



46-063 Emepela Pl. #U101 Kaneohe, HI 96744 · (808) 679-7454 · Kris Coffield · Co-founder/Executive Director

TESTIMONY FOR SENATE BILL 2477, RELATING TO NONREPORTING ON CHILD ABUSE

**Senate Committee on Human Services
Hon. Josh Green, Chair
Hon. Stanley Chang, Vice Chair**

**Monday, February 5, 2018, 3:45 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 016**

Honorable Chair Green and committee members:

I am Kris Coffield, representing IMU Alliance, a nonpartisan political advocacy organization that currently boasts over 400 members. On behalf of our members, we offer this testimony in support of Senate Bill 2477, relating to nonreporting on child abuse.

Mandatory reporting of suspected cases of human trafficking involving children became effective in 2013 under Act 246, when sex and labor trafficking were added to the scope of the state's child abuse protection statutes pursuant to HRS §350-1. Child trafficking victims often require immediate care, both medical and psychological. The first 48 hours can be critical in preserving evidence of trafficking-related offenses and, given children's unique vulnerabilities, protecting innocent minors from being ensnared within the state's prolific slave trade.

We are one of the state's largest victim service providers for survivors of sex trafficking, for which childhood sexual abuse is frequently a precursor. Over the past 10 years, we have provided comprehensive direct intervention services to 130 victims, successfully emancipating them from slavery and assisting in their restoration, while providing a range of targeted services to over 1,000 victims in total. We are also a leading provider of anti-sexual-exploitation education, teaching over 10,000 students each year about the perils of sex trafficking and the commercial sex trade. When we provide anti-trafficking instruction in the Department of Education schools, students report that themselves or someone they know are being or at risk of being trafficking at a 2:1 ratio—two victims for every class we teach. 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."

To stop slavery in Hawai'i, we must prevent victimization before it begins by increasing compliance with our state's mandatory reporting laws. Too often, the failure to report potential victimization results in irreparable harm and, in some cases, the loss of life. Our children deserve better.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

Sincerely,
Kris Coffield
Executive Director
IMUAlliance

SB-2477

Submitted on: 2/1/2018 11:22:32 AM

Testimony for HMS on 2/5/2018 3:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dara Carlin, M.A.	Domestic Violence Survivor Advocate	Support	No

Comments:

SB-2477

Submitted on: 2/2/2018 7:46:00 AM

Testimony for HMS on 2/5/2018 3:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jade Ling		Support	No

Comments:

I support this bill!

SB-2477

Submitted on: 2/2/2018 6:58:58 AM

Testimony for HMS on 2/5/2018 3:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Nona Ai	Justice, Peace and Healing for Sons and Daughters	Support	No

Comments:

I SUPPORT THIS BILL.

SB-2477

Submitted on: 2/2/2018 10:08:10 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/5/2018 3:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Marilyn Yamamoto		Oppose	No

Comments:

I oppose penalties for failure to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the state hotline and particularly the felony offense that this bill proposes. First, the bill only applies to mandated reporters and those reporters are likely to be pressured to over-report due to fear of consequences provided by criminal charges. Second, the language of the previous bill is "knowingly fails to report". It makes sense to provide yearly training to mandated reporters and an explanation of the language of the previous law to clarify any risk of a decision not to report. The consequences of any hotline report are terrifying to both parents and children. There should not be a threat to reporters to submit a concern due to a criminal charge if that report is not made.

SB-2477

Submitted on: 2/3/2018 6:54:56 AM

Testimony for HMS on 2/5/2018 3:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Namaka		Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support this bill.

SB-2477

Submitted on: 2/3/2018 7:46:26 AM

Testimony for HMS on 2/5/2018 3:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Debra Koonohiokala Norenberg		Support	No

Comments:

SB-2477

Submitted on: 2/3/2018 12:37:27 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/5/2018 3:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Nako?olani Warrington		Support	No

Comments:

I am in STRONG SUPPORT OF SB2477.

PLEASE PASS SB2477!

SB-2477

Submitted on: 2/3/2018 10:09:24 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/5/2018 3:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kat Culina		Support	No

Comments:

Yes, please protect the keikis! They depend on us.

SB-2477

Submitted on: 2/4/2018 4:07:03 AM

Testimony for HMS on 2/5/2018 3:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mary Whispering Wind	Patients Without Time	Support	No

Comments:

Please SUPPORT SB2477 to help protect children.

SB-2477

Submitted on: 2/4/2018 5:54:18 AM

Testimony for HMS on 2/5/2018 3:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Bridgit Bales		Support	No

Comments:

I STRONGLY support SB2477.

SB-2477

Submitted on: 2/4/2018 8:39:08 AM

Testimony for HMS on 2/5/2018 3:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Shannon Rudolph		Support	No

Comments:

Support

Dear Chair Green, Vice Chair Chang, and committee members:

I am a survivor of childhood sex abuse and support SB2477.

In light of the recent USA Gymnastics and Kamehameha sex abuse scandals, it's clear that other people in the reporting process could have and should have taken these allegations more seriously at the time of reporting. Whether through negligence or purposeful protecting of the perpetrator and/or organization, these people should face harsher penalties for their non reporting of the sexual abuse. They had a chance to prevent further abuse on innocent boys and girls but ignored their pleas and cries for help. By changing the penalty for non reporting of child abuse or neglect from a petty misdemeanor to Class C felony, future allegations of child abuse or neglect will be taken more seriously and reduce the # of victims. This change will hold everyone in the reporting process accountable for reporting the serious crime of child abuse or neglect.

Thank you very much,

Andre Bisquera

SB-2477

Submitted on: 2/4/2018 2:35:49 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/5/2018 3:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Barbara Barry		Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I strongly support this Bill.

Please do the same,

Mahalo,

Ms. Barbara Barry

Haiku, HI