



**LATE**

To: The Honorable Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair  
The Honorable Gilbert Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair  
Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

From: Trish La Chica, Policy and Advocacy Director, Hawai'i Public Health Institute

Re: **Support for SB 2089, Relating to a Youth Commission**

Hrg: February 28, 2018 at 11:00 am at Conference Room 211

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Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of SB 2089 which establishes a youth commission and appropriates funds in the Office of Youth Services to advise the Governor and the Legislature on the effects of legislative policies, needs, assessments, priorities, programs, and budgets relating to youth.

The Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI) engages in a number of policy efforts to ensure that Hawai'i is the healthiest place to live. The Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Hawai'i (Coalition) is a program of HIPHI that is dedicated to reducing tobacco use through education, policy, and advocacy. With more than two decades of history in Hawai'i, the Coalition has led several campaigns on enacting smoke-free environments, including being the first state in the nation to prohibit the sale of tobacco and electronic smoking devices to purchasers under 21 years of age.

Part of the Coalition's success can be attributed to the work of our Youth Council. The Youth Council is a statewide network of youth and young adults representing all four Hawaii counties. In the last four years, they have championed campaigns to raise the age of sale of tobacco to 21, protect minors from secondhand smoke in cars, and now – to regulate vaping and keep tobacco stores away from schools.

We have engaged our youth as part of policy solutions, providing ways for them to lead and channel their motivation and experiences into effective community change. Through youth-led legislative campaigns, our youth leaders have been able to explore community challenges in public health and potential solutions. They learn how to develop a campaign and build a network to educate their peers and create policy change.

SB 2089 provides a critical opportunity for Hawai'i youth to become involved in the legislative process and gain recognition as an important voice for change. HIPHI is in support of this measure and we respectfully ask you to pass this measure out of committee.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Trish'.

Trish La Chica  
Policy and Advocacy Director

**LATE**

**SB-2089**

Submitted on: 2/28/2018 7:56:59 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2018 11:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Kaneala Peters-Clark	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Chair Donovan Dela Cruz  
Senate Ways and Means Committee

Kaneala Peters-Clark  
808-426-3829  
02/28/2018

I am writing to testify in support of SB 2089, the formation of the Youth Commission, for the following reasons.

It will give minors a voice in public policy making.

16 and 17 year olds can marry, drive, work, and pay taxes; they should have some political representation.

Over 75 percent of voters are over the age of 55, and there are more voters over the age of 90 than under the age of 30.

Young people are legally prohibited from many aspects of the political process.

People under the age of 18 may not vote in elections.

Many young people are disenfranchised for other reasons, including lack of citizenship, a discrepancy between where they go to school and where they are permanent residents, or heavy responsibilities at work or elsewhere.

It will give more attention to issues important to youth.

Some of the most persistent issues in Hawaii, including affordable housing, good jobs, and education, remain unaddressed because they are young people's issues.

Young people's lives will be most impacted by decisions made by government today, because they will have to live with them for decades more to come.

The Legislature frequently hear from older testifiers and lobbyists on issues, but rarely from young people and students.

It will better prepare future leaders of Hawaii.

The commissioners would gain valuable insights--and a sense of responsibility to our community--through their unique opportunity to learn about government.

Service on a Youth Commission would be attractive to colleges and prospective future employers.

San Francisco has had a successful Youth Commission since 1996.

In 2004, their Youth Commission successfully expanded "Healthy Kids," San Francisco's universal health care system for children, to include 18- to 24-year-olds.

The San Francisco Youth Commission played a key role in winning free public transportation for all youth.

Many other jurisdictions have Youth Commissions, including Miami-Dade County, Seattle, San Jose, Philadelphia, Saint Paul, and Multnomah County (Portland).

For all of these reasons, I ask that you approve SB 2089, the formation of the Youth Commission. Thank you for your attention and your service.

Very truly yours,  
Kaneala Peters-Clark  
James Campbell High School Senior