

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



PANKAJ BHANOT
DIRECTOR

CATHY BETTS
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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

LATE

April 2, 2018

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

FROM: Pankaj Bhanot, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 2277 HD1 SD1 – RELATING TO CHILD WELFARE SERVICES**

Hearing: Tuesday, April 3, 2018, 10:00 a.m.
Conference Room 211, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this bill and offers the following comments. In addition to concepts identified in the measure, DHS administration is also discussing additional resources such as consultation, evaluation, and analytics capabilities that would support positive case outcomes and improved case practices.

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

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

CWS - East Hawaii has experienced a low vacancy rate (currently, all caseworker positions are filled in East Hawaii) and maintains a relatively stable workforce.

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

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

DHS appreciates the legislature's interest and commitment to protect and meet the needs of Hawaii's abused and neglected children. DHS is working with House and Senate committee members on a workable pilot project to improve the Child Welfare Services (CWS) system that will keep children safe and establish best practices in-line with the Administration for Children and Families federal standards. We understand that the legislature may not be able to allocate the projected cost of \$2.6 million at this time, and we will work with members and the community through conference to develop alternatives to achieve a caseload reduction to enable improved casework services to those in need of CWS services.

CWSB staff consistently report that insufficient resources and prevention programs are needed to better serve families. Early childhood and early learning opportunities for children and parents, residential substance abuse programs that allow children to be placed with parents, resources to address economic and health issues, limited transportation resources, and an aging state vehicle fleet are examples of needs identified by staff. To

address one of these needs, in SFY 2018, CWSB is identifying funding to purchase new vehicles for three of the Sections without motor pool services.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION
AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

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

The Twenty-Ninth Legislature, State of Hawaii
The Senate
Committee on Ways and Means

LATE

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association

April 2, 2018

H.B. 2277, HD1, SD1 – RELATING TO CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO supports the intent of H.B. 2277, HD1, SD1 which seeks to establish a pilot project and appropriate funds for the Department of Human Services to increase staff and reduce caseloads in the East Hawaii Child Welfare Services Section.

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of H.B. 2277, HD1, SD1.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira
Executive Director



ONLINE SUBMITTAL

Hearing on: Tuesday, April 3, 2018 @ 10:00 a.m.
Conference Room #211

DATE: April 2, 2018

TO: Senate Committee on Ways & Means
TO: Sen Donovan Delacruz, Chair
Sen. Gilbert Keith-Agaran, Vice-Chair

LATE

FROM: Eva Andrade, President

RE: Support for HB2277 HD1 SD1 Relating to Child Welfare Services

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

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

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

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

April 3, 2018

LATE

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

From: Mandy Finlay, Director of Public Policy
Hawaii Children's Action Network

Re: **HB 2277 HD1, SD1 – Relating to Child Welfare Services**
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 211, April 3, 2018, 10:00 AM

Hawaii Children's Action Network (HCAN) writes in support of HB 2277, HD1, SD1, which would appropriate funds to establish a five-year pilot program to limit the number of children per child welfare services caseworker to no more than twenty and appropriates funds for additional case managers and support staff.

Manageable caseloads for child welfare workers will result in better outcomes for the children they serve by allowing caseworkers adequate time to engage with families and successfully handle complex cases. This measure supports workers who provide critical services to keiki in East Hawaii by ensuring that caseworkers are not being tasked with an impossibly large caseload. To support children within the child welfare system, we must also support the caseworkers who help them.

For the above reasons, HCAN respectfully requests the Committee to pass this measure.

HCAN is committed to building a unified voice advocating for Hawaii's children by improving their safety, health, and education.



LATE

CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2277 HD1 SD1: Relating to Child Welfare Services

TO: Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair, Senator Gilbert S. C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair, and Members, Committee on Ways and Means
FROM: Terrence L. Walsh, Jr., President and Chief Executive Officer
Hearing: **Tuesday, 4/3/18; 10:00 AM; CR 211**

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members, Committee on Ways and Means:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony **in strong support** of HB 2277, HD1, SD1 which appropriates funds to establish a five-year pilot program to limit the number of children supervised by social workers in the East Hawaii Child Welfare Services (CWS) section to twenty or fewer in order to appropriately care for the safety and well-being of children who have been or are at risk of being abused or neglected. I am Terry Walsh, with Catholic Charities Hawaii.

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

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

We support implementation of this five-year pilot program ASAP. We strong support:

1. Limiting the number of children supervised by each social worker to 20 or fewer.
2. Adding eight full-time equivalent case managers and 15 full-time support staff positions.

We urge you to pass **HB 2277 HD1, SD1** to help protect our keiki in East Hawaii from harm.

Please contact our Program Direction, Melisa Secola, at secolam@catholiccharitieshawaii.org or at 961-7018, if you have any questions.



April 2, 2018

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

LATE

Re: H.B. 2277 H.D.1 S.D.1 Relating to Child Welfare Services

Hearing: Tuesday, April 3, 2018, 10:00 a.m., Room 211.

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committee on Ways and Means:

My name is Stephanie Batzer. I am the Chair of the Board of Directors for Family Programs Hawaii, a family social worker, and I have been a Court Appointed Special Advocate Volunteer Guardian ad Litem (CASA VGAL) for nearly six years. On behalf of Family Programs Hawaii, I am submitting testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT of HB.2277 H.D.1 S.D.1** Relating to Child Welfare Services, which would establish the East Hawaii Child Welfare Services Section Pilot, increasing staff and reducing caseloads in the East Hawaii Child Welfare Services Section.

Children are Hawaii's most valuable resource. They are our future. Family Programs Hawaii is a unique non-profit agency that provides quality care to the children of Hawaii. Our goal is that every child in Hawaii has the opportunity to reach his or her full potential. We help foster children and children at risk with three areas of service: prevention, transition, and support. We do this from two offices, located in Honolulu and Hilo. Our social workers in Hilo see the impact of overworked Child Welfare Services caseworkers upon the children in foster care. This pilot is long overdue, and the children of Hilo deserve the greater level of support, and additional consultation, evaluation and analytics capabilities that this program would enable.

The rate of children entering into foster care has been on the rise in Hawaii for the past three and a half years. The rise has been most dramatic in Hilo, with the chief cause of removal being parental substance abuse and significant child neglect. Casey Family Programs, a benefactor of Family Programs Hawaii, has recognized the need to reduce the workload for child welfare social workers, and to help strengthen families before they enter into the child welfare system. Increasing the number of social workers combined with reducing individual caseloads should greatly improve the outcome for these families.

For this reason, I strongly urge you vote in support of H.B. 2277 H.D.1 S.D. 1., and strongly urge that the appropriation and implementation occur **well before** 7/1/3000.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Stephanie W. Batzer, Esq., LSW
Chair, Board of Directors, Family Programs



We help kids



LATE

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2018 10:10:58 AM
Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Hi Council members,

I worked as an RN for life care center in Hilo for 7 years and am in seminary for diocese of Honolulu Catholic Church now. I feel the children of Hawaii need decent living conditions. They are human beings, not animals. We forget where we came from when we neglect the children of Hawaii. Please think about the children not just the rail system.

God bless from a future Catholic Priest of Hawaii,

john Akau

LATE

neglected, or are at high risk for abuse and neglect. The office oversees the safety of endangered children in a geographic area that extends from Honokaa to Ocean View, including the districts of north and south Hilo, Puna, and much of Hamakua and Kau. Furthermore, the rate of confirmed cases for abuse or neglect in 2015 was two hundred thirteen children per 100,000 residents in Hawaii county, nearly triple the rate of confirmed cases for the city and county of Honolulu.

The legislature further finds that due to challenging economic times and funding cuts in Hawaii's child welfare services, layoffs and hiring restrictions have caused the east Hawaii child welfare services section to lose nineteen of the fifty-six positions it had in 2009, resulting in a dramatic increase in average caseload per caseworker. The recommended number of caseloads for social workers is no more than fifteen children, but social workers in east Hawaii regularly have caseloads of forty to fifty children. These higher caseloads increase the potential for harm to children at risk for neglect or abuse, further contributing to the high rate of confirmed cases in Hawaii county, and has even prompted the family court to sanction the east Hawaii child welfare services section because of late filings of reports and failure to meet court deadlines. Therefore, the legislature finds that it is necessary to undertake a pilot project demonstrating the positive impact of adequate staffing levels on the safety and well-being of at-risk children and families in east Hawaii.

The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds for:

(1) The department of human services to establish a five-year pilot program in the east Hawaii child welfare services section in Hawaii county that limits the number of children per child welfare services caseworker to no more than twenty; and

(2) Additional case managers and support staff for the pilot program.

SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ _____ or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2018-2019 for:

(1) The department of human services, child welfare services branch, to establish a five-year pilot program that limits the number of children supervised by each child welfare services caseworker at no more than twenty in the east Hawaii child welfare services section in the county of Hawaii; and

(2) Eight full-time equivalent (8.0 FTE) case managers and fifteen full-time equivalent (15.0 FTE) support staff positions for the pilot program.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of human services for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2018.

A petition for support by:

Bill Title: Relating To Child Welfare Services.

Spectrum: Partisan Bill (Democrat 5-0)

Status: (*Engrossed*) 2018-03-12 - Bill scheduled to be heard by HHS on Thursday, 03-15-18 10:00AM in House conference room 329. [[SB2276 Detail](#)]

Download: [Hawaii-2018-SB2276-Introduced.html](#)

THE SENATE

S.B. NO.

2276

TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE, 2018

STATE OF HAWAII

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the east Hawaii child welfare services section in the county of Hawaii faces unique challenges as it is the office responsible for the safety and well-being of the State's most vulnerable children who have been abused,

#	Print Full Name	Signature	Email
1	Jennifer Carter		ahchong4@hawaii.edu
2	Shaelyn Thomas-Carvalho		shaelynt@hawaii.edu
3	Lucille Mailelei SALDANA		saldana1@hawaii.edu
4	VALERIE PERTUBAL		vp24@hawaii.edu
5	Yvonne Kahikina		Yvonne7@hawaii.edu
6	Ku'ukuaiona Lovell-Wong		KLLW@Hawaii.edu
7	ERICA WELLS		ewells@hawaii.edu
8	Taylor Au		wtaylor@hawaii.edu
9	JACK LaForge III		Jack 3@hawaii.edu
10	Sarah Ledward		slward@hawaii.edu
11	Sasha Wyhard		swyhard@hawaii.edu
12	Darrell Silva		Silva2@hawaii.edu
13	Andrew Braswell		ajb3@hawaii.edu
14	Serina Len		slen9@hawaii.edu
15	Natasha Zarate		nzarate@hawaii.edu

16	Ivan Kaune		ikaune@hawaii.edu
17	MICHELE MARCOS		mqmarcos@hawaii.edu
18	Sandra K. Claveria		sclaveria@hawaii.edu
19	SONIA CHING		sching14@hawaii.edu
20	Matthew Shore		mshore2@hawaii.edu
21	ANNE GIORDANENGLO		ANNE30@HAWAII.EDU ANNE
22	Darlene Vicente		Knightgurl2506@yahoo.com
23	Maria Halderman		alohagina22@hotmail.com
24	CYNTHIA BRYANT		hanaloma@gmail.com

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2018 12:53:50 PM

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

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Cindy Varner	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

We are writing you to request you support SB2276 SD1 to fund the 5-year pilot study to cut the case load of East Hawaii CWS.

It simply is not realistic to expect the case workers to effectively manage these types of caseloads, it is grossly unfair to the children and the staff.

If a caseworker has 25 - 50 children in an area stretched over 100 miles, how can they be expected to see all the children, resource parents, birth parents and deal with their issues and concerns even once a month?

The children and the employees deserve better care.

Mahalo for your time,

Cindy and Sam Varner

LATE

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2018 2:26:41 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Liza Ann Farm	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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.
Conference Room 211

PLACE: 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 members 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,

Liza-Ann Farm

LATE

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2018 3:35:23 PM
Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jan Comstock	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

The workload for Child Welfare case managers in Hawaii is unmanageable at the current Number of Children to Case Manager levels. Some managers are responsible for 50 children. Imagine it! Meeting their needs on a responsive and responsible basis is impossible! Please support the passage of HB2277 in order to better care for our children in need and to better avoid burn-out among our experienced case managers. Thank you.

LATE

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2018 4:12:28 PM

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

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

Comments:

To whom it may concern,

(Submitted twice just in case the first one didn't go through.) I am in support of HB2277 and the pilot program that will cap the caseload per case worker to 20 and have funds to hire more employees. As a former case manager in the mental health field, I know sometimes it can be challenging take care of a moderate size case load. And for a East Hawai'i CWS case worker to be responsible for a caseload anywhere between 40 to 50 or more can be overwhelming. First thing comes to mind is, is it possible for a case worker to be able to care for a caseload that large? Well, maybe for some but, I'm sure after awhile any case worker will feel compassion fatigue and eventually feel burned-out. Having this 5 year pilot program is worth a try. Again, I am supporting HB2277. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully submitted,

Allan

LATE

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2018 4:12:28 PM

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

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

Comments:

To whom it may concern,

(Submitted twice just in case the first one didn't go through.) I am in support of HB2277 and the pilot program that will cap the caseload per case worker to 20 and have funds to hire more employees. As a former case manager in the mental health field, I know sometimes it can be challenging take care of a moderate size case load. And for a East Hawai'i CWS case worker to be responsible for a caseload anywhere between 40 to 50 or more can be overwhelming. First thing comes to mind is, is it possible for a case worker to be able to care for a caseload that large? Well, maybe for some but, I'm sure after awhile any case worker will feel compassion fatigue and eventually feel burned-out. Having this 5 year pilot program is worth a try. Again, I am supporting HB2277. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully submitted,

Allan

LATE

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2018 9:10:42 PM
Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2018 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

LATE

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2018 6:07:26 AM

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

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

Comments:

To Whom It May Concern

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 2277. I ask that our senators and representatives employ every vital measure to protect the health and safety of our most vulnerable children in Hawaii.

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

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

I look forward to continuing our collaborative work.

Sincerely,

Dr. Normana Q. Arancon

LATE

HB-2277-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2018 10:32:16 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
K-Si Arulong	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

All lives matter!