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TESTIMONY FOR HOUSE BILL 944, RELATING TO SCHOOLS

House Committee on Education
Hon. Roy M. Takumi, Chair
Hon. Sharon E. Har, Vice Chair

Friday, February 6, 2017, 2:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 309

Honorable Chair Takumi and committee members:

I am Kris Coffield, representing IMUAlliance, a nonpartisan political advocacy organization that currently boasts over 350 members. On behalf of our members, we offer this testimony in support of House Bill 944, relating to schools.

Sex traffickers prey on our state's school children, often hovering around public school campuses to target our children. Traffickers are experts in observing and selecting their victims, and often infiltrate public schools by using students to recruit their peers. One of the largest child sex trafficking rings discovered on Hawai'i's shores was unearthed in 2014. It included 16 students, most whom were students at Mililani High School and Moanalua High School, two of our state's top performing schools.

IMUAlliance is one of the state's largest victim service providers for survivors of sex trafficking. Over the past 10 years, we have provided direct intervention services to 130 victims, successfully emancipating them from slavery and assisting in their restoration. Each of the victims we have assisted has suffered from complex and overlapping trauma, including post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and anxiety, dissociation, parasuicidal behavior, and substance abuse. Trafficking-related trauma can lead to a complete loss of identity. A victim we cared for in 2016, for example, had become so heavily bonded to her pimp that while under his grasp, she couldn't remember her own name.

Sex trafficking is a profoundly violent crime. The Average age of entry into commercial sexual exploitation is 13-years-old, with 60 percent of sex trafficked children being under the age of 16. Approximately 150 high-risk sex trafficking establishments are operational in Hawai'i. An estimated 1,500-2,500 women and children are victimized by sex traffickers in our state annually. Over 110,000 advertisements for Hawai'i-based prostitution are posted online each year, a number that has *not* decreased with the recent shuttering of Backpage.com's "adult services" section. More

than 80 percent of runaway youth report being approached for sexual exploitation while on the run, over 30 percent of whom are targeted within the first 48 hours of leaving home.

With regard to mental health, sex trafficking victims are twice as likely to suffer from PTSD as a soldier in a war zone. Greater than 80 percent of victims report being repeatedly raped and 95 percent of report being physically assaulted, numbers that are underreported, according to the United States Department of State and numerous trauma specialists, because of the inability of many victims to recognize sexual violence as such. As one underage victim—now a survivor—told IMUAlliance prior to being rescued, “I can’t be raped. Only good girls can be raped. I’m a bad girl. If I *want* to be raped, I have to *earn* it.”

Accordingly, we support this measure’s attempt to improve public school safety by expanding first degree criminal trespass under HRS §708-813 to include disrupting the orderly operation, safety, or peaceful conduct of activities on school campuses. We must do all we can to protect our children from the state’s prolific slave trade. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

Sincerely,
Kris Coffield
Executive Director
IMUAlliance



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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION

RE: HB 944 - RELATING TO SCHOOLS.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2017

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Takumi and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association **supports HB 944**, relating to schools.

Student success demands school safety. At some public schools, especially those adjacent to public parks, drug dealers loiter near public school property, harassing children as they enter and exit campus. Similarly, individuals residing at homeless encampments that exist in close proximity to public schools sometimes trespass on public school property during school hours, particularly on the West side of O'ahu. To be clear, we do not see this bill as or want it to become an anti-homeless initiative. HSTA fully endorses Housing First and support services that meet the basic needs of our state's houseless population and opposes state laws and city ordinances that criminalize poverty. At the same time, we note that this bill specifically targets actions that disrupt school operations, campus peace and safety, and orderly conduct.

For the sake of our students' safety, the Hawaii State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** this bill.

EDNtestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, February 1, 2017 10:59 PM
To: EDNtestimony
Cc: jamesjtz@aol.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB944 on Feb 6, 2017 14:00PM*

HB944

Submitted on: 2/1/2017

Testimony for EDN on Feb 6, 2017 14:00PM in Conference Room 309

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
James Gauer	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

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