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Date: February 23, 2018

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

From: Justin Murakami, Policy Research Associate
The Sex Abuse Treatment Center
A Program of Kapi'olani Medical Center for Women & Children

RE: Testimony in Support of S.B. 2817
Relating to Crime Victim Compensation for Mental Health Services

Good morning Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

The Sex Abuse Treatment Center (SATC) supports S.B. 2817.

Violent crimes often cause deep and lasting harm to secondary victims in their wake. Secondary victims experience harm as a result of their relationship with the primary victim who was the direct focus of the violent crime, such as the child of a domestic violence victim who witnesses the crime, or the family of a murder victim.

The psychological impact experienced by children on witnessing domestic violence in their families, and the consequences of that trauma, are well established. Each year, an estimated 3 to 5 million American children witness domestic violence in their families. Such children can display similar effects as the primary victim of domestic violence, including anxiety, depression, psychosomatic complaints (e.g. headaches and stomachaches), manifesting violent behavior themselves, poor school performance, difficulty in relationships with others, and substance abuse disorders.

Similarly, the violent, unexpected death of a family member is, as noted by the federal Department of Justice's Office for Victims of Crime, one of the most traumatic experiences a person can face. Survivors of homicide victims are at risk for developing post-traumatic stress disorder, as well as extreme anxiety, fear, and sadness, with nightmares and intrusive thoughts remaining constant for weeks or months. Additional stressors can further contribute to psychological strain, including financial issues that result from the homicide, participation in the investigation and criminal justice process, and news media coverage of the homicide.

Mental and behavioral health interventions, such as supportive counseling and therapy, are helpful in managing the overwhelming emotions encountered by secondary victims of crime. Unfortunately, Hawaii's victim compensation statute does not currently authorize the use of Crime Victim Compensation Commission

(CVCC) program funds for mental health counseling services for survivors of homicide victims or children who witness domestic violence in their families. This fails to recognize these people, whose lives have been indelibly affected by violent crimes, as legitimate victims, despite the very real suffering they experience, and creates a barrier to accessing necessary mental health services.

S.B. 2817 corrects this issue by authorizing the use of CVCC program funds for the coverage of mental health services that these victims of violent crimes need and deserve.

SB-2817

Submitted on: 2/21/2018 9:35:47 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/23/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Melodie Aduja	Testifying for OCC Legislative Priorities Committee, Democratic Party of Hawai'i	Support	No

Comments:

OAHU COUNTY COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAII

THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

THE SENATE

TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

REGULAR SESSION OF 2018

Friday, February 23, 2018

10:00 AM

Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 211

RE: Testimony in Support of SB2817 RELATING TO CRIME VICTIM
COMPENSATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

To the Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair; the Honorable Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Committee on Ways and Means:

Good afternoon, my name is Melodie Aduja. I serve as Chair of the Oahu County Committee ("OCC") Legislative Priorities Committee of the Democratic Party of Hawaii. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on Senate Bill No. 2817, relating to Crime Victim Compensation for Mental Health Services.

The OCC Legislative Priorities Committee is in favor of Senate Bill No. 2817 and support its passage.

Senate Bill No.2817 is in alignment with the Platform of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i ("DPH"), 2016, as it authorizes crime victim compensation for mental health services for survivors in cases involving a death and for children who witness domestic violence.

The DPH Platform states that "[w]e support restorative justice that repairs the harm caused by criminal behaviors.. . ." (Platform of the DPH, P. 5, Line 273 (2016)).

Given that Senate Bill No. 2817 authorizes crime victim compensation for mental health services for survivors in cases involving a death and for children who witness domestic violence, it is the position of the OCC Legislative Priorities Committee to support this measure.

Thank you very much for your kind consideration.

Sincerely yours, /s/ Melodie Aduja

Melodie Aduja, Chair, OCC Legislative Priorities Committee

Email: legislativepriorities@gmail.com, Tel.: (808) 258-8889

SB-2817

Submitted on: 2/17/2018 12:53:25 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/23/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Benton Kealii Pang, Ph.D.	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

SB-2817

Submitted on: 2/20/2018 10:33:07 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/23/2018 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Carmen Golay	Individual	Support	No

Comments: