

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
OFFICE OF YOUTH SERVICES
707 Richards Street, Suite 525
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

February 27, 2017

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

FROM: Merton Chinen, Executive Director

SUBJECT: **HB 693 HD1, Relating to Programs for High Risk Youth**

Hearing: Wednesday, March 1, 2017, 1:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 308

OFFICE'S POSITION: OYS supports the intent of the measure but requests that any appropriation not affect the priorities in the Executive Biennium Budget. OYS strongly supports a balanced and multi-prong approach to strengthen protective factors and improve a community's response in addressing problems such as youth violence and juvenile delinquency. OYS partners with both government and private community-based agencies to ensure a coordinated continuum of services for youth, incorporating HRS 5-7.5, Aloha Spirit, and a positive youth development framework for youth and their families to develop competencies, increase protective factors, and strengthen relationships and resiliency.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the measure is to appropriate funds to the Department of Human Services for operational costs of an organization providing prevention, intervention, and group and individual counselling for high risk youth.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.

DEPARTMENT OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

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1060 RICHARDS STREET • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
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KEITH M. KANESHIRO
PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

CHRISTOPHER D.W. YOUNG
FIRST DEPUTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY



THE HONORABLE SYLVIA LUKE, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Twenty-Ninth State Legislature
Regular Session of 2017
State of Hawai'i

March 1, 2017

RE: H.B. 693, H.D. 1; RELATING TO PROGRAMS FOR HIGH RISK YOUTH.

Chair Luke, Vice-Chair Cullen and members of the House Committee on Finance, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney of the City and County of Honolulu ("Department") supports the intent of H.B. 693, H.D. 1, however, would urge this committee to consider reallocating the funds associated with H.B. 693, H.D. 1 to Adult Friends for Youth as an alternative agency to carry out the goals and objectives.

The purpose of H.B. 693, H.D. 1 is to help reduce youth violence and delinquency in the State by creating therapeutic prevention and mental health programs for high risk youth. The creation of additional programs to assist our youth is consistent with this Department's ongoing concern for at-risk youth. Over the years, our Department has seen increases in crime involving youth offenders who at times are as young as 12 years of age. Yet, despite this rise, there are few programs available to youth offenders in Hawaii, often leaving them with little or no meaningful alternatives.

While the purpose of H.B. 693, H.D. 1 is to establish a multi-pronged approach in programs which works to combine elements of community and school counseling, our Department would strongly urge this committee to consider appropriating funds associated with H.B. 693, H.D. 1 for the fiscal year 2017-2018 to Adult Friends for Youth as an alternative. Adult Friends for Youth, was established in 1985 at the University of Hawaii, School of Social Work and boasts a stellar track record and history of sustainability which would ensure that any appropriated funds will be allocated properly and effectively. Adult Friends for Youth works with more than 400 high risk youth per week and has established many successful programs such as their Re-directional Therapy which is an effective therapeutic approach to combat violence, drugs, crime, teen pregnancy, family dysfunction, learning disabilities and anti-social behaviors amount the very high risk youth both in and outside of the classroom. Through the

programs implemented by Adult Friends for Youth, their services have successfully changed the attitudes and behaviors of over numerous different gangs. They have also successfully assisted multiple gang members through the difficult task of integration back into the community.

For all the reasons above, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney of the City and County of Honolulu supports the intent of H.B. 693, H.D. 1 and strongly urges this committee to reallocate any funds to the Adult Friends for Youth Program. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.



February 28, 2017

TIM VANDEVEER
Chair

MARGARET WILLE
SEAN SMITH
Legislative Affairs Committee Co-Chairs

SUPPORT FOR HB693 HD1
“RELATING TO PROGRAMS RELATED TO HIGH RISK YOUTH”

Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Ty Cullen, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

Wednesday, March 1, 2017 1:00 pm State Capitol, Conference Room 308

Submitted on Behalf of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i supports HB693 HD1 “Relating to Programs Related to High Risk Youth”, which would appropriate funds to the Department of Human Services for programs for at youth risk, including for school and neighborhood centers facilities, which likely would include drop-in center facilities with social and educational services. **HB693 HD1 is consistent with DPH’s 2017 legislative priorities to address youth at risk education programs and youth neighborhood drop-in centers.**

Mahalo in advance for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Tim Vandever
Chair of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i

/s/ Margaret Wille
/s/ Sean Smith
Legislative Affairs Committee Co-chairs

HAWAII YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

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Web site: <http://www.hysn.org> E-mail: info@hysn.org

Rick Collins, President

Judith F. Clark, Executive Director

Bay Clinic

Big Brothers Big Sisters of
Hawaii

Bobby Benson Center

Central Oahu Youth Services
Association

Child and Family Service

Coalition for a Drug Free Hawaii

Domestic Violence Action Center

EPIC, Inc.

Family Programs Hawaii

Family Support Hawaii

Hale Kipa, Inc.

Hale 'Opio Kauai, Inc.

Hawaii Student Television

Ho'ola Na Pua

Hui Malama Learning Center

Kokua Kalihi Valley

Life Foundation

Marimed Foundation

Maui Youth and Family Services

P.A.R.E.N.T.S., Inc.

Parents and Children Together
(PACT)

Planned Parenthood of the
Great Northwest and
Hawaiian Islands

Salvation Army Family

Intervention Services

Sex Abuse Treatment Center

Susannah Wesley Community
Center

The Catalyst Group

Uhane Pohaku Na Moku

O Hawai'i

Waikiki Health

February 27, 2017

Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair

And members of the Committee on Finance

COMMENTS ON HB 693 HD1 RELATING TO PROGRAMS FOR HIGH RISK YOUTH

Hawaii Youth Services Network (HYSN), a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, is providing comment on HB 693 HD1 Relating to Programs for High-Risk Youth.

HYSN strongly disagrees with the opening premise of the bill – that youth violence is a growing concern in our state.

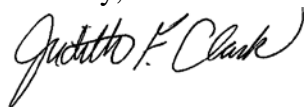
Hawaii's youth have a very low rate of violent crime compared to other states. A review of 10 years of data on juvenile crime and contact with the juvenile justice system showed that almost half of Hawaii's juvenile arrests were for status offenses, such as running away from home, curfew violations, and truancy from school (Umemoto, K et. al. Disproportionate Minority Contact with the Juvenile Justice System, 2012). From 2003 through 2012, Hawaii's juvenile arrests declined by 36.5% and confinements at the Hawaii Youth Correctional Center decreased by 51.1%. Only 5% of juvenile arrests involved weapons or intimidation. (Juvenile Delinquency Trends in Hawaii 2003 – 2012). Hawaii has the lowest rate of gun violence in the United States (U.S. Centers for Disease Control). In a recent report on gun-related injuries and deaths in which a minor was the perpetrator, Hawaii reported only one injury and no deaths – a teenage boy shot himself in the leg with a bb gun (Honolulu Star-Advertiser).

HYSN supports positive youth development programs that prevent youth violence. We believe that the low rate of youth violence in our state is due, in part, to effective youth programs provided by government and non-profit providers.

But planning and funding for youth programs must be based on reliable data, not on inaccurate opinions about youth violence. It is neither fair nor accurate to characterize Hawaii's juvenile offenders as violent criminals or to state that youth violence in Hawaii is a growing problem.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judith F. Clark". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "J".

Judith F. Clark, MPH
Executive Director



Adult Friends for Youth

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Sidney M. Rosen, M.S.W., Ph.D.

**Past Chair of the Board*

Submitted to:

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE:

Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair

Representative Ty J.K. Cullen, Vice Chair

Submitted by:

Siutiti Takai

Redirectional Specialist of Adult Friends for Youth

Subject: Support for HB 693

I strongly support HB 693. While growing up, violence was all too familiar. Many of my family members were involved in fighting especially, my father. Fighting was the way they would resolve situations. As a child, you grow up thinking its okay because you see it all around you. But I am here to say that violence is not the answer! My name is Siutiti Takai and I am a Redirectional Specialist with Adult Friends for Youth. The high risk youths we service is the reason I come to work every day. At AFY, we provide the students with alternative options and teach them coping mechanisms to help prevent them from reverting to violence. I strongly believe, high risk youth need unconditional love, support and encouragement daily. They need to know and hear that they are valuable members of our community.

In the eyes of many, youth violence and homeless youth involved in acts of violence and juvenile delinquency is a growing problem that needs immediate attention. Rather than spend incredibly high cost on incarcerating the young people of our community. We should invest in programs that have the experienced expertise and relationship building skills to address serious concerns. The concerns around destructive and violent behavior in order to redirect these behaviors toward a positive and constructive solution. Many high risk youth have issues that go deeper than what they portray that often leads to lashing out through violence. Therefore, counseling sessions as a group in school helps express the emotions that are bottled up.

Adult Friends for Youth (AFY) is a nonprofit organization, providing intervention work toward high risk youth for the past 30 years. AFY has gained a notable reputation for its overwhelming success with this specific youth population. By helping to redirect their lives through advocacy and empowerment, continuous effort is further directed toward integrating them into healthy community living and personal well-being. AFY's outreach services help to heighten the potential for achieving community goals, such as reducing extreme poverty, improving healthy lifestyles, and access to educational opportunities that enhances the quality of life. The youth AFY serves are those who believe they have no place in the community. I truly, support the vision and mission AFY stands for and I'm proud to say that I am a part of this agency whom, is making a difference in the lives of youth gang members. We ask the support of this bill, HB 693 because it will help give the youth a chance towards a brighter future.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify.



Adult Friends for Youth

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Sidney M. Rosen, M.S.W., Ph.D

**Past Chair of the Board*

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

Submitted to:

**Committee On Human Services:
Representative Dee Morikawa, Chair
Representative Chris Todd, Vice Chair**

Submitted by:

**Jeffrey Aganos
Redirectional Specialist of Adult Friends for Youth**

**Subject: Support for HB693
Relating to Programs for High Risk Youth.**

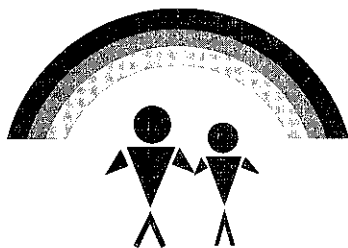
Wednesday – March 1, 2017

My name is Jeffrey Aganos and I am representing and testifying in support of HB 693 relating to programs for high risk youth. Throughout the years, Adult Friends for Youth has played a vital role in keeping the community safe from violence and also redirecting the lives of youths within the low-income community.

AFY has conducted group and individual sessions in redirecting and empowering the lives of the youth to not only make the community a safer and better place for everyone but also working with youth to help them believe that they matter. Over the years the youth we have worked with have felt that they have been portrayed in a negative way - where they had to endure that stigma of making them feel unworthy to the mainstream.

Through AFY's help many of them come out feeling confident in knowing that they can make a difference in the in their community. This Bill will help support organizations that are helping cope with this serious problem, but more importantly, helping to secure safer schools and communities, build bridges that will help all youth cross over to a better future.

Once again, I highly support HB693 in relating to programs for High Risk Youth. Thank you for your time and consideration.



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Adult Friends for Youth

Submitted to House Committee on Finance,

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

Submitted by McKay Schwenke
Vice President,

Date: February 27, 2017

HB 693 Relating to Programs for High Risk Youth

I am in strong support for HB 693 which relates to Programs for High Risk Youth. Youth violence among "high Risk" and youth gangs are on the rise again. Over the past year there have been numerous incidences reported by the media regarding youth violence relating to gang confrontations in schools, parks and in the community. Recently violence has also been reported among the homeless youth population as well. This Bill if passed will allow organizations to reach out to this specific "high risk" youth population to help combat violence, crime, and destructive behaviors. For the past 30 years, Adult Friends for Youth (AFY) has been servicing high risk youth, by redirecting them from violent and destructive behaviors to non-violent and constructive behaviors through advocating and empowering them to explore possible options that will lead them away from crime and prison, and toward healthy outcomes and meaningful lifestyles. The ultimate objective for all youth is to help them become contributing members of their community, and society as a whole.

AFY's professional staff is able to comfortably reach out to these "high risk" youth individuals and groups to build relationships through face to face meetings, and engaging them in group mentoring activities. Working with groups as whole entities allows members within the group to build stronger group cohesion with one another, also allowing members to effectively become role models for each other as they begin to experience positive growth through their successful outcomes

as they move in a positive direction. Success breeds success and the more positive the experience, the more successful the end result will be.

Helping children and youth believe that they matter is critical in order for self-determination and self-respect to be appreciated. The old adage, "Prevention is better than Cure" is so true! Locking up and incarcerating our youth is not the answer. Prevention and intervention coupled with individual and group counseling services that have the ability and the expertise to relate and impact change among youth, is the key to keeping them from not only hurting themselves, but others as well.

In order to help decrease and stop the violence among many of our "high risk" youth, we as a Government body have to realize the magnitude and severity of this urgent matter and be willing to make the appropriate decisions to effectively combat this serious concern. Furthermore, I hope you will support this Bill so these children and youth will receive the services that will help impact our schools and communities.

Once again I support HB 693 and hope you see the bigger picture on how this Bill will also support and promote safer schools and communities for our children and youth to prosper in for years to come.

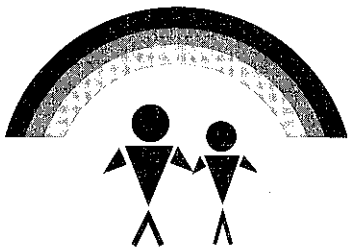
Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony.

In addition to my support of this Bill, I humbly request that the Committee consider adopting the following friendly amendments as updated by Committee on Human Services.

1. Page 1 Section 1, lines 1,2,3; The Legislature finds that youth violence is a growing concern in the State, particularly **associated with gang membership and homeless youth involved with violence and juvenile delinquency.**
2. Page 2 lines 7&8 and 14&15...**organization providing prevention, intervention, group and individual counseling** for high risk youth.

We recommend these amendments for the following reasons:

1. As stated earlier we have learned that some, not all homeless youth are engaging in gang and criminal activities. We need to stop the cycle from recurring.
2. The change of language will allow for the services to be overseen by the Department of Human Services particularly the Office of Youth Services as they are suited and have had the experience in dealing with these issues.



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**Past Chair of the Board*

Submitted to House Committee on Finance
Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Ty Cullen, Vice Chair

Submitted by:

Lisa Tamashiro

Director of Operations and Special Programs of
Adult Friends for Youth

Date: February 28, 2017

I am in strong support of HB 693 HD1, Relating to Youth Gangs, which will appropriate funds to programs that have the experience and expertise in serving this targeted youth population. Adult Friends for Youth has been providing services to Oahu's youth for over 30 years. The non-profit agency is committed to redirecting the lives and behaviors of the youth from destructive to constructive and building safer communities for all residents.

Hawaii, particularly on Oahu has a rising issue of youth violence, crime and homelessness. It is not a situation to be taken lightly as the epidemic we have seen on the island with the homeless population. It is crucial that we see the value in working with our youth now that will soon become adults. In order to break the destructive cycles of violence, crime and homelessness, it is a necessity that we work with the youth who given the opportunities, has the potential to change and not be a burden of the State and taxpayers.

As a service provider, I have seen the drastic changes that youth can make when given the opportunity. The peer group is considered to be most influential in a youth's life. When the youth are serviced as whole entities, members can learn to hold each other accountable for their actions and progress positively as a group.

Over the years, studies have shown that incarceration has proven to not be an effective approach in the rehabilitation of youth. The targeted youth need services where it is multi-faceted and holistic. The building of trusting and meaningful relationships with service providers has the capacity in redirecting the behaviors of the youth to becoming contributing and productive members of society.

While addressing the needs and issues, the youth can also learn coping skills and tools to abstain from violence and crime. In addition, homelessness amongst youth can be tackled when the youth are given the prescription of hope and believe they matter.

By providing the appropriate services for these youth, we will be creating a safer community for all residents of Hawaii and a brighter future for the next generation. We strongly urge the committee to pass HB 693 HD 1 with the amendments approved by the House Committee of Human Services submitted by staff of Adult Friends for Youth. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



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**Past Chair of the Board*

Adult Friends for Youth

Submitted to House Committee on Finance,
Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair,
Representative Ty J. K. Cullen, Vice Chair

Submitted by Rafael Gacula
Redirectional Specialist
Date: February 27, 2017

HB 693 HB1 Relating to Programs for High Risk Youth

My name is Rafael Gacula, a recent graduate of UHM's Myron B. Thompson School of Social work and current staff member of Adult Friends for Youth (AFY). I am in strong support for HB 693 HD1 relating to Programs for High Risk Youth. Growing up in poverty and coming from a low income family has warped my understanding of success and happiness. When I was younger school was not a priority to me. The harsh realities of life's demands had a much stronger pull on a young person's mind than education and good moral values. Success to me back then meant that my friends and loved ones were protected at any cost, even at the expense of a destructive path, and happiness was having everyone around the next day to do it again. My worldview of poverty lead me to believe that society was a cruel place, and to live in it, you had to be tough and cruel back, not caring for anything or anyone besides yourself.

This Bill if passed will allow organizations to reach young people to realize their potential, redirect destructive and violent behaviors, and lead them to becoming contributing members of their community and society as a whole. For the past 30 years, AFY has been servicing these youths to help stop violence in order to strengthen family and community safety while promoting healthy and meaningful lifestyles for all youth so that they can reach their full potential. Young people are the strongest influence to another young person's life. This bill is vital to helping children believe that they matter and will help all youth to secure their future and prosper today.



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**Past Chair of the Board*

Submitted to Committee on Finance
Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Ty J.K. Cullen, Vice Chair

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen and members of the Committee on Finance, I am here to testify in support of HB 693 HD 1 relating to Programs for High Risk Youth.

Before taking on the role of President and CEO of Adult Friends for Youth (AFY), I spent over 20 years in the field working directly with youth involved in gangs and violence. What have I learned over the years? Gang members and youth involved in violence are usually acting out as symptom of deep rooted issues. They join gangs because they need a place to belong and the gang becomes their surrogate family. Like drugs, the gang becomes a means to escape dealing with problems that have become overwhelming for them to handle. To break up the gang or to work with a youth in isolation is defeating because although it may be negative, you are taking them away from their only support network. We also know that peers tend to have the most influence on each other at this developmental stage in their lives. Youth gang membership and violence is not limited to particular communities nor is it limited to only public housing, it is much more wide spread.

So what have I learned that works? Providing outreach services to these young men and women and engaging them in group counseling sessions helps begin identifying the deep rooted problems, talking about it, and teaching them skills to cope with the problem as well as skills to empower them. These services has to be consistent, long-term and infused in their communities. These services should be holistic and include the entire peer group to turn negative peer pressure into positive peer pressure so that they can begin to hold each member accountable for their actions. The Juvenile Justice System has agreed that working with a youth in their environment is much more effective than incarceration and has made stride to provide services to a youth in their communities. Youth involved with gangs and violence should be given the same option.

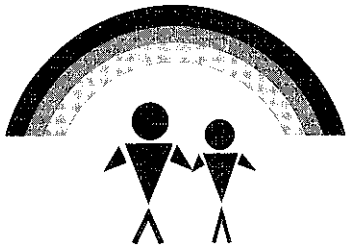
Over the years, gang membership and violence have become more prevalent because technology namely social media has brought it to the forefront. Fights, name calling, bullying and recruitment of members are often posted to many of these sites allowing the problem to spread faster and island wide. This sensationalizes the violence and makes it attracting to watch as well as engage in the behavior. Social media has also been the catalyst that have brought youth (sometimes close to a hundred) from all over the island to engage, participate and/or witness a fight causing members and residents of the community to live in fear.

In 2015, there were many fights and violence on the streets of Kalihi. This left the community up in arms and fearful. As we worked with the youth through counseling sessions, we knew that we had to also address the concerns of the community at large too. Upon their request we assisted many residents of Kalihi particularly those in public housing from both Kamehemeha Homes and Kuhio Park Terrace. These meetings allowed residents, DOE administrators, HPHA, area legislators, HPD, concern community members and youth to have an open and honest communication. What we learned was that data and statistic alone do not always show us the true picture. Communication with all who live and operate in these communities draws us a bigger picture of the problems they must face on regular basis. Since those meetings, communication has continued and partnerships have been built to address the problems of gang and community violence. We are happy to report that the many youth who were involved in these negative activities have gone back to mainstream school or alternative education programs, graduated and/ or are gainfully employed.

This past summer, gang violence became noticeable with some homeless youth in Kakaako who have organized to form their own gang. They have contributed to violence and criminal activities because of their circumstances. Many do it for protection on the streets and to find the means to survive. In August 2016, the Institute of Human Services (IHS) asked AFY to intervene and contracted us to provide services to 10 youth. Since then we have been in contact with nearly 40 youth addressing the violence and gang activities while assisting to hop get these youth off the streets and into housing.

At AFY we reach and provide services to more than 350+ students a week, which involves group counseling as well as outreach, case management, advocacy, truancy reduction, leadership training, and mentorship on and off the school campus. Our Street wise, street smart therapeutic prevention and intervention approach works with high risk youth on their own turf and tackles difficult challenges that youth faces. We work with youth gangs as whole entities for a period of three plus years. Our services are culturally relevant to Hawaii's diverse multi-ethnic population. We also provide crisis services and interventions 24/7 because we know that the violence do not only occur between 9am - 5 pm. AFY works in partnership with school administrators and faculty to provide effective counseling services to reduce and eliminate destructive behaviors on school campuses in order to create a violence free, safe educational environment where students can thrive. We provide mediation services between rival gangs at schools and between schools. We partner with other programs to refer youth for more services when they have learned to properly conduct themselves in the appropriate settings.

We ask for your support of this bill, HB 693 HD1, because it will provide services to our youth, who are the future and give them the opportunity to become productive and contributing members of society, Thank you for allowing me to testify.



Adult Friends for Youth

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Sidney M. Rosen, M.S.W., Ph.D

**Past Chair of the Board*

Submitted to:

House Committee on Finance
Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Ty Cullen, Vice Chair

Submitted by

Malakai Maumalanga
Director of Redirectional Services
Adult Friends for Youth

Subject: Support for HB 693 HD 1, Relating to Programs For High Risk Youth

Aloha, my name is Malakai Maumalanga and I am the Director of Redirectional Services at Adult Friends for Youth. I am in support of HB 693 HD1 relating to Youth Gangs.

I want to start by stating that I would not be here today testifying if I didn't get the support I needed to change my life. That support came from Adult Friends for Youth (AFY). As a kid growing up in Kalihi I got heavily involved in gangs and violence which seemed like a normal life for me. It's a lifestyle you don't grow out of unless you get the support to deal with these issues. I was expelled from every school I attended because of all the fights. My gang was well known by the police for the destructive behaviors and violence we caused in the communities. It got so bad that the police were often posted on King Street to monitor us. The kids in the neighborhood would not come to the park to play they were afraid of all the trouble. We had been in so many fights and we didn't care that we terrorized our neighborhood. Nobody wanted or knew how to deal with us. Then AFY came into our lives. At first we thought they were another police program to monitor us. We later found out they really wanted to help us and have a peaceful and safe community. I have been blessed to have had AFY help me and my friends deal with our issues so that we could live a productive life. They worked with my whole gang to decrease the violence and to help us begin to hold each other accountable. The accountability that we had for each other helped us to look toward a more productive life. If you only work with one youth or one person from the gang it becomes difficult for that person to try and steer the other members to a positive path. However, if you work with the gang as whole entities—the peer pressure now is easier and becomes positive rather than negative. I went to jail

many times but with the continuous support of AFY, I eventually went to college and got a Master's degree in Social Work. I had all of this experience and today my friends and I are productive people of society. We are not a burden or draining our economy but rather giving back.

Today, I am the Director of Redirectional Services at AFY. We help students redirect their lives and change their perspectives of life through Redirectional Therapy. We believe that all students have the capacity to enter mainstream of their issues are addressed and their feelings nurtured. By redirecting youth violence and gangs it has a tremendous impact in our schools and communities. By supporting HB 693 HD 1, it gives these youth an opportunity to reach their full potential. Aggressive behavior and violence is a disease, if left untreated spreads like any other disease. So please support HB 693 HD 1, give our gang youth a change in life, and help to redirect them from destructive behaviors to a constructive life. Thank you for your time, support and LOVE for our youth and our communities. Mahalo and have a Blessed day.

Adult Friends for Youth

Submitted to House Committee on Finance,
Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair,
Representative Ty J. K. Cullen, Vice Chair

Submitted by McKay Schwenke
Vice President,
Adult Friends for Youth.

Date: February 27, 2017

HB 693 HD1 Relating to Programs for High Risk Youth

I am in strong support for HB 693 HD1 which relates to Programs for High Risk Youth. Youth violence among "high Risk" and youth gangs are on the rise again. Over the past year there have been numerous incidences reported by the media regarding youth violence relating to gang confrontations in schools, parks and in the community. Recently violence has also been reported among the homeless youth population as well. This Bill if passed will allow organizations to reach out to this specific "high risk" youth population to help combat violence, crime, and destructive behaviors. For the past 30 years, Adult Friends for Youth (AFY) has been servicing high risk youth, by redirecting them from violent and destructive behaviors to non-violent and constructive behaviors through advocating and empowering them to explore possible options that will lead them away from crime and prison, and toward healthy outcomes and meaningful lifestyles. The ultimate objective for all youth is to help them become contributing members of their community, and society as a whole.

AFY's professional staff is able to comfortably reach out to these "high risk" youth individuals and groups to build relationships through face to face meetings, and engaging them in group mentoring activities. Working with groups as whole entities allows members within the group to build stronger group cohesion with one another, also allowing members to effectively become role models for each other as they begin to experience positive growth through their successful outcomes as they move in a positive direction. Success breeds success and the more positive the experience, the more successful the end result will be.

Helping children and youth believe that they matter is critical in order for self-determination and self-respect to be appreciated. The old adage, "Prevention is better than Cure" is so true! Locking up and incarcerating our youth is not the answer.

Prevention and intervention coupled with individual and group counseling services that have the ability and the expertise to relate and impact change among youth, is the key to keeping them from not only hurting themselves, but others as well.

In order to help decrease and stop the violence among many of our "high risk" youth, we as a Government body have to realize the magnitude and severity of this urgent matter and be willing to make the appropriate decisions to effectively combat this serious concern. Furthermore, I hope you will support this Bill so these children and youth will receive the services that will help impact our schools and communities.

Once again I support HB 693 HD1 and hope you see the bigger picture on how this Bill will also support and promote safer schools and communities for our children and youth to prosper in for years to come.

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony.



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Sidney M. Rosen, M.S.W., Ph.D

**Past Chair of the Board*

Submitted to:

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE:

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

Submitted by:

Siutiti Takai
Redirectional Specialist of Adult Friends for Youth

Subject: Support for HB 693 HD1

I strongly support HB 693. While growing up, violence was all too familiar. Many of my family members were involved in fighting especially, my father. Fighting was the way they would resolve situations. As a child, you grow up thinking its okay because you see it all around you. But I am here to say that violence is not the answer! My name is Siutiti Takai and I am a Redirectional Specialist with Adult Friends for Youth. The high risk youths we service is the reason I come to work every day. At AFY, we provide the students with alternative options and teach them coping mechanisms to help prevent them from reverting to violence. I strongly believe, high risk youth need unconditional love, support and encouragement daily. They need to know and hear that they are valuable members of our community.

In the eyes of many, youth violence and homeless youth involved in acts of violence and juvenile delinquency is a growing problem that needs immediate attention. Rather than spend incredibly high cost on incarcerating the young people of our community. We should invest in programs that have the experienced expertise and relationship building skills to address serious concerns. The concerns around destructive and violent behavior in order to redirect these behaviors toward a positive and constructive solution. Many high risk youth have issues that go deeper than what they portray that often leads to lashing out through violence. Therefore, counseling sessions as a group in school helps express the emotions that are bottled up.

Adult Friends for Youth (AFY) is a nonprofit organization, providing intervention work toward high risk youth for the past 30 years. AFY has gained a notable reputation for its overwhelming success with this specific youth population. By helping to redirect their lives through advocacy and empowerment, continuous effort is further directed toward integrating them into healthy community living and personal well-being. AFY's outreach services help to heighten the potential for achieving community goals, such as reducing extreme poverty, improving healthy lifestyles, and access to educational opportunities that enhances the quality of life. The youth AFY serves are those who believe they have no place in the community. I truly, support the vision and mission AFY stands for and I'm proud to say that I am a part of this agency whom, is making a difference in the lives of youth gang members. We ask the support of this bill, HB 693 because it will help give the youth a chance towards a brighter future.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify.



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**Past Chair of the Board*

Submitted to:
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE:
Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Ty Cullen, Vice Chair

Submitted by
Tevita Williams
Redirectional Specialist
Adult Friends for Youth

Subject: Support for HB 693 HD 1, Relating to Programs and High Risk Youth

For the past 30 years, Adult Friends for Youth (AFY) has been an intricate force in tackling youth violence in Hawaii, particularly delinquent youth associated with being high risk. As a current staff member of AFY, I am testifying in strong support of HB 693 HD 1 Relating to Programs and High Risk Youth, which will allow organizations like ours to continue to take on the difficult task of reaching out to these youths who are the most at-risk. It will also allow us to provide them opportunities to develop essential skills needed to become productive and contributing members of society. In my three years at AFY, I have been directly involved with redirecting deconstructing behaviors of youth from deferent demographics by promoting healthy lifestyles and personal well-being. AFY's redirecting and empowering the lives of these youth will not only better these individuals, but the communities these individuals come from as well. Again, with recommendations of amendments submitted by staff of Adult Friends for Youth, I strongly support HB 693 HD 1 Relating to Programs and High Risk Youth and hope you will also see the significance of how this Bill will help to combat violence among youth and effectively promote community and school safety for all. Thank you very much for your time and presence.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, February 27, 2017 8:32 PM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: sabrinanguyen2010@yahoo.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB693 on Mar 1, 2017 13:00PM

HB693

Submitted on: 2/27/2017

Testimony for FIN on Mar 1, 2017 13:00PM in Conference Room 308

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

Comments: I support HB693, HD1, because it will save the state taxpayers money, because funding can be used for a program to timely address youth gang violence and focus on keeping youth out of the Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility, which will save substantial amounts of taxpayer costs.

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Sent: Monday, February 27, 2017 8:01 PM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: kananisouza@yahoo.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB693 on Mar 1, 2017 13:00PM

HB693

Submitted on: 2/27/2017

Testimony for FIN on Mar 1, 2017 13:00PM in Conference Room 308

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kanani Souza	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I support HB693, HD1, because this will be a wise investment in addressing "at risk" youth and youth gang members, by having a program which deals specifically with this subject. A program to reduce youth gangs, reduce "at risk" youth from breaking the law and crimes will go a long way to ensure safer communities and a safer state. It costs the State of Hawaii over \$200,000 a year to house a youth at the Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility. This money for only one youth could be better spent on youth mentoring programs that will cover hundreds of "at risk" youth and youth gang members, instead of just throwing "at risk" youth in HYCF costing taxpayers over \$200,000 per year per youth.

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To: FINTestimony
Cc: alangarcia2017@yahoo.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB693 on Mar 1, 2017 13:00PM

HB693

Submitted on: 2/27/2017

Testimony for FIN on Mar 1, 2017 13:00PM in Conference Room 308

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Alan Garcia	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I submit testimony in strong support of HB693, HD1 to provide an appropriation to the department of human services to contract services to address "at risk" youth violence and youth gangs. The fact is that it costs the state of Hawaii \$200,000 per year to house a youth (under the age of 18 years) at the Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility. Some of these youth deserve to be at that facility. However, a number of youth who are arrested for "status offenses" which are minor violations that would not be considered a violation of the law if the youth was not a minor such as missing school, staying out past 10 p.m. etc. are placed at HYCF - Therefore, a Youth Program that will cost the state what it would cost one youth placed at the HYCF is much better spent and the benefits are greater, because \$200,000 or even less can be used to address more than just one youth - a program can address these "at risk" youth and youth gang members in areas all over the state would be of great benefit and in the end save the taxpayers money and save many youth from ending up at HYCF - and ultimately ending up in the "system."

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LATE

Public Testimony
of
Reginald Castanares, Business Manager
Plumbers and Fitters Local 675
Honolulu, Hawaii

In Support of HB 693
RELATING TO PROGRAMS FOR HIGH RISK YOUTH

Before the House:
Committee on Finance
Wednesday, March 1, 2017
1:00 p.m., Conference Rm. 308

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen and Members.

My name is Reginald Castanares; I have the privilege and honor to represent the Plumbers and Fitters Local 675. Our membership is representative of the many working families of our community. Those families are also tragically affected from time to time by the impacts of societal ills, drugs abusive relationships and criminal activity. These issues are found at all levels of our community today.

With those realities our Union has always tried to do its part in helping those in our society less fortunate. Our apprenticeship program is one whereby we hope to influence our younger generation to continue their education and to acquire a trade. With that in mind we have been an active supporter of the incredible work which the organization "Adult Friends for Youth" provides in our community.

We recognize that there are no easy answers to these difficult issues but we are also committed to doing our part to provide encouragement, help and assistance where ever we can. Thus, we would like to add our support to the many community leaders who have come forward in support of HB 693.

We fully endorse the position as proposed by the AFY leadership at this time.

I apologize for the lateness of this testimony, but given the importance of what is being considered I feel compelled to submit it for your thoughtful consideration.

Respectfully,
Reginald Castanares

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, February 28, 2017 3:32 PM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: Heather@Epic-changes.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB693 on Mar 1, 2017 13:00PM*

HB693

Submitted on: 2/28/2017

Testimony for FIN on Mar 1, 2017 13:00PM in Conference Room 308

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Heather Blodgett	Epic-Interventions LLC	Support	No

Comments:

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LATE



92-954 Makakilo Dr. #71, Kapolei, HI 96707 Email: RainbowFamily808@gmail.com Ph: (808) 779-9078 Fax: (808) 672-6347

DATE: February 28, 2017

RE: HB 693 HD1 Programes for Youth At Risk

STRONG SUPPORT

TO: House Finance Committee Hearing

Aloha House Representatives Luke, Cullen and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB 693 HD1 relating to Programs for Youth at Risk. Rainbow Family 808 is a support and resource organization that focuses on reaching out to all families in love, support and advocacy, especially our Youth At Risk.

Rainbow Family 808 asks that HB 693 HD1 be passed with sufficient funds to benefit our Youth At Risk. It is past time that we care for our youth, especially our Youth At Risk who have been over looked for far too long.

Please pass HB 693 HD1 with sufficient funding to reach our Youth at Risk in a manner that is respectfully in keeping with the Aloha State that we strive to be. Thank you.

Respectfully,

Carolyn Martinez Golojuch, MSW
President and Co-Founder



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**Past Chair of the Board*

Adult Friends for Youth

**Submitted to:
House Committee on Finance
Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair,
Representative Ty J.K. Cullen, Vice Chair**

**Submitted by:
Jeffrey Aganos
Redirectional Specialist of Adult Friends for Youth**

Subject: Support for HB693 HD1
Relating to Programs for High Risk Youth.

Wednesday – March 1, 2017

My name is Jeffrey Aganos and I am representing and testifying in support of HB693 HD1 relating to programs for high risk youth. Throughout the years, Adult Friends for Youth has played a vital role in keeping the community safe from violence and also redirecting the lives of youths within the low-income community.

AFY has conducted group and individual sessions in redirecting and empowering the lives of the youth to not only make the community a safer and better place for everyone but also working with youth to help them believe that they matter. Over the years the youth we have worked with have felt that they have been portrayed in a negative way - where they had to endure that stigma of making them feel unworthy to the mainstream.

Through AFY's help many of them come out feeling confident in knowing that they can make a difference in the in their community. This Bill will help support organizations that are helping cope with this serious problem, but more importantly, helping to secure safer schools and communities, build bridges that will help all youth cross over to a better future.

Once again, I highly support HB693 HD1 in relating to programs for High Risk Youth. Thank you for your time and consideration.

LATE

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
 Sent: Tuesday, February 28, 2017 6:15 PM
 To: FINTestimony
 Cc: lisa@afyhawaii.com
 Subject: Submitted testimony for HB693 on Mar 1, 2017 13:00PM
 Attachments: Puna Funaki.docx

HB693

Submitted on: 2/28/2017

Testimony for FIN on Mar 1, 2017 13:00PM in Conference Room 308

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Puna Funaki	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

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Submitted to House Committee on Finance
Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Ty Cullen, Vice Chair

Submitted by:
Jerry Killion
AFY Student

Date: February 28, 2017

Aloha ladies and gentlemen, Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen and Committee members on Finance. My name is Jerry Killion and I am in support of HB No. 693 HD 1.

For so long gangs and violence has been a part of my life and raided our society leaving behind a heavy burden for our leaders. They go out into our streets vandalizing at their will causing unnecessary expenses that pile up for taxpayers. I have witnessed violence and crime all my life and observed how it becomes a lifestyle. Generations after generations the lifestyle is passed on and the process once again, repeats itself leaving one questions, "When does it stop?" These problems can't be stopped when they are adults. We must teach them when they are still young. On top of the problems already within the youth, another problem emerges and that is youth homelessness.

One of my friends whose smile and joy emanated off of him especially on the basketball courts turned homeless and has been on the streets for 2 years now. He is only 16 years old. What support does he have to make it through? Making it to college and graduation with a degree is most definitely the least of his worries.

Adult Friends for Youth is an organization that services high risk youth and homeless youth. Their influence within our communities has grown drastically that many of us rely on them. AFY offers group and individual counseling but also prevention and intervention services. They have an alternative education programs (C-Base) that has been ongoing for over 10 years now. I met AFY because of my affiliation with a gang in Kalihi that used to cause riots and property damage within the community.

Within my three years as an AFY serviced student, I have been taught how to take responsibility for my actions and then grow from my mistakes. They helped me believe that I could have great accomplishments if I work diligently. AFY is also filled with staff members who are willing to go that extra mile because their happiest moments are when kids like me grow successful and lead the next generation. One of the many things that separate AFY is that they have no termination policy and they continue to keep tight bonds with their older students. Thanks to AFY and their support, I had the confidence to take on AP Calculus my junior year, passed the class with an A and had a perfect score on the state exams. I am now a senior at Farrington High School awaiting for my diploma to become a future marine and serve my home as you all are doing here too.

I ask that we come together to nurture the next generation because together, anything is possible. So ladies and gentlemen, I ask that you humbly support HB 693 HD 1. Thank you so much for your valuable time.

LATE

Submitted to House Committee on Finance
Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Ty Cullen, Vice Chair

Submitted by:
Hans Hanis from Farrington High School

Date: February 28, 2017

My name is Hans Hanis and I support this bill HB 693 HD 1. I am a Micronesian and I am affiliated with a friendship group from Kalihi Valley Homes and Kuhio Park Terrace. I am writing this testimony or story, on behalf of an agency that I have been with for quite some time called Adult Friends for Youth (AFY).

I met AFY through my 'brothers' and my rugby coach, Molo. I was once a boy who did not care about how my life would turn out. I couldn't see myself succeeding in any way and I wanted to give up. When my father was sent to jail, I was left with no hope, no future, and no motivation to become the Hans I am today. I felt like a failure- a failure that had no dream. This all changed when I met AFY. They took the boys and I on an "outing" to experience new things. I knew this was a group I wanted to be part of. I changed schools from Roosevelt to Farrington where regular services were offered. Through weekly therapeutic sessions, I received pep talks, motivation, and ultimately, the courage to seek out opportunities to better my life.

I am now a different Hans. I have made the people I love happy. I know I will be successful. I will work to give people hope that can't find hope as well as to continue to pursue this great ambitious goal of mine all thanks to AFY's job as giving hope to this young individual who was a failure. I will be the man that changes the negative perceptions of Micronesians as well as to let them know that there is a Micronesian who is going to do his very best to get them all where they have to be. Most importantly, I know that AFY will be there to guide me every step of the way. Thanks to the staff at Adult Friends for Youth, I am the man I can be proud of today.

Please pass this bill so that others can receive services from AFY like I do. Thank you for your time and opportunity for me to testify.

LATE

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, February 28, 2017 7:01 PM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: mikegolojuch808@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB693 on Mar 1, 2017 13:00PM

HB693

Submitted on: 2/28/2017

Testimony for FIN on Mar 1, 2017 13:00PM in Conference Room 308

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

Comments: Help protect our youth and pass HB693.

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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