Rapoza	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Senator Donovan Dela Cruz and WAM Committee,

Hawaii showed no improvement in the recent Federal Review. We can do better than this. Hawaii should be a shining example of how we take care of our foster youth. We should not be completely failing review after review after review. Foster kids are disproportionately native hawaiian and this isn't okay. Please fund and support this bill.

mahalo,

Zashalyn Rapoza

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2018 1:14:34 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Bronson K.	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2018 1:13:29 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dara Carlin, M.A.	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2018 9:45:32 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Vanessa-Lee K. Kekahuna	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

TO: Senator, Donovan Delacruz, Chair
Senator, Gilbert Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair
Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Esther B. McDaniel

HEARING: Tuesday, April 3, 2018, 10:00AM, Conference Room 016,
HB 2277 HD1 – Relating to Child Welfare Services

Aloha Senators:

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit written testimony for HB 2277. I am a licensed resource caregiver (AKA foster parent) and I support HB 2277.

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)

The children in my home who were reunified with family had parents or relatives who were in regular and direct contact with the case worker and the case worker was responsive and at times following up and/or looking for the parent or relative. I believe increasing the number of workers and reducing the number of children on a worker's case load 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. This pilot program in East Hawaii would place a cap of 20 children per caseworker. 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.”

Many resources caregivers 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-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2018 8:45:14 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jonathan Mendoza	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Thank you for taking the time to hear this concern.

My wife and I are foster parents on the East Side of the Hawaii Island. We both agree that the Social Worker's for Child Welfare Services of the Department of Human Services are incredible workers. They are a blessing to the youth that have to grow up in foster care. Please bless the Hilo side with this Pilot to beef up the work force for this population. It is a preventative measure for not only protecting and nurturing the future generation, our Keiki. But even more, to assist the families who step up to do the frontline work with these youngsters who have gone through various types of abuse and neglect. Furthermore, it will also protect these amazing folks who go into the field of Social Work to help out this whole situation of youth being removed from their homes due to trauma and such. With more Social Workers and Assistants, these workers will be able to manage a case load that is recommended by the Child Welfare League of America. (20 children per worker, not between 40 and 50). With this type of "Cap" in place, these workers can make a career out of this rather than "Burning Out" or experiencing "Compassion Fatigue" to where they can't do the job anymore and keep up with the expectations of case managing too many children on their work load.

Please allow House Bill 2277 to pass, thank you for your time.

Aloha and Mahalo, Jonathan Mendoza

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2018 8:54:30 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Rosemary Strong	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha-

I am happy to see this bill making it's way through the process. I assume this means the representatives also understand the importance of passing this measure. I believe it will greatly impact the well-being of our keiki to have more social workers and less caseload. This will help to keep those workers who have the passion and heart to do this work, without burning them out! So they can better protect the children.

Mahalo!!

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2018 9:22:28 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Katherine Wood	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha, I strongly support House Bill 2277 to limit the number of cases and children each social worker may be assigned. It is critical for the well being of Hawaii's keiki. I am the adoptive mother of two wonderful brothers whom we fostered, then adopted. The first social worker we had, was very experienced and met with us in our home monthly despite her giant workload. She took time to speak with our son (then 2), and let him show her his room, or toys, or games, or pictures. She would ask us how we were doing as new parents and answer any questions we had. She would compliment his progress and was amazed by how fast he was adapting to our home. At the time we were only fostering our eldest (our younger child hadn't been born) and we didn't require too much support. However, she readily responded when we reached out for assistance. She was really great and aptly was promoted after about 5 months. Unfortunately we were then assigned a less experienced (new to CPS) social worker who was not as adept at handling her caseload. We felt like a very low priority and over 16 months had only 2 visits in our home, and only then at our request. She took her time returning phone calls if she returned them at all. We made a host of excuses for her. She's new. She probably inherited our rockstar social worker's caseload. Still though, despite being his fourth home, our foster son was thriving! Certainly she was just spending time with other cases that needed her more? We're we just on the back burner because our foster son was doing so well? It wasn't until the TPR hearings and we requested to have his infant brother placed with us, that we realized how much her pervasive lack of communication and home visits would negatively impact our family. Despite never really observing us together as a family more than three or four times over the course of 16 months, she made a decision to break apart our family. She removed our older foster son from our home (after 1.5 years) and shipped him and his infant brother out of state to some relatives who had specifically stated multiple times they didn't want a baby. Ultimately we won a court decision (and won a subsequent case in appellate court) to have both boys returned to us to live together. Justice was served but at what emotional cost to our children, all of the parties of the case and to the tax payer? While it is possible that she was just a really crappy social worker, I'd like to give her the benefit of the doubt. I hope that if she would have had a smaller, more manageable caseload, she would have had time to develop a relationship with our family. She would have had time to observe our foster son in our home, our join us on an outing or adventure to see how he was doing where he was placed. She would have come to the current conclusion on her own. She would have seen with her own eyes and her heart,

that we were the forever home the boys deserved without dragging us all through 2+ years of stressful and expensive litigation. We personally spent over \$25000 in law yers' fees and missed out on the first 4.5 months of our younger son's life because of one overburdened social worker. Who knows how much public money was spent on the two separate court cases both for the Guardian Ad Litem and CPS workers, lawyers etc?

The stress and financial toll isn't the only cost though. parents. We were amazing foster parents. My husband and I are amazing We had never intended to foster only 2 boys. su We had always imagined fostering many children. The negative experiences we suffered due to one overburdened social worker have cost East Hawaii one set of amazing foster parents. We can't possibly risk going through that again. Please consider making the social worker's jobs more manageable so they may do a great job for every child. This will have such a giant ripple effect. It will improve the lives of foster children, of foster families, of the social worker and of the community. Please approve House Bill 2277.

Mahalo,

Kate Wood

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2018 9:23:11 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Danielle Mendoza	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Danielle Mendoza

P.O. Box 10303

Hilo, Hawaii 96720

April 2, 2018

Re: Support for our child welfare system

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.

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.

Best wishes!

Sincerely,

Danielle Mendoza

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2018 9:11:27 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Shauntelle Bohol	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2018 7:43:41 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Melisa Secola	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

April 2, 2018

Melisa Secola

P.O. Box 1618

Pahoa, HI 96778

Re: Support for our child welfare system

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, that is, 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.

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. Further, please help our 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.

Best wishes!

Sincerely,

Melisa Secola, Ph.D., LMHC

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2018 9:31:14 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Danielle Tamala	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I am a foster parent and I am in strong support of HB2277. Please help our keiki O Ka Aina and pass this bill.

Thank you,

Danielle Tamala

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2018 9:54:55 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
VERNA POST	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please support HB2277. It supports the vitality of Hawaii and the future of our community. The children deserve all the attention that is possible.

Verna Post

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2018 9:57:17 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Shawn A. Humphers	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Shawn A. Humphers

204 Waianuenue Avenue

Hilo, HI 96720

April 2, 2018

Re: Support for child welfare system

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.

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.

Best wishes!

Sincerely,

Shawn Humphers