

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
P. O. Box 3378  
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378  
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

**Testimony COMMENTING on HB0330  
RELATING TO SUICIDE PREVENTION**

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN M. MIZUNO, CHAIR  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Hearing Date: 02/12/2019

Room Number: 329

1 **Fiscal Implications:** HB 330 requests funding for fiscal years 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 for  
2 youth suicide early intervention, prevention, and education programs in the County of Kauai and  
3 the County of Hawaii. The Department of Health defers to the priorities set forth in the  
4 Governor's Executive Biennium Budget request.

5 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health supports the intent of HB 330.

6 Between 2013 - 2017, there were 153 suicides among all residents aged 15 to 24 years, making  
7 suicide the leading cause of injury related deaths for this age group. For every child age 15 to 24  
8 who dies from suicide in Hawaii, there are an estimated 57 more youth per year who are  
9 hospitalized, and another 181 youth per year who are treated in emergency departments (ED) for  
10 nonfatal self- inflicted injury.

11 Youth suicide rates are significantly higher for all Neighbor Islands in comparison to the City  
12 and County of Honolulu. From 2012 to 2016, the overall age adjusted rate for youth suicide on  
13 Oahu was 66 suicides per 100,000. In Kauai County, the rate was 92 per 100,000, in Hawaii  
14 County 117 per 100,000, and in Maui County 86 per 100,000.

15 **Offered Amendments:** Given the higher rates of youth suicide in the Neighbor Island counties  
16 of Kauai, Hawaii and Maui, the DOH respectfully recommends consideration of need for youth  
17 suicide prevention and early intervention resources for all three counties. This would include  
18 continuation of FY 18 resources (\$25,000) for Maui County.

19 Thank you for the opportunity to testify



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
P.O. BOX 2360  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

**Date:** 02/12/2019  
**Time:** 09:00 AM  
**Location:** 329  
**Committee:** House Health

**Department:** Education

**Person Testifying:** Dr. Christina M. Kishimoto, Superintendent of Education

**Title of Bill:** HB 0330 RELATING TO SUICIDE PREVENTION.

**Purpose of Bill:** Appropriates moneys for youth suicide early intervention, prevention, and education initiatives in Kauai and Hawaii counties.

**Department's Position:**

The Department of Education (Department) supports HB 330.

The Department recognizes a need for increased interventions to address the higher rates of suicide among youth on the Neighbor Islands in comparison to Honolulu County. This bill would help to address and prevent youth suicide in Kauai and Hawaii Counties. In alignment with the Department of Health's requested amendment, the Department similarly requests that Maui County also be included in this bill to sustain and fully implement plans for youth suicide prevention projects in that county.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 330.

The Hawaii State Department of Education seeks to advance the goals of the Strategic Plan which is focused on student success, staff success, and successful systems of support. This is achieved through targeted work around three impact strategies: school design, student voice, and teacher collaboration. Detailed information is available at [www.hawaiipublicschools.org](http://www.hawaiipublicschools.org).



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
**OFFICE OF YOUTH SERVICES**  
1010 Richards Street, Suite 314  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

February 11, 2019

TO: The Honorable John Mizuno, Chair  
House Committee on Health

FROM: Merton Chinen, Executive Director

**SUBJECT: HB 330, RELATING TO SUICIDE PREVENTION**

Hearing: Tuesday, February 12, 2019, 9:00 a.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 329

**OFFICE'S POSITION:** OYS supports the measure but requests that any appropriation not affect the priorities in the Executive Biennium Budget. Suicide is a serious community and public health problem. Prevention of suicide requires ongoing awareness, education, and training to provide multiple-tools for Hawaii's people to prevent suicide. Youth at-risk are vulnerable to suicide and require a caring network of responsive adults and peers to act in a timely manner to connect appropriate services to assist and intervene.

As a member of the Prevent Suicide Hawai'i Taskforce, we were guided by four core values that guide our efforts related to suicide prevention—Aloha, Ola, Connectivity, and Culture. *Aloha*, is essential for all relationships and imperative to suicide prevention. *Ola* refers to life, health, hope, healing, contentment, and peace after a struggle, creating both a personal and spiritual sense of connectedness to others and place. Connectivity in times of need is frequently expressed by those who have attempted suicide, as well as by those dedicated to preventing suicide in our communities. Culture refers to the values, traditions, and practices, of any group and is an important consideration in suicide prevention, particularly with our diverse communities.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the measure is to appropriate moneys for youth suicide early intervention, prevention, and education initiatives in Kauai and Hawaii counties. Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.

County of Hawai'i  
Council District 4 -  
Lower Puna



Office: (808) 961-8265  
Fax: (808) 961-8912  
ashley.kierkiewicz@hawaiicounty.gov

## ASHLEY L. KIERKIEWICZ

HAWAII COUNTY COUNCIL – DISTRICT 4  
Chair: Committee on Planning, and Committee on Government Relations & Economic Development  
25 Aupuni Street • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

February 11, 2019

**LATE**

### House Committee on Health

Rep. John Mizuno, Chair

Rep. Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice-Chair

**RE: Support for HB330  
relating to Youth Suicide Early Intervention for Hawai'i and Kaua'i Counties**

Aloha, Representatives:

According to a 2017 report by the state Department of Health, Hawai'i has the highest attempted suicide rate in the country for youth ages 10 to 24. For every suicide death in the islands, there are 25 attempted suicide deaths. There's no question that suicides are on the rise, and we must address this serious and complex public health issue.

A 2018 report by the Prevent Suicide Hawai'i Taskforce to the State Legislature identified a suite of suicide prevention strategies and activities for our State. I support the intent of HB330, which would provide funds to Hawai'i and Kaua'i counties for youth suicide early intervention, prevention and education initiatives for persons between the ages of 10 and 24.

I encourage both counties to work in partnership with youth on messaging development and delivery to ensure the initiative resonates with youth today. Thank you for making this issue a priority. Please feel free to contact me should you have questions.

Mahalo nui loa,

Ashley Lehualani Kierkiewicz  
Hawai'i County Council, District 4



ONLINE SUBMITTAL  
Submitted: February 9, 2019

**HEARING:** February 12, 2019 9:00 a.m. in room 329

**TO:** House Committee on Health  
Rep. John Mizuno, Chair  
Rep. Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice-Chair

**FROM:** Eva Andrade, President

**RE:** **Strong Support for HB 330 to Suicide Prevention**

Hawaii Family Forum is a non-profit, pro-family education organization committed to preserving and strengthening life, family and religious freedom in Hawaii. We support this bill that provides necessary funding for youth suicide early prevention, intervention and education in Kauai and Hawaii counties.

We are committed to defending the sanctity of human life from conception until natural death, and everything that comes between. Many people in our community are concerned about suicide, because it affects the vulnerable people in our community, especially our youth and elderly. In fact, several of our pastors have dealt with this very issue just within the past few months.

In Hawaii, suicide was the most common cause of fatal injuries among Hawaii residents between 2010 and 2014, accounting for one-quarter of all fatal injuries and experts point out that one person dies by suicide in Hawaii every two days. This is heartbreaking and something we absolutely need to change!

Experts rightly point out that suicidal behaviors, for people of any age, are usually rooted in many different factors, with mental health issues playing an important role in the overall mix. It is a "perfect storm" of emotional issues and the only way to begin making a difference, is by identifying and treating each person. And the good news, is that it is fixable by awareness and treatment.

If this bill is passed with the appropriate funds necessary, Kauai and Hawaii County youth will have resources that may very well save their life. Protecting these precious lives are an outcome that is one upon which everyone in the community will agree. Funding for these types of services, we hope, will go a long way towards helping Hawaii's keiki thrive.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support.

## Helping Hawai'i Live Well

To: Representative John Mizuno, Chair, Representative Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair, Members, House Committee on Health

From: Trisha Kajimura, Executive Director

**Re: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 330 RELATING TO SUICIDE PREVENTION**

**Hearing: February 12, 2019, 9:00 am, CR 329**

Thank you for hearing **House Bill 330**, which appropriates funds for youth suicide early intervention, prevention, and education initiatives in Kauai and Hawai'i counties.

Mental Health America of Hawai'i (MHAH) is a 501(c)3 organization founded in Hawai'i 77 years ago, that serves the community by promoting mental health through advocacy, education and service. We support youth mental health in Hawaii through our Youth Suicide and Bullying Prevention Program and through our advocacy work. One of our signature services is a training for middle and high school age youth on Youth Suicide and Bullying Prevention that we developed here in Hawaii called "Ho'olohe Pono." This training has been evaluated to show that over 80% of participants increase their knowledge of bullying, suicide, helpful resources, and how they can assist someone in need.

In Hawai'i, we unfortunately have very high rates of suicide, suicide attempts, and suicidal ideation amongst various age groups. Shockingly, our state's most recent Youth Risk Behavioral Survey (part of a national survey) results show that 23.2% of middle age youth in Hawaii self-report suicidal ideation, 16.3% has made a suicide plan, and 12.4% have made a suicide attempt.<sup>1</sup> Suicide-related behavior has a serious and profound impact on communities that can be reduced with education, awareness, and appropriate mental health treatment services.

Thank you for considering my **testimony in support of HB 330**. Please contact me at [trisha.kajimura@mentalhealthhawaii.org](mailto:trisha.kajimura@mentalhealthhawaii.org) or (808)521-1846 if you have any questions.

---

<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Youth Risk Behavioral Surveillance System, Hawaii, 2017



Tuesday, February 12, 2019

House Bill 330  
Testifying in Support

Aloha Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Kobayashi, and members of the Committee on Health,

The Democratic Party of Hawaii (DPH) **supports HB330 Relating to Suicide Prevention**, which would appropriate funds to the Department of Health for youth suicide early intervention, prevention, and education initiatives in Kauai and Hawaii counties.

According to [hawaiihealthmatters.org](http://hawaiihealthmatters.org)<sup>1</sup>, in 2017 Kauai county had 3.4 percent and Hawaii county had 3.5 percent of its teens attempt suicide.

Relative to Oahu, Kauai and Hawaii Island have been afforded grossly inadequate resources to treat minors experiencing mental health issues, with no residential facilities available that accept MedQuest. This is especially troubling when we know the rate of suicide is much greater in these two counties. To the extent this disproportionate rate is due to an imbalance in funding, it is imperative for the Legislature to take immediate action. It is not only a matter of equity or fairness, it is a matter life and death.

On June 8, 2018, in a Hawaii News Now story<sup>2</sup>, Trisha Kajimura, Mental Health America of Hawai'i Executive Director, said this, about the suicide statistics in Hawaii.

"What's also known about neighbor islands is the difficulty in accessing mental health care, as well as other types of medical care. So, when you put those things together, it can be difficult to find help even when you want it."

For years, behavioral health concerns have been stigmatized, which forces these conversations into the shadows. The shadows are where hopelessness blooms and death results.

Creating access for behavioral health services to every person living in Hawaii is a top priority for the DPH.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable vote on this bill.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,



Josh Frost  
Co-Chair, Legislation Committee  
Democratic Party of Hawai'i



Zahava Zaidoff  
Co-Chair, Legislation Committee  
Democratic Party of Hawai'i

1. <http://www.hawaiihealthmatters.org/indicators/index/view?indicatorId=2500&localeId=601>
2. <http://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/story/38377686/cdc-suicide-rates-in-hawaii-on-the-rise/>





**TO: Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Kobayashi, and Members of the House Committee on Health**

**FROM:** Ryan Kusumoto, President & CEO of Parents And Children Together (PACT)

**DATE/LOCATION:** February 12, 2019; 9:00 a.m., Conference Room 329

**RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 330– RELATING TO SUICIDE PREVENTION**

**We ask you to support HB 330 which appropriates money for youth suicide early intervention, prevention, and education initiatives in Kauai and Hawaii counties.** We support this bill which will appropriate funding to the Department of Health to support our youth particularly on Kauai and Hawaii Island, which have been hardest hit by natural disasters during 2018. As a provider of services on both Kauai and Hawaii Island, we saw firsthand how lives were upended during the extreme flooding and lava disasters causing stress and trauma to many local residents.

There is a growing need to address our youth's social, emotional and mental health needs.

- Suicide awareness and prevention was a top priority voiced by Hawaii's youth at the Hawaii Children's and Youth Summit held at the Capitol last year.
- Suicide rates in Hawaii have increased nearly 20% since 1999 with an annual average of about 170 deaths.
- In Hawaii, suicide (as well as non-fatal injury) rates tend to be higher on neighbor islands where there is greater difficulty in accessing mental health or other medical care.
- Nationally, nearly 45,000 lives were lost to suicide in 2016 according to CDC.

It is imperative that we put in place preventative measures that connect youth with resources BEFORE it's too late. Suicide intervention, prevention and education initiatives for youth can be life saving. It also raises the awareness of caring for one's mental health and can help to reduce the negative stigma associated with mental health related issues. These initiatives can allow for open conversations about the importance of one's whole health, create safe opportunities for youth to reach out for help when they need and enable the community to be equipped with connecting our youth to appropriate supportive resources.

Founded in 1968, Parents And Children Together (PACT) is one of Hawaii's not-for-profit organizations providing a wide array of innovative and educational social services to families in need. Assisting more than 15,000 people across the state annually, PACT helps families identify, address and successfully resolve challenges through its 18 programs. Among its services are: early education programs, domestic violence prevention and intervention programs, child abuse prevention and intervention programs, childhood sexual abuse supportive group services, child and adolescent behavioral health programs, sex trafficking intervention, poverty prevention and community building programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Please contact me at (808) 847-3285 or [rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org](mailto:rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org) if you have any questions.

# HAWAII YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

677 Ala Moana Boulevard, Suite 904 Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Phone: (808) 489-9549

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

Rick Collins, President

Judith F. Clark, Executive Director

Bay Clinic

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Hawaii

Bobby Benson Center

Child and Family Service

Coalition for a Drug Free Hawaii

Collins Consulting, LLC

Domestic Violence Action Center EPIC, Inc.

Family Programs Hawaii

Family Support Hawaii

Friends of the Children of West Hawaii

Hale Kipa, Inc.

Hale 'Opio Kauai, Inc.

Hawaii Children's Action Network

Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center

Hawaii Student Television

Ho'ola Na Pua

Kahi Mohala

Kokua Kalihi Valley

Maui Youth and Family Services

Na Pu'uwai Molokai Native Hawaiian Health Care Systems

P.A.R.E.N.T.S., Inc.

Parents and Children Together (PACT)

PHOCUSED

PFLAG – Kona Big Island

Planned Parenthood of the Great Northwest and Hawaiian Islands

Residential Youth Services & Empowerment (RYSE)

Salvation Army Family Intervention Services

Sex Abuse Treatment Center

Susannah Wesley Community Center

The Catalyst Group

February 8, 2019

Representative John Mizuno, Chair  
And members of the Committee on Health

## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 330 RELATING TO SUICIDE PREVENTION

Hawaii Youth Services Network (HYSN), a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, supports HB330 Relating to Suicide Prevention.

Suicide prevention was one of the top priorities that youth who attended the Children and Youth Summit last October felt the Hawaii Legislature needs to address.

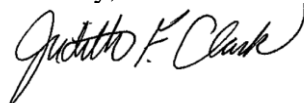
Nearly a quarter of Hawaii's middle school students and sixteen percent (16%) of Hawaii high school students seriously considered suicide in the last 12 months. Twelve percent (12%) of middle school students and ten percent (10%) of high school students have made a suicide attempt according to the 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey.

Kauai and Hawaii island residents have survived serious natural disasters in the past year, including flooding, hurricanes, and a volcanic eruption. Many are experiencing post-traumatic stress that can lead to suicidal thoughts and actions, making those areas a priority for mental health and suicide prevention services.

Early intervention, education, and prevention efforts can save lives.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Judith F. Clark, MPH  
Executive Director

**HB-330**

Submitted on: 2/11/2019 8:57:57 AM

Testimony for HLT on 2/12/2019 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Melodie Aduja	O`ahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities of the Democratic Party of Hawai`i	Support	No

Comments:

Tuesday, February 12, 2019 at 9:00 AM  
Conference Room 329

**House Committee on Health**

To: Representative John Mizuno, Chair  
Representative Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair

From: Michael Robinson  
Vice President, Government Relations & Community Affairs

**Re: Testimony in Support of HB 330  
Relating to Suicide Prevention**

---

My name is Michael Robinson, Vice President, Government Relations & Community Affairs at Hawai'i Pacific Health. Hawai'i Pacific Health is a not-for-profit health care system comprised of its four medical centers – Kapi'olani, Pali Momi, Straub and Wilcox and over 70 locations statewide with a mission of creating a healthier Hawai'i.

**I write in support of HB 330** which appropriates funds for youth suicide early intervention, prevention and education initiatives in Kauai and Hawaii counties.

A teen in Hawai'i is nearly twice as likely to attempt suicide as a teen elsewhere in the United States, with 2,280 reporting having attempted suicide here in 2007, according to a Centers for Disease Control survey in Hawaii's schools. This data has been confirmed by the Department of Health which found that Hawai'i has the highest attempted suicide rate in the country for youth ages 10 to 24. For every suicide death in the islands, there are 25 attempted suicides. The neighbor islands have a higher suicide attempt rate among the youth than Oahu. While suicide or suicide attempt is troubling at any age, youth suicide has unique challenges.

Funding for youth-focused outreach programs through early intervention, prevention, and education would bring community awareness to the problem of youth suicide. This effort would stem the tide of the alarming frequency of youth suicide attempts and help our youths in leading less troubled lives.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

# HAWAII YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

677 Ala Moana Boulevard, Suite 904 Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Phone: (808) 489-9549

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

Rick Collins, President

Judith F. Clark, Executive Director

Bay Clinic

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Hawaii

Bobby Benson Center

Child and Family Service

Coalition for a Drug Free Hawaii

Collins Consulting, LLC

Domestic Violence Action Center EPIC, Inc.

Family Programs Hawaii

Family Support Hawaii

Friends of the Children of West Hawaii

Hale Kipa, Inc.

Hale 'Opio Kauai, Inc.

Hawaii Children's Action Network

Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center

Hawaii Student Television

Ho'ola Na Pua

Kahi Mohala

Kokua Kalihi Valley

Maui Youth and Family Services

Na Pu'uwai Molokai Native Hawaiian Health Care Systems

P.A.R.E.N.T.S., Inc.

Parents and Children Together (PACT)

PHOCUSED

PFLAG – Kona Big Island

Planned Parenthood of the Great Northwest and Hawaiian Islands

Residential Youth Services & Empowerment (RYSE)

Salvation Army Family Intervention Services

Sex Abuse Treatment Center

Susannah Wesley Community Center

The Catalyst Group

February 8, 2019

Representative John Mizuno, Chair  
And members of the Committee on Health

## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 330 RELATING TO SUICIDE PREVENTION

Hawaii Youth Services Network (HYSN), a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, supports HB330 Relating to Suicide Prevention.

Suicide prevention was one of the top priorities that youth who attended the Children and Youth Summit last October felt the Hawaii Legislature needs to address.

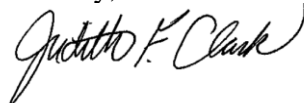
Nearly a quarter of Hawaii's middle school students and sixteen percent (16%) of Hawaii high school students seriously considered suicide in the last 12 months. Twelve percent (12%) of middle school students and ten percent (10%) of high school students have made a suicide attempt according to the 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey.

Kauai and Hawaii island residents have survived serious natural disasters in the past year, including flooding, hurricanes, and a volcanic eruption. Many are experiencing post-traumatic stress that can lead to suicidal thoughts and actions, making those areas a priority for mental health and suicide prevention services.

Early intervention, education, and prevention efforts can save lives.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Judith F. Clark, MPH  
Executive Director

Tuesday, February 12, 2019 at 9:00 AM  
Conference Room 329

**House Committee on Health**

To: Representative John Mizuno, Chair  
Representative Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair

From: Michael Robinson  
Vice President, Government Relations & Community Affairs

**Re: Testimony in Support of HB 330  
Relating to Suicide Prevention**

---

My name is Michael Robinson, Vice President, Government Relations & Community Affairs at Hawai'i Pacific Health. Hawai'i Pacific Health is a not-for-profit health care system comprised of its four medical centers – Kapi'olani, Pali Momi, Straub and Wilcox and over 70 locations statewide with a mission of creating a healthier Hawai'i.

**I write in support of HB 330** which appropriates funds for youth suicide early intervention, prevention and education initiatives in Kauai and Hawaii counties.

A teen in Hawai'i is nearly twice as likely to attempt suicide as a teen elsewhere in the United States, with 2,280 reporting having attempted suicide here in 2007, according to a Centers for Disease Control survey in Hawaii's schools. This data has been confirmed by the Department of Health which found that Hawai'i has the highest attempted suicide rate in the country for youth ages 10 to 24. For every suicide death in the islands, there are 25 attempted suicides. The neighbor islands have a higher suicide attempt rate among the youth than Oahu. While suicide or suicide attempt is troubling at any age, youth suicide has unique challenges.

Funding for youth-focused outreach programs through early intervention, prevention, and education would bring community awareness to the problem of youth suicide. This effort would stem the tide of the alarming frequency of youth suicide attempts and help our youths in leading less troubled lives.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



1200 Ala Kapuna Street ♦ Honolulu, Hawaii 96819  
Tel: (808) 833-2711 ♦ Fax: (808) 839-7106 ♦ Web: www.hsta.org

Corey Rosenlee  
President

Osa Tui Jr.  
Vice President

Logan Okita  
Secretary-Treasurer

Wilbert Holck  
Executive Director

## TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

RE: HB 330 - RELATING TO SUICIDE PREVENTION

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2019

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT  
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION  
Chair Mizuno and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association **strongly supports HB 330**, relating to suicide prevention. This measure would appropriate funds to support youth suicide early intervention, prevention, and education initiatives in Kauai and Hawaii counties.

Suicide is the second leading cause of death nationwide for youth age 15-24; in Hawaii, the data on youth suicide attempts is especially concerning. According to the 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), 10% of high school students in Hawaii reported attempting suicide in the previous year compared to 7% nationwide. To make matters worse, our neighbor island youth are especially at risk of attempting suicide; the 2017 YRBS found that 12% of youth in Hawaii County and 11% of youth in Maui County have attempted suicide.

Suicide rates vary by area, with neighbor island and rural communities seeing higher rates than urban areas. For the period from 2013 to 2015, the statewide suicide rate was 12.9 deaths for every one hundred thousand individuals (not only youth). For the same time period, for every one hundred thousand people, the counties of Hawai'i, Maui, and Kaua'i had 20.4, 15.9, and 14.6 deaths, respectively. The city and county of Honolulu's suicide rate, at 10.3 deaths for every one hundred thousand people, was slightly lower than the state average.

To address the mental health crisis, especially among our youth, we must act now to implement best-practice suicide prevention programs in our schools; these programs should be rolled out in our neighbor island schools first considering the high rate of suicide attempts among youth in these communities.

To reduce the risk of suicide among Hawaii's youth, the Hawaii State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** HB 330.





1200 Ala Kapuna Street ♦ Honolulu, Hawaii 96819  
Tel: (808) 833-2711 ♦ Fax: (808) 839-7106 ♦ Web: www.hsta.org

Corey Rosenlee  
President

Osa Tui Jr.  
Vice President

Logan Okita  
Secretary-Treasurer

Wilbert Holck  
Executive Director

## TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

RE: HB 330 - RELATING TO SUICIDE PREVENTION

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2019

COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT  
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION  
Chair Mizuno and Members of the Committee:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association **strongly supports HB 330**, relating to suicide prevention. This measure would appropriate funds to support youth suicide early intervention, prevention, and education initiatives in Kauai and Hawaii counties.

Suicide is the second leading cause of death nationwide for youth age 15-24; in Hawaii, the data on youth suicide attempts is especially concerning. According to the 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), 10% of high school students in Hawaii reported attempting suicide in the previous year compared to 7% nationwide. To make matters worse, our neighbor island youth are especially at risk of attempting suicide; the 2017 YRBS found that 12% of youth in Hawaii County and 11% of youth in Maui County have attempted suicide.

Suicide rates vary by area, with neighbor island and rural communities seeing higher rates than urban areas. For the period from 2013 to 2015, the statewide suicide rate was 12.9 deaths for every one hundred thousand individuals (not only youth). For the same time period, for every one hundred thousand people, the counties of Hawai'i, Maui, and Kaua'i had 20.4, 15.9, and 14.6 deaths, respectively. The city and county of Honolulu's suicide rate, at 10.3 deaths for every one hundred thousand people, was slightly lower than the state average.

To address the mental health crisis, especially among our youth, we must act now to implement best-practice suicide prevention programs in our schools; these programs should be rolled out in our neighbor island schools first considering the high rate of suicide attempts among youth in these communities.

To reduce the risk of suicide among Hawaii's youth, the Hawaii State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** HB 330.

**HB-330**

Submitted on: 2/11/2019 9:30:08 PM  
Testimony for HLT on 2/12/2019 9:00:00 AM

**LATE**

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Pua Kaninau Santos	Oahu Prevent Suicide Hawaii Taskforce	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

As the chair for the O`ahu Prevent Suicide Hawai`i Task Force, I urge you to pass this bill. As the mother of a teen son, Kaniela Kaninau, who died by suicide, 2 months before his graduation from high school, I know the importance of providing suicide prevention basic training to our youth, their parents or caregiver, and to the adults who support them.

Suicide is Preventable! We have a statewide strategic plan with action items in place to utilized the funds. We are a core group of people who love our community, and our hope is to Reduce the incidents of suicide 25% X 2025. We have the plan to acheive this goal. Please support this bill, by voting to pass it.

Thank You,

Pua Kaninau-Santos

Representative Mizuno, Chair  
Representative Kobayashi, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Health

Jenaiah Banasihan  
990 Ala Nanala St. #26b,  
Honolulu, HI 96818  
808-652-7926

Tuesday, February 12, 2019 at 9am  
Conference Room 329

Support for HB 330 Relating to Suicide Prevention

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and distinguished committee members. My name is Jenaiah Banasihan. I am currently a student at the Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work, specializing in Behavioral Mental Health. I am testifying in strong support of HB 330 which appropriates funds to support youth suicide early intervention, prevention, and education initiatives in Kaua'i and Hawai'i counties.

I was born and raised from the Westside of Kaua'i. I have a 12-year-old niece that attends Waimea Middle School, and she is a victim of bullying. She has experienced outcasting, name-calling, threats as well as being attacked through cyberbullying. According to Hawai'i Health Matters, children who are bullied are more likely to experience depression, anxiety, substance use, and other health complaints. Some of these effects can persist into adulthood. Additionally, children who are bullied often experience decreased academic achievement and are more likely to skip or drop out of school. These vulnerable children are also at a higher risk for suicidal thoughts and ideations. Although my niece has not experienced suicidal thoughts, she has expressed feelings of sadness and have wanted to change schools. She has a difficult time staying focused in school and as a result, has received 2 D's. As we all know, bullying is a risk factor for suicide.

I recommend that the initiatives outlined in HB 330 include bullying prevention and intervention curriculum within the educational initiatives, in order to combat the high risk between bullying and suicide. I believe educating youth and the Kaua'i and Hawai'i counties on the impact of bullying and the risk factors of suicide, they will gain an awareness and schools will be able to provide more support to the students that experience these problems. In doing this, students, like my niece, will feel safe in their school environment and will be able to gain the appropriate coping skills so that they can build resiliency. Coming from the Westside of Kaua'i, I have seen and became aware of the lack of resources there, so I know that HB 330 will be vital to our Kaua'i and Hawai'i counties.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.

**LATE**

**HB-330**

Submitted on: 2/12/2019 7:10:53 AM  
Testimony for HLT on 2/12/2019 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
William N. Arakaki	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

**HB-330**

Submitted on: 2/11/2019 12:11:11 PM

Testimony for HLT on 2/12/2019 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Helen Duley	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Suicide is a devastating issue that affects our islands and especially our youth.

On average 2 people die from suicide in Hawaii every day (AFSP), and is the leading cause of death for 15-44 years old (CDC 2016). Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islander youth are at higher risk for suicide compared with other ethnic groups (Wong et. Al 2012). Hawaii Island and Kauai have the highest rates of suicide in the state, which is due to multiple factors including being predominantly rural communities with limited infra structure and limited resources. Suicide can be preventable when people in the community have the knowledge and skills to help prevent it. The more knowledge and skills, the more lives can be saved.

I have been involved with the Hawaii Island Prevent Suicide Task Force for the past 6 years, with my primary goal being to increase awareness about suicide, reduce stigma about mental health and train people to recognize the warning signs of suicide and how to refer people with suicidal thoughts to the appropriate resources. As an educator in the community, I provide suicide prevention training to my students and to the general public. Having the skills and knowledge about suicide saves lives.

I humbly ask that you vote "Yes" to HB 330 to appropriate funding for youth suicide prevention for both Hawaii Island and Kauai. Supporting suicide prevention for youth will help raise awareness among youth, provide education to develop skill building and strategies for coping with challenging circumstances, and increase the much needed support and resources that are seemingly inaccessible to youth and are limited on our islands. Your decision to vote "Yes" to SB 330 will help save the lives of youth in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Yolisa Duley

Chair, Hawaii Island Prevent Suicide Task Force