

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

2534

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 12 2020

RE: S.B. No. 2435
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirtieth State Legislature
Regular Session of 2020
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Human Services, to which was referred S.B. No. 2435 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to require the Department of Human Services, when conducting an investigation regarding a child who is or may be subject to imminent harm, to provide the parent with a document listing the parent's rights as listed in the law, and the consequences of failing to cooperate at the time of the first face-to-face contact with the parent.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Hawaii Family Advocacy Team and Pacific Alliance to Stop Slavery. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of Human Services and Attorney General.

Your Committee finds that the Department of Human Services is required to assess the safety of children in all reports of abuse and neglect. Communication and partnership with the child's parent or guardian is critical in the assessing the child's safety, and determining if the child can safely remain in the family home. A child may face continued harm without the support and services the Department could provide to families to make the family home safe. Additionally, your Committee finds a parent's



or guardian's refusal to communicate and work with Child Welfare Services may result in the removal of the child and increase the number of children placed in foster care.

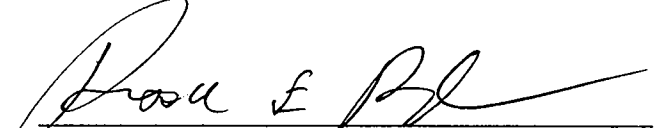
Your Committee notes, in partnership with families and based on the assessment, the Department may ask the parent to jointly develop and sign an in-home safety plan to manage any safety concerns and maintain the child safely in the home. This practice is designed to understand the family's strengths and challenges and address issues in partnership with parents. In addition, your Committee further notes that the Department does not generally record interviews with children. Depending on the type and or severity of the allegations, some children may be interviewed at the Children's Justice Center where the interview may be recorded.

Your Committee has amended this measure, as suggested by the Attorney General, to correct the reference contained in the current law to conform to the amendments made in this measure and to preserve the confidentiality protections provided by law.

Your Committee also made technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Human Services that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 2435, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 2435, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Judiciary.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Human Services,



RUSSELL E. RUDERMAN, Chair



