



*The Judiciary, State of Hawai‘i*

**Testimony to the House Committee on Human Services**

Representative Dee Morikawa, Chair

Representative Chris Todd, Vice Chair

Friday, February 3, 2017 9:00 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 329

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY**

By

Judge R. Mark Browning

Senior Judge, Deputy Chief Judge

Family Court of the First Circuit

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**Bill No. and Title:** House Bill No. 844, Relating to Youth.

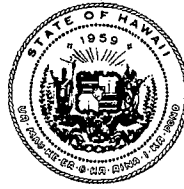
**Purpose:** Requires OYS to coordinate a two-year Safe Places for Youth Pilot Program.

**Judiciary's Position:**

The Judiciary strongly supports this bill that will offer a much needed service to homeless youth and that may be a pivotal moment for a youth to find a way back to healthy, life-affirming choices.

In the experience of the family court, young people on the streets are not usually there as a result of individual willful rebellion or bad intent. Some of these kids come from good families but leave as a result of trauma experienced outside of the home or exposure to negative influences they are exposed to because of poverty. Some of these kids come from families suffering from generations of dysfunction, violence, and substance abuse. This bill, like other Safe Places throughout the country will “broker” services to these young people non-judgmentally and with kindness and acceptance. The Office of Youth Services (OYS) is particularly well suited to administer such a program. It is, of course, crucial that the OYS receive adequate funding to implement the vision of this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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

February 2, 2017

TO: The Honorable Dee Morikawa, Chair  
House Committee on Human Services

The Honorable Takashi Ohno, Chair  
House Committee on Intrastate Commerce

FROM: Merton Chinen, Executive Director

**SUBJECT: HB 844, Relating to Youth**

Hearing: Friday, February 3, 2017, 9:00 a.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 329

**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 currently procures programs and services across the state to assist youth and their families in navigating through a continuum of care system in order to engage in needed services, including outreach and advocacy, and 24-hour short term residential emergency shelters for youth in crisis. The measure would expand our current efforts in ensuring a coordinated continuum of services for youth. OYS also has the following comments:

- Hawaii Revised Statute §346 –17.6 includes a listing of services related to no cost emergency shelters to which a minor may consent given several contingencies, and if the services to be provided are deemed appropriate by the provider. We recommend similar language be included in this bill to both clarify and ensure that a minor can consent to the services that would be provided under this bill.
- The definition of youth should be less than eighteen years of age, this would be consistent with the definition of a minor as defined in HRS §346 – 17.6 and HRS §571 – 2 which defines terms for the Family Courts. This recommendation addresses our

concerns with the comingling of adults in need of services with minors in need of services.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the measure is to require the Office of Youth Services to coordinate a two-year Safe Places for Youth Pilot Program in partnership with private organizations to coordinate a network that youth can access for safety and where youth can obtain advice, guidance, programs, and services. Establishes a Safe Places for Youth Pilot Program Coordinator position and appropriates funds.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.

To: Representative Dee Morikawa, Chair, Representative Chris Todd, Vice Chair, and members of the Human Services Committee  
From: Tami Yamashita,  
4172A Huanui Street  
Honolulu, HI 96816  
tyamashi@hawaii.edu

Re: Testimony in support of HB 844, Relating to Youth  
Hearing: Friday, February 3, 2017, 9:00 am, Conference 329

Thank you for hearing HB 844, which requires the office of youth services to organize a two-year safe places pilot program in partnership with private organizations for at-risk youth in Hawaii. I strongly support this measure because it will help to service the needs of youth who are victims of homelessness, physical abuse, sexual abuse, domestic violence, neglect, sexual exploitation, substance abuse, mental health disabilities, and death.

According to an analysis of the fiscal resources supporting at-risk youth in Hawaii, between 20 and 25 percent of Hawaiian youth are at risk of dropping out of school and according to SAMHSA, only 20%-40% of depressed youth in Hawaii are ever diagnosed and treated. These are just some of the statistics that depict the adversities that the youth, our future, currently face.

The Safe Place program has been servicing youth since 1983 and, according to [nationalsafeplace.org](http://nationalsafeplace.org), has successfully connected 166,423 youth to immediate help and safety and 179,395 youth to counseling by phone. This program has the potential to assist and benefit youth in Hawaii who do not have a place to grow and develop into healthy, functional, and integral citizens of our society.

Passing HB 844 will give the youth in Hawaii access to a place of safety where they can receive the appropriate resources that will meet their physical, mental, and emotional needs. The youth are our future and thus they are our responsibility and must be our priority. Please help us improve youth services in Hawaii by passing HB 844.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.



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

**FamilyProgramsHawaii.com**

TO: Committee on Human Services  
Rep. Dee Morikawa, Chair  
Rep. Chris Todd, Vice Chair

HEARING: Friday, February 3, 2017  
9:00 A.M.  
Conference Room 329

FROM: Judith Wilhoite  
Family Programs Hawaii

RE: HB844 - RELATING TO YOUTH

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in favor of HB 844. I am the Family Advocate for Family Program Hawaii's It Takes An Ohana program and a resource caregiver.

In my position, I have regular contact with current and former foster youth. I have had youth call to ask for help in finding a safe harbor when running from a living situation that is unsafe. If this bill passes, I will be able to direct them to a Safe Place where they are able to sign themselves in, without their parents' permission, to receive needed support. This can mean:

1. That youth are able to be safe while the issues in the youth's life are sorted out.
2. There is time to de-escalate what might be a volatile situation, thus preventing violence and other destructive actions, saving everyone grief, time, as well as funds.

I first heard of safe places for youth at the October 2012 Children and Youth Summit. Youth who attended this summit voted this as their top priority for legislative action in 2012 and 2013. In 2014 they indicated it was still of high importance to them. I am happy to see that it is again before the legislature and hope that this time, we can move it forward.

I think you for this opportunity to voice my strong support for HB844.

We help kids

## HUStestimony

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 1, 2017 9:29 AM  
**To:** HUStestimony  
**Cc:** laurie.field@ppvnh.org  
**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for HB844 on Feb 3, 2017 09:00AM\*

### HB844

Submitted on: 2/1/2017

Testimony for HUS on Feb 3, 2017 09:00AM in Conference Room 329

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Laurie Field	Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest and Hawaii	Support	No

#### Comments:

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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**Committee On Human Services**  
Representative Dee Morikawa Chairman  
Representative Chris Todd Vice Chairman

Testimony for HB 844

Aloha Chair Morikawa and Vice Chair Todd, my name is Clarence B Vierra Jr. I am a Graduate Student in the Myron B Thompson School of Social Work at the University of Hawaii, I am also a Certified Substance Abuse Counselor, Father, Grandfather, and community advocate. I am in support of HB 844, which states, “Requires the Office of Youth Services to coordinate a two-year Safe Places for Youth Pilot Program in partnership with private organizations to coordinate a network that youth can access for safety and where youth can obtain advice, guidance, programs, and services. Establishes a Safe Places for Youth Pilot Program Coordinator position. Appropriates funds.”

This bill will be a great resource for Hawaii’s youth at risk, there are three areas that I believe this bill will address social needs of Hawaii’s youth. Equal Access, Safety, and Funding of the Coordinator position are several areas that can make an powerful impact in the lives of youth in need. HB 844 will provide a positive support service for the youth. The first reason is Equal Access, sadly, there is a lack of services for adolescents throughout the state and nationwide. Once a child becomes a teen, availability of services of any kind is limited. Services drop off for at risk youth which presents a challenge for teens who may be homeless, on the run, or suffering from a mental health illness. This issue creates a deterrent that could prevent equal access to services needed to address their needs. At risk youth is a community that is often overlooked and in many cases forgotten.

Safety is the second reason why I support this bill, The Department of the Attorney General reports that there is over 300 youth who are reported as runaways each month. Many of these youth live on the streets where they fall prey to crimes like rape, assault, sexual exploitation and in some cases resort to committing crimes themselves. Basic needs such as not having a safe place to sleep, no place to shower or get clean clothing, no food, and no medical care are contributing factors that jeopardizes the safety of the youth. The Youth Pilot Program will provide an alternative to youth at risk in finding a safe place where they can get support to help them in finding the resources

Thirdly, Funding for this bill the key in creating the coordinator position that would support the establishment of the Youth Pilot Program. The program coordinator plays a major role in initiating contact of community organizations and service providers, gathering data, and organizing the information to create the partnerships needed to assist the program around the state.

In closing, developing a program like this can reap huge dividends for youth and families across the state. The success of this program rests on the passing of the bill that will allocate providing the funds needed to support this bill. The passage of this bill will play a significant role that will send a strong message to the youth of Hawaii that they are not forgotten. The youth of

Hawaii deserve having a resource that they can turn to for support. I ask you to please pass this bill, our youth deserves a safe place where they can go to for help. Mahalo nui loa for your time.

Sincerely,

Clarence B Vierra Jr. BSW, CSAC, ICADC  
PO Box 73  
Hauula, Hawaii 96717



todd2 - Chloe

**LATE**

**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 2, 2017 10:38 PM  
**To:** HUSstestimony  
**Cc:** erinrutherford815@gmail.com  
**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for HB844 on Feb 3, 2017 09:00AM\*

**HB844**

Submitted on: 2/2/2017

Testimony for HUS on Feb 3, 2017 09:00AM in Conference Room 329

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Erin Rutherford	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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# HAWAII YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

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Web site: <http://www.hysn.org> E-mail: [info@hysn.org](mailto:info@hysn.org)

**LATE**

Daryl Selman, President  
Judith F. Clark, Executive Director  
Aloha House  
American Civil Liberties Union of Hawaii  
Bay Clinic, Inc.  
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Honolulu  
Big Island Substance Abuse Council  
Blueprint for Change  
Bobby Benson Center  
Catholic Charities Hawaii  
Child and Family Service  
Coalition for a Drug Free Hawaii  
Courage House Hawaii  
Domestic Violence Action Center  
EPIC, Inc.  
Family Programs Hawaii  
Family Support Hawaii  
Hale Kipa, Inc.  
Hale 'Opio Kauai, Inc.  
Hawaii Behavioral Health  
Hawaii Student Television  
Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition  
Hina Mauka Teen Care  
Hui Malama Learning Center  
Kaanalike  
Kahi Mohala Behavioral Health  
KEY (Kualoa-Heeia Ecumenical Youth)  
Project  
Kids Hurt Too  
Kokua Kalihi Valley  
Life Foundation  
Marimed Foundation  
Maui Youth and Family Services  
Palama Settlement  
P.A.R.E.N.T.S., Inc.  
Parents and Children Together (PACT)  
Planned Parenthood of Hawaii  
REAL  
Salvation Army Family Intervention Svcs.  
Salvation Army Family Treatment Svcs.  
Sex Abuse Treatment Center  
Susannah Wesley Community Center

February 3, 2017

To: Representative Dee Morikawa, Chair  
And members of the Committee on Human Services

## **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 844 RELATING TO YOUTH**

Hawaii Youth Services Network (HYSN), a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, strongly supports HB 844 Relating to Youth.

The proposed network of safe places for youth was first conceived by the young people who attended the October 2012 Children and Youth Summit at the Capitol. It was voted the top priority for legislative action in both 2012, 2013, and 2014 indicating its importance to Hawaii's youth.

Senator Chun Oakland then established the Safe Places for Youth Work Group that has met regularly to build the concept into a viable plan that addresses such issues as training, outreach, coordination, criminal background checks, and right to consent for services. More than 120 individuals and organizations have been involved in planning the Safe Place Network.

It takes a 'Ohana to raise a child and the Safe Places Network will expand our children's 'ohana through caring neighbors in our communities.

The Safe Place Network will link together many existing resources for youth and families, such as Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA/YWCAs, Family Centers and Neighborhood places. It will provide safe environments where adolescents can safely address such issues as peer pressure, unplanned pregnancy, child abuse and neglect, and substance abuse. It will provide young people with ways to deal with problems before they get into trouble and avoid unnecessary arrests for status offenses.

The Catalyst Group  
The Children's Alliance of Hawaii  
Waikiki Health Center  
Women Helping Women  
YWCA of Kauai

While much of the network is already in place, funding is needed to ensure 24-hour crisis response capability, provide training of youth workers, and ensure coordination of services among the various providers.

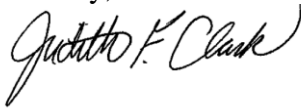
The 24-hour crisis response will follow the National Safe Place model, in which community partners, such as fire stations and public bus systems are recruited as places where young people can go in an emergency. It may include local businesses and stores, enabling them to provide a valuable community service to youth and their families. Staff in those companies are trained and provided with a 24-hour number to call. Workers from the 24-hour site assess the situation, notify parents, and can arrange emergency shelter, make reports to Child Protective Service, or provide other appropriate responses to the situation.

After the immediate crisis response, youth-serving agencies will help families resolve the issues that led the youth to seek help from a Safe Place site.

The Safe Places for Youth Network will help youth and families resolve problems before they get out of control.

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 initial "J".

Judith F. Clark, MPH  
Executive Director

