

This Resolution is redundant. National Child Abuse Prevention Month in April was established in 1983. In two weeks, DHS in all states will be submitting a news release that foster care is prevention of child abuse and neglect and will refer to the Blue Ribbon Project as an indicator of child welfare department's active intervention.

As a family advocate who has heard hundreds of stories from traumatized parents, my perspective is that child welfare removes far too many children from their families needlessly and due to lack of transparency and accountability to its own laws and policies.

Last month the National Governor's association met in D.C. for the annual winter conference. Governors from Kentucky and Massachusetts spoke out adamantly that the child welfare system needs serious reform. The Governor from New Hampshire stated that the government is inherently reactive, not proactive. Foster care is not prevention but reactive intervention when abuse has allegedly already occurred.

This is my contribution to the discussion asked for in this resolution. The state cannot save every child referred to by the 1700 statistic. While tragic, the 20,000 yearly child deaths by accident and health issues is far more common than abuse or neglect. I assert that the 600,000 in state care is a number considerably higher than those who met the standards for removal. The solution to PREVENT abuse and neglect is to educate parents of newborns. Hawaii needs to restore full funding of the Department of Health home visiting and the Hawaii YWCA Healthy Families programs. I have first hand observation of these free and voluntary services and highly recommend.