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Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work

HAWAII FAMILY SUPPORT INSTITUTE
Making Hawaii's Families Strong

February , 2017

Representative Scott Nishimoto, Chair, House Judiciary Committee,
Representative Joy San Buenaventura, Vice-Chair, Judiciary Committee
Hawaii State Capitol,
Honolulu, Hi 96813

Re: HB 581, Relating to the Hawaii Zero to Three Court

Dear Representatives Nishimoto, San Buenaventura and Members of the House Judiciary Committee

I am Gail Breakey, Director of the Hawaii Family Support Institute, testifying in support of HB 581, which would provide funding support for the Hawaii Zero to Three Court within the Family Court. The Hawaii Zero to Three Court was established by the Family Court in 2007, in collaboration with the national ZERO TO THREE organization's model Babies Court initiative which was designed to (1) improve outcomes for maltreated infants and toddlers and (2) reduce the re-occurrence of substantiated abuse and neglect of infants and toddlers in the courts jurisdiction.

Why important?

- Infants under age one comprise the largest age cohort (271 infants) of child protective service cases in Hawaii, followed by children aged one, two and three (DHS report, 2015)
- Abuse and neglect has been linked with serious developmental consequences for infants and toddlers, including attachment disorders and developmental delays.
- These negative consequences can be further exacerbated in a foster care system with infrequent visitation, multiple placements changes and delays in achieving a permanent home.
- However developmental neuroscience demonstrates that appropriate early intervention and child welfare policies can help infants and toddlers overcome the negative consequences stemming from maltreatment.
- Recognizing this, the national ZERO TO THREE organization created and piloted the Safe Babies Court Teams, a project rooted in developmental science which seeks to : (1) Increase awareness among those who work with maltreated infants and toddlers about the negative effects of abuse and neglect upon young children, and (2) Change local systems to improve outcomes and present future court involvement in the lives of very young children

What is Hawaii Zero to Three Court?

- The Zero to Three Court Team is composed of a lead family court judge and designated guardians ad litem, parents' counsel, deputy attorneys general, and Department of Human Services social workers. Community coordinator, a case manager, a lead family court judge, a DHS case worker, and the assigned Guardian ad Litum.
- The team conducts monthly case conferences for each family and also monthly court hearings (compared with traditional practice of hearings every six months)
- The project trains court and community professionals on early child development and the unique needs of infants and toddlers issues by bringing in national Zero to Three trainers, coordinates appropriate community services for families, increases parent child visitation contact, engages parents in mental health and substance abuse treatment services, monitors placement stability, advocates for emergency or transitional housing, provides tailored parenting services, and enhanced visitation in a family-like, nurturing setting,

Evaluation:

In addition to positive evaluation results of Court Teams at the national level, several evaluations have been conducted for the Hawaii Court, including the most recent study by the UH Department for Developmental Disabilities Studies. This study found positive results as follows:

- Reduction of parental alcohol or drug use
- Improve reunification outcomes for families
- Decrease the length of stay in foster care and number of placements
- Increase visitation frequency
- Ensure timeliness of service availability
- Increase access to services

Funding:

In 2013, the Honolulu Zero to Three Court lost its funding through the national ZERO TO THREE. The Court was however committed to continuing to provide intensive services to infants and families and transferred the program to the Family Drug Court with a dedicated case coordinator. The Drug Court successfully applied for a SAMHSA grant which included funding for the Zero to Three Court and continued its association with and technical support from the national ZERO TO THREE. However, this

grant will end in summer, 2017. Stable funding is needed to maintain services and resources of the Hawaii Zero to Three court team.

\$ 279,430 is requested to support the current level of services provided by the Zero to Three Court.

The requested funds should not supplant the Judiciary's existing funding or 2017 legislative budget request, and is intended to provide needed services to support families with infants and toddlers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



Gail Breakey, RN, MPH, Executive Director,

Hawaii Family Support Institute

Myron B. Thomson School of Social Work, University of Hawaii at Manoa



The Judiciary, State of Hawai'i

Testimony to the House Committee on Judiciary
Representative Scott Nishimoto, Chair
Representative Joy San Buenaventura, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 15, 2017 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 325

By

Judge R. Mark Browning
Senior Judge, Deputy Chief Judge
Family Court of the First Circuit

Bill No. and Title: House Bill No. 581, Relating to the Zero to Three Court.

Purpose: Appropriates funds for staff positions and various services to support the Hawaii Zero to three court.

Judiciary's Position:

The Judiciary supports this bill and wishes to acknowledge and thank the Legislature for its initiative in the critical area of providing safety and succor to children in this age bracket by applying specific strategies developed by scientific research.

In 2008, the family court began to implement its vision of a "Zero to Three Court" in response to increasing scientific evidence that: (1) babies and toddlers are neurologically compromised by dysfunctional family dynamics even if they are not directly physically harmed; (2) their compromised brains result in long lasting compromised behaviors and learning disorders; (3) early intervention is effective in preventing or alleviating these problems; and (4) there are proven techniques that can help many of these babies and toddlers.

The bill, at pages 1 to 5, can be a model "primer" for both laypersons and persons in policy making positions. Research and practices are clearly explained along with the consequences of inaction (or untimely action) and the positive results of skilled timely intervention. Pages 1 to 5 are also a good example of principled public policy based on "good"



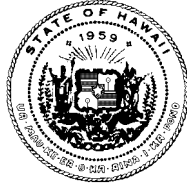
House Bill No. 581, Relating to the Zero to Three Court
House Committee on Judiciary
Wednesday, February 15, 2017 at 2:00 p.m.
Page 2

science. Social science research and data can sometimes be less than conclusive, not because of the research, but because of the difficulty of establishing sound metrics. In contrast, this research has been focused on and builds upon medical/neurological data that can be quantified.

The Zero to Three Court began with federal “seed” funding and grants from the national non-profit Zero to Three organization. The court was then continued through monies that the national organization applied for and received from the Kellogg Foundation and the HMSA Foundation. The current funding from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (SAMHSA) will end mid-2017. Long term sustainability will require a dependable stream of state funding. This critically timely bill will prove to be the watershed transition, as recognized on page 5, that will not only insure sustainability for this important court but will also enable an expansion of community resources benefiting all families in addition to the families in court.

The appropriations listed on page 6 of this bill are admirable evidence of the Legislature’s deep understanding and appreciation of the research-based tenets of the Zero to Three Court. In our Judiciary Appropriations bill (SB469/HB320), we have requested the resources needed to sustain the Zero to Three Court at its current level of operations. However, the resources proposed in this bill will expand on our budget request and will enable the Zero to Three Court to enhance its program for the vulnerable population it serves. Additionally, we are grateful for the bill’s express intent, at page 6, that “It is not the legislature’s intent that the requested funds supplant the judiciary’s existing funding or budget requests.”

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.



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

February 15, 2017

TO: The Honorable Representative Scott Y. Nishimoto, Chair
House Committee on Judiciary

FROM: Pankaj Bhanot, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 581 - RELATING TO THE ZERO TO THREE COURT**

Hearing: Wednesday, February 15, 2017; 2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services supports this bill.

PURPOSE: The purpose of HB 581 is to appropriate funds for the Hawaii Zero to Three court to fund the program manager and case manager positions, transportation costs for parents to visit their children, emergency housing assistance, a parent incentive program, training and professional development for court team members and community partners, creation of visitation and parent coaching contracts, and evaluation of the program.

The Zero to Three court provides a valuable structure for families and children in the court system involved with Child Welfare Services and has added resources that help support them in establishing a safe, nurturing home. Numerous studies have shown the benefits to children and society when children's length of stay in foster care is shortened with effective case management, and children and their families are successfully reunited.

The voluntary nature of this program makes it a unique model in the child welfare system which emphasizes the motivation of the families to participate and learn what is necessary to become stable families who eventually need no further reliance on the judiciary or welfare system.

Families are provided special attention and given more time and social opportunities to learn from each other and professionals in the field. The success of the program is built

upon the limited number of families served at one time, frequent nature of court hearings, specialized services available for the families, and trusting relationships built between the families, case manager and service providers. Many families report they enjoy working with the case manager and thus want to stay in the program even though monthly court hearings are cumbersome.

In SFY2016, 21 families were served which involved 31 parents, 26 children 0-3 years of age and 13 older siblings. The national ZERO TO THREE's Quality Improvement Center for Research-Based Infant-Toddler Court Teams is collecting data on the outcomes for Hawaii and 13 other pilot sites and will be issuing a report in the fall of 2017.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



250 Vineyard Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
(808) 521-9531

FamilyProgramsHawaii.com

TO: COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Chair
Rep. Joy A. San Buenaventura, Vice Chair

HEARING: Wed., February 15, 2017 - 2:00 PM - Conference Room 325

FROM: Judith Wilhoite - Family Advocate - Family Programs Hawaii

RE: HB 581 RELATING TO THE ZERO TO THREE COURT

My name is Judith Wilhoite. I am Family Programs Hawaii's Family Advocate as well as a resource caregiver strongly support HB 581.

When looking at today's cutting edge research, it is clear that abuse and neglect of children, if left untreated, can lead to everything from mental health problems to anti-social behaviors¹. The good news is that effective intervention in the early years of a child can change the life outcomes of these children from being a drag on our community resources and possibly a danger to themselves and others to being productive, contributing members of our island home.

I would like to point out line 3 on page 4 that states 77% of children in this program received at least 2 parental visits a week, with some children daily visits. This is important because evidence in the literature widely supports that the greater the contact, the more likely it is that the child returns home' (Richards, 1995: 43). Thus, as well as contributing to the overall emotional well-being of the child, frequent contact is linked to reunification of child and family (Farmer, 1996;Hess, 2003).

Part of the excellence of the ZTT program is that it addresses the trauma of the children, while it addresses the issues of the children's parents. When the parents' needs are addressed *plus* the parents are educated on the child's developmental needs, the biological parents are often able to move on to parenting in a healthy way to ALL the children in their home, including future children.

Accomplishing all of the above for multiple families and children for the low cost of \$280,000 a year is remarkable and an extremely effective use of public funds.

Thank you for allowing me to voice strong support for HB 581.

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/>

We help kids

February 15, 2017

Representative Scott Nishimoto, Chair House Judiciary Committee,
Representative Joy San Buenaventura , Vice-Chair, House Judiciary Committee
Hawaii State Capitol,
Honolulu, Hi 96813

Re: HB 581, Relating to the Hawaii Zero to Three Court

Dear Representatives Nishimoto, San Buenaventura and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

I am Joey Keahiolo, President of the Hawaii Association for Infant Mental Health testifying for in support of SB 499, which would provide funding support for the Early Court within the Hawaii Family Court. The Hawaii Early Court was established by the Family Court in 2009 in collaboration with the national ZERO TO THREE organization in order to (1) improve outcomes for maltreated infants and toddlers and (2) to reduce there-occurrence of substantiated abuse and neglect of infants and toddlers in the courts jurisdiction.

Infants under age one comprise the largest age cohort (271 infants) of child protective service cases in Hawaii, followed by children aged one, two and three (DHS report, 2015) Abuse and neglect has been linked with serious developmental consequences for infants and toddlers, including attachment disorders and developmental delays. These negative consequences can be further perpetrated in a foster care system with infrequent visitation, multiple placements changes and delays in a achieving permanent home.

The Zero to Three Court Team is composed of a lead family court judge and designated guardians ad litem, parents' counsel, deputy attorneys general, and Department of Human Services social workers. Community coordinator, a case manager, a lead family court judge, a DHS case worker, and the assigned Guardian ad Litum.

- The team conducts monthly case conferences for each family and also monthly court hearings (compared with traditional practice of hearings every six months)
- The project trains court and community professionals on early child development and the unique needs of infants and toddlers issues by bringing in national Zero to Three trainers, coordinates appropriate existing community services for families, increasing parent child visitation contact, engages parents in mental health and substance abuse treatment services, monitors placement stability, advocates for emergency or transitional housing, provides tailored parenting services, and enhanced visitation in a family-like, nurturing setting,

Evaluation: In addition to positive evaluation results of Court Teams at the national level, several evaluations have been conducted for the Hawaii Court, including the most recent study by the UH Department for Developmental Disabilities Studies. This study found positive results as follows:

- Reduction of parental alcohol or drug use

- Improve reunification outcomes for families
- Decrease the length of stay in foster care and number of placements
- Increase visitation frequency
- Ensure timeliness of service availability

SAMHSA grand funding which has sustained the program over the past 3 years will terminate in summer, 2017

\$ 279,430 is requested to support the current level of services provided by the Zero to Three Court.

The requested funds should not supplant the Judiciary's existing funding or 2017 legislative budget request, and is intended to provide needed services to support families with infants and toddlers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this initiative.

Sincerely,

Joey Keahiolalo, President,
Hawaii Association for Infant Mental Health

Statement in Support of HB No. 581 To Representative Scott Nishimoto, Chair House Committee on the Judiciary

Matthew E. Melmed, Executive Director



ZERO TO THREE
Early connections last a lifetime

February 14, 2017

On behalf of ZERO TO THREE, I strongly endorse *House Bill No. 581: Relating to the Zero to Three Court*. It presents an opportunity to continue potentially life-saving work led by the Honorable Paul Murakami and his predecessors of the District Family Court of the First Circuit (island of O'ahu). The Zero to Three Court focuses on infants and toddlers in foster care, shortening their time in foster care, ensuring they get needed services, and helping their parents gain the skills they need to safely care for them—or the wisdom to recognize that they cannot care for their children and to relinquish them to the loving members of their extended family.

Founded 40 years ago, ZERO TO THREE is a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to ensure that all babies and toddlers have a strong start in life. We translate the science of early childhood development for parents, practitioners, and policymakers. We work to ensure that babies and toddlers benefit from the family and community connections critical to their wellbeing and healthy development. Nowhere are these connections that are so essential to early brain development more important than for babies in the child welfare system. Over the last decade, we have worked particularly to bring the science of early brain development to courts and communities around the country.

Honolulu's Zero to Three Court is one of 19 courts in 13 states that ZERO TO THREE has worked with to implement the Safe Babies Court Team approach. This approach has been demonstrated to significantly improve the experience of infants and toddlers in foster care. To date, three evaluations have been completed. The first study was based on an analysis of 186 cases at three sites.ⁱ The findings indicate that our approach promotes better long-term developmental outcomes for maltreated infants and toddlers:

- **Achieving the federal mandate for meeting children's medical and mental health needs:** 97% of the identified service needs of infants and toddlers served by the Court Teams had either been fully met or were in process with progress being made.
- **Timely permanency:** Timely permanency was achieved in 95% of closed Court Team cases (n=88) with more than 50% achieving permanency within 12 months of cases opening.
- **Frequent parent-child contact:** Very young children need to see their parents multiple times each week to develop a trusting relationship for reunification purposes. But, in fact, most children in foster care see their parents less than once each week. Court team sites were managing daily parent-child contact in nearly 32% of the cases, from 3-6 times per week in 13% of the cases, and twice weekly in 11% of the cases.
- **Placement stability:** More than two-thirds (72%) of children remained in 1 or 2 placements whether they were in out-of-home care for less than 12 months, between 12-24 months, or longer than 24 months.

- **Positive safety outcomes:** 99.05% of the infants and toddlers served were protected from further maltreatment.

The second study examined the effect of the Safe Babies Court Team approach on how quickly children achieve a permanent home.ⁱⁱ Researchers used data on children in the four original Safe Babies sites (n=298) and compared them to a nationally representative sample of young children in foster care from the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being (n=511).

- **Expedited permanency:** Children served by the Safe Babies Court Teams exited the foster care system approximately 1 year earlier than children in the comparison group.
- **Keeping children with family members:** Reunification was the most common type of exit for Court Team children (38%), while adoption was the most typical for the comparison group (41%). If kinship families were included, 62.4% of the Court Teams children ended up with family members while only 37.7% of the comparison group did.

The third study looked at the cost effectiveness of the SBCT approach, after determining the average direct cost of SBCT participation.ⁱⁱⁱ The evaluators found the costs to be at the low end of similar early childhood interventions (e.g. Nurse Family Partnership, Early Head Start) at \$10,000 per child.

- Earlier exits from foster care reduced costs by an average of \$7,300 per child.
- More than 70% of the direct costs of SBCT participation are recouped in the first year alone.
- If the children's placements truly are permanent—and they remain outside of the child welfare system—these savings will accumulate and pay for the entire program.

There is increasing pressure on programs to demonstrate an evidence base. The Safe Babies Court Team has been recognized by the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare as being highly relevant to the child welfare context and demonstrating promising research evidence. The Honolulu Zero to Three Court team has continued to accumulate local evidence of efficacy, as highlighted in Section 1 of H.B.No.581.

While there are an increasing array of specialty courts vying for funding, the Zero to Three Court is different: by melding their work with families with a reflective focus on making procedural, policy, regulatory, and legislative changes, they will improve the child welfare court process for all families. What makes our approach unique is our constant willingness to rethink the best ways to improve outcomes for infants and toddlers in foster care. We never expect to reach a point where the problem is "fixed." There will always be better ways to support families involved in the child welfare system. The Zero to Three Court is positioned to continue to make those incremental enhancements over time.

In Section 2, the legislation includes funding for two positions, training, and supports to families. It would thus provide an adequate level of dedicated staffing, which is critical to ensure the various stakeholders in the program, including the parents and children, all work together in a concerted fashion. Training and professional development, particularly in understanding early development and how it should guide decision making as well as the impacts of maltreatment, lack of consistent caregiving, and the impact of parents' own previous trauma, are at the core of helping families progress and children achieve both permanency and wellbeing. Supports provided with the funding would help both improve parents' ability to nurture their children's development and increase family stability.

The Honolulu Zero to Three Court has been an important partner in developing an innovative and game-changing approach to child welfare practice. I hope to continue our collaboration on behalf of the most vulnerable infants and toddlers in the U.S.

Submitted by:

Matthew E. Melmed, Executive Director
Executive Director
ZERO TO THREE
1255 23rd Street, NW Suite 350
Washington, DC 20037

ⁱ Hafford, C., McDonnell, C., Kass, L., DeSantis, J., & Dong, T. (2009). *Evaluation of the Court Teams for maltreated infants and toddlers: Final report*. Submitted to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice by James Bell Associates, Arlington, VA.

ⁱⁱ McCombs-Thornton, K. L. (2012). The effect of the ZERO TO THREE Court Teams initiative on types of exits from the foster care system—A competing risks analysis. *Children and Youth Services Review* 34, 169–178.

ⁱⁱⁱ Foster, E. M., & McCombs-Thornton, K. L. (2012). *Investing in our most vulnerable: A cost analysis of the ZERO TO THREE Safe Babies Court Teams Initiative*. Birmingham, AL: Economics for the Public Good, LLC.



TO: Chair Nishimoto, Vice Chair San Buenaventura, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary
FROM: Ryan Kusumoto, President & CEO of Parents And Children Together (PACT)
DATE/LOCATION: Wednesday, February 15, 2017; 2:00 p.m., Conference Room 325

RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 581 – RELATING TO ZERO TO THREE COURT

We support HB 581 – Relating to Zero to Three Court. Early childhood neuroscience is clear that the first 1,000 days of each life provides the foundation for future development. Working with parents and their keiki at an early age to promote healthy child development, school readiness, nurturing parenting skills, and reduce toxic family stress is critical for future success. Access to programs at an early age will also help early identification of developmental, social-emotional, and early learning issues. Parents And Children Together supports more early intervention and learning opportunities for our keiki, especially to the most vulnerable families in our community. Participation in early learning and development programs for future success have immediate and long-term benefits that include higher levels of educational achievement, reduced homelessness, reduced crime, reduced substance abuse, improved health, and overall better social and economic well-being.

We support the Zero to Three Court as it facilitates the necessary processes to support a family with young children deal with their current issues. This court addresses the immediate needs of the child during difficult family times that could occur through complicated legal proceedings. It is of crucial importance that we invest in our keiki. **Children in Hawaii, no matter what their circumstance, deserve a chance.** This is also a key component to our war on intergenerational poverty as it addresses issues early on providing the child with an opportunity to succeed.

Founded in 1968, Parents And Children Together (PACT) is one of Hawaii's not-for-profit organizations providing a wide array of innovative and educational social services to families in need. Assisting more than 18,000 people across the state annually, PACT helps families identify, address and successfully resolve challenges through its 16 programs. Among its services are: early education programs, domestic violence prevention and intervention programs, child abuse prevention and intervention programs, child and adolescent behavioral health programs, and community building programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support of HB 581**, please contact me at (808) 847-3285 or rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org if you have any questions.

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February 15, 2017

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Representative Scott Nishimoto, Chair, House Judiciary Committee
Representative Joy San Buenaventura, Vice-Chair, House Judiciary Committee
Hearing Date: February 15, 2017, 2:00 p.m., Room 325
Hawaii State Capitol, Honolulu, HI 96813
Re: HB 581 Relating to Zero to Three Court

Dear Representatives Nishimoto, San Buenaventura and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I am Howard Garval, President and CEO of Child and Family Service, testifying in support of HB 581, which would provide funding for the Early Court within the Hawaii Family Court. The Hawaii Early Court is patterned after a model court established by the national ZERO TO THREE organization in order to (1) improve outcomes for maltreated infants and toddlers; and (2) to reduce the re-occurrence of substantiated abuse and neglect of infants and toddlers in the court's jurisdiction.

Infants under age one are the most vulnerable and comprise the largest age cohort (271 infants) of child protective service cases in Hawaii, followed by children aged one, two and three (DHS report, 2015). Abuse/neglect has been linked with serious developmental consequences for infants and toddlers, including attachment disorders and developmental delays. These negative consequences can be further exacerbated in a foster care system with infrequent visitation, multiple placements change and delays in achieving a permanent home.

The Zero to Three Court Team is composed of a lead family court judge and designated guardians ad litem, parents' counsel, deputy attorneys general, and Department of Human Services social workers, a community coordinator, and a case manager,

The team conducts monthly case conferences for each family and also monthly court hearings (compared with traditional practice of hearings every six months)

- The project trains court and community professionals on early child development and the unique needs of infants and toddlers by bringing in national Zero to Three trainers, coordinating appropriate existing community services for families, increasing parent child visitation contact, engaging parents in mental health and substance abuse treatment services, monitoring placement stability, advocating for emergency or transitional housing, providing tailored parenting services, and enhancing visitation in a family-like, nurturing setting,

Evaluation: In addition to positive evaluation results of Court Teams at the national level, several evaluations have been conducted for the Hawaii Court, including the most recent study by the UH Department for Developmental Disabilities Studies. This study found positive results as follows:

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SAMHSA grand funding which has sustained the program over the past 3 years will terminate in the summer, 2017.

\$279,430 is requested to support the current level of services provided by the Zero to Three Court.

The requested funds should not supplant the Judiciary's existing funding or 2017 legislative budget request, and is intended to provide needed services to support families with infants and toddlers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this initiative.

Sincerely,

Howard Garval
President and CEO

"We're all about FAMILY"

Mission: Strengthening Families and Fostering the Healthy Development of Children



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Council on Accreditation
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AFFILIATIONS

Alliance for Strong Families and
Communities
Kauai United Way
Maui United Way
Hawaii Island United Way



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FamilyProgramsHawaii.com

TO: COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Chair
Rep. Joy A. San Buenaventura, Vice Chair

HEARING: Wednesday, February 15, 2017
2:00 p.m.
Room 325

FROM: Stephanie Batzer, JD, MSW
Chair, Board of Directors
Family Programs Hawaii

RE: HB 581 RELATING TO THE ZERO TO THREE COURT – STRONGLY SUPPORT

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB 581.

My name is Stephanie Batzer, I am the Chair of the Board of Directors for Family Programs Hawaii, and I have been a Court Appointed Special Advocate for four and a half years. I also run a small visit doing visit supervision between parents and their children, offering parenting skills training focused on the zero to three age group.

HB 581 seeks to supplement the Judiciary's budget in fiscal years 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 by approximately \$279,000.¹ This appropriation would fund two manager positions, along with a number of programs in support of the Zero to Three Court parents and children.² The services include referral to child-focused services, mental health intervention, evidence-based parenting education, housing assistance, transportation costs that facilitate parent-child visitation, and training and professional development for the Court Team.³ While this may seem like a large number, it is small when compared to the savings generated by the Zero to Three Court.

The USS Department of Health and Human Services studied the results of the Zero to Three Court Teams initiative. Children typically exit foster care in one of four ways; reunification, adoption, relative guardian, or non-relative guardian.⁴ Children in the Zero to Three Court reunified with their parents eight

¹ H.B. 581, 2017 Leg., 29th Sess. (Hi. 2017).

² Id.

³ Id., see also E. Michael Foster & Kimberly L. McCombs-Thornton. (2012) Investing in our most vulnerable: A cost analysis of the zero to three safe babies court teams initiative, 5, available at: <https://acestoohigh.files.wordpress.com/2015/02/economicsforpublicgood.pdf>

⁴ US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau. (n.d.). Child welfare outcomes 2002-2005: report to Congress prepared by the Children's Bureau (ACYF, ACF) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; available at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cwo05/index.htm>.

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months faster than on average, those who were adopted exited foster care ten months sooner than on average, those who reached permanency with a relative guardian exited three to four months faster, and those who reached permanency with a non-relative guardian left foster care approximately ten to thirteen months quicker.⁵ A similar study conducted by the University of Hawai`i concluded that First Circuit's Zero to Three Court improved reunification outcomes for families, and decreased the children's length of stay in foster care.⁶

It is imperative that we continue the Zero to Three Court program in Hawai`i. The Court is moving towards financial and programmatic sustainability outside of federal grants. It will be a step backwards for our families if this appropriation is denied, and an increased burden on the traditional child welfare program.

We strongly support the appropriation of funds to ensure the continuity of services provided by the Zero to Three Court.

I thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

⁵ Id., (emphasis added).

⁶ H.B. 581, supra note 1.

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LATE



February 13, 2017

To: Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Chair
Rep. Joy A. San Buenaventura, Vice Chair
Committee on Judiciary

From: Karen Worthington, Project Coordinator
Early Childhood Action Strategy

Re: HB581 – Relating to the Zero to Three Court
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 325, February 15, 2017, 2:00 PM

Position: Action Strategy supports HB581 Relating to the Zero to Three Court

Dear Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Rep. Joy A. San Buenaventura, and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of Hawaii's Early Childhood Action Strategy, a public private collaborative that recognizes the strength of communities and works across sectors to increase the number of young children in Hawaii who are born healthy, developing on track, ready for school when they enter kindergarten, and proficient learners by third grade.

Action Strategy strongly supports HB581 which provides state funding for staff positions and essential services for the Hawaii Zero to Three Court (HZTT) which serves one of Hawaii's most vulnerable populations: children aged three and younger who are victims of child abuse and neglect.

The HZTT was created with federal funding in 2009 as part of a national initiative to help family courts improve outcomes for maltreated infants and toddlers, reduce the recurrence of abuse and neglect of the youngest children, and to reduce the time these children spend in out of home care. This is one of Hawaii's most fragile populations and with appropriate interventions, the negative outcomes associated with abuse and trauma at such a young age can be avoided. Younger children are victimized at higher rates than older victims and are at greatest risk for serious injury and death from abuse and neglect. In 2015 in Hawaii, 37% of confirmed child victims of abuse and neglect were aged three and younger (Hawaii Department of Human Services, *A Statistical Report on Child Abuse and Neglect in Hawaii 2015*, page 6).

Supporting the healthy development of young children and preventing abuse and neglect are key components of the Action Strategy approach. Action Strategy collaborates with initiatives throughout the state that further these goals, including the HZZT. The HZZT Court utilizes the latest research on infant and toddler brain development and the impact of trauma on child development, and implements evidence-based interventions with families.

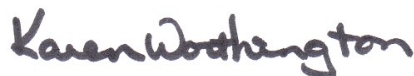
A key element of the success of the HZZT is the multi-disciplinary HZZT Court Team which provides legal, case management, and social services supports for the family. The Team connects families with needed services such as mental and physical health services, parenting support, addiction treatment, housing and more. One primary goal for the team is to help the family succeed on its own and not return to the child welfare or court systems.

This approach works! The cost savings to the state over a child victim's lifetime is huge. In 2012, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention determined that the estimated lifetime cost for every victim of child abuse and neglect is approximately \$210,012; the costs from a child death are even higher (*The economic burden of child maltreatment in the United States and implications for prevention*). Dollar figures do not capture the physical, social and emotional benefits for the child and parent who are able to have a safe, loving relationship after receiving appropriate interventions, nor do they capture the benefits to future generations once a cycle of abuse and addiction is broken.

Action Strategy asks that you pass HB581 to continue the essential services provided by the HZZT. The federal SAMHSA grant which funds the court ends in July 2017. Without this critical service, more young children in Hawaii will be victims of abuse and neglect and will be at higher risk for serious injury and death.

Action Strategy is committed to ensuring Hawaii's young children are healthy, safe and ready to learn and HB581 supports that vision. Please feel free to contact me for additional information. I can be reached at 808-214-9336 or karen@clnhawaii.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen Worthington". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Karen Worthington, JD

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, February 13, 2017 5:42 PM
To: JUDtestimony
Cc: mikegolojuch808@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB581 on Feb 15, 2017 14:00PM

HB581

Submitted on: 2/13/2017

Testimony for JUD on Feb 15, 2017 14:00PM in Conference Room 325

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mike Golojuch	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I strongly support HB581.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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February 14, 2017

TO: COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
Representative Scott Nishimoto, Chair
Representative Joy San Buenaventura, Vice-Chair

HEARING: Wednesday, February 15, 2017, 2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 325

FROM: Faye Kimura
Specialist, Child Welfare Project, William S. Richardson School of Law

RE: HB 581 RELATING TO ZERO TO THREE COURT – STRONGLY SUPPORT

I strongly support HB 581, which will provide needed funding for the Hawaii Zero to Three Court for the next two years.

There is no population more at-risk for failure than infants and toddlers in the child welfare system. In 2016, children age 0-3 comprised the largest age cohort of child welfare service cases in Hawaii.

Abuse and neglect has been linked with serious developmental consequences for infants and toddlers, including attachment disorders and developmental delays. Fortunately, research confirms that *the early years present an unparalleled window of opportunity to effectively intervene* (Heckman, Grunewald, Reynolds, 2006). Research-informed decision-making, combined with developmentally appropriate services for the children and sensitive responses to the trauma histories of their parents, can change the odds for these at-risk babies and toddlers. To be effective, interventions must begin early and be designed with the characteristics and experiences of these infants, toddlers, and families in mind.

The Hawaii Zero to Three Court is an example of an effective intervention that provides developmentally appropriate services for infants and their parents who are involved in child abuse and neglect.

- The Hawaii Zero to Three Court Team is composed of a lead family court judge and designated guardians ad litem, parents' counsel, deputy attorneys general, and Department of Human Services social workers.
- The team conducts monthly case conferences for each family and monthly court hearings (Note: H.R.S. 587A requires that review hearings occur at least every six months).
- The project trains court and community professionals on early child development and the unique needs of infants and toddlers by bringing in nationally recognized ZERO TO THREE experts, coordinates appropriate community services for families, increases parent child visitation contact, engages parents in mental health and substance abuse treatment services, monitors placement stability, and provides tailored parenting services and enhanced visitation in a family-like, nurturing setting.

Intervening in the early years can lead to significant cost savings over time through reductions in child abuse and neglect, criminal behavior, public benefits dependence, and substance abuse. It also has the potential to reduce or eliminate educational disparities when these children reach school.

I have been involved in implementing this Court since 2008 and have seen the positive effects of having an experienced, trained, and interpersonally skilled staff intensively working with our families utilizing the resources provided through SAMHSA. Losing staff and resources due to the termination of grant funding in July 2017--and not replacing them--would be a tragic setback for the families and most importantly, the babies, for whom we all have a duty to provide optimal care when we intervene in their lives.

The requested funds should not supplant the Judiciary's existing funding or 2017 legislative budget request.

Faye Kimura, J.D.
Specialist, William S. Richardson School of Law