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February 11, 2019

TO: The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Pankaj Bhanot, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 231 - RELATING TO THE YOUTH COMMISSION**

Hearing: February 13, 2019, 10:00 a.m.
Conference Room 211, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the SB 231 that establishes and funds the youth commission administrator in the Office of Youth Services and provides comments.

The Office of Youth Services is administratively attached to DHS. DHS prefers that its base budget and requested biennium budget increases be contained in one budget measure that will be known as the General Appropriations Act of 2019. This year the Governor's executive budget proposal is SB 126 or HB 964. We are concerned that splitting the base budget from the biennium budget requests into multiple vehicles increases the risk of funding errors or shortfalls, and will negatively impact long term planning and program improvement. Especially in human services that impact individuals and families, non-recurring appropriations tend to lead to cautious implementation. Creating operational systems, rules and processes, and implementing benefits or services for recipients takes time as well as time to evaluate effectiveness. Short term funding cycles impacts program development as well as program's ability to fill vacancies that are based upon temporary programs and budgets.

PURPOSE: The purpose of **SB 231** is to establish the youth commission administrator that shall administer the youth commission. Makes an appropriation to fund one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) permanent youth commission administrator position.

DHS supports this proposal. Act 106, Session Laws of Hawaii (SLH) 2018, established a youth commission to advise the governor and legislature on the effects of legislative policies, needs, assessments, priorities programs, and budgets concerning the youth of the state. Act 106, SLH 2018, appropriated funds to hire one staff position to administer the youth commission and other administrative costs; however, funds were only authorized for one state fiscal year and funding for the position will end on June 30, 2019.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

Chair Dela Cruz
Vice Chair Keith-Agaran
Senate Committee on Ways & Means

Wednesday, February 13, 2019
10:00 AM

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB231 RELATING TO THE YOUTH COMMISSION

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, Members of the Senate Committee on Ways & Means,

My name is Jun Shin. I am a freshman at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, currently serving as the Environmental Justice Action Committee Chair for the Young Progressives Demanding Action (YPDA). I am **testifying in support of SB231 relating to the youth commission.**

The Youth Commission bill was the very first bill I ever testified on when I first got involved in the legislative process as a high schooler. I also had the opportunity as a member of the YPDA Social Justice Action Committee to testify both in writing and orally last session when the youth commission bill, HB1716 passed and became Act 106. One of my passions is trying to help get more people, especially young people involved and active in civic life as it strengthens democracy while empowering individuals, and I continue to believe that this commission will serve as a great venue for this to happen.

I appreciate that steps are continuing to be taken in establishing the youth commission and that this bill is working on a important part of the process by setting up a youth administrator to administer the youth commission. That being said, I am also very passionate about economic justice, and am helping to work on pushing for raising the minimum wage to a livable wage for working families in 2019. In the state with a very high cost of living, I hope in your deliberations on this legislation that you will be able to insure that the full time and permanent youth commission administrator has economic security, as all full time workers should be able to afford their basic needs, while assisting in the active engagement of our future leaders. **I support SB231 and request for it to be passed through your committee.**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify,

Jun Shin
Environmental Justice Action Committee Chair
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COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Sen. Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair

Sen. Gilbert Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 13, 2019

10 am

Room 211

STRONG SUPPORT - SB 231 - ADMINISTRATOR FOR YOUTH COMMISSION

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and Members of the Committee!

My name is Kat Brady and I am the Coordinator of Community Alliance on Prisons, a community initiative promoting smart justice policies in Hawai'i for more than two decades. This testimony is respectfully offered on behalf of the families of **ASHLEY GREY, DAISY KASITATI, JOEY O'MALLEY, JESSICA FORTSON AND ALL THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE DIED UNDER THE "CARE AND CUSTODY" OF THE STATE** as well as the approximately 5,500 Hawai'i individuals living behind bars or under the "care and custody" of the Department of Public Safety on any given day. We are always mindful that more than 1,600 of Hawai'i's imprisoned people are serving their sentences abroad thousands of miles away from their loved ones, their homes and, for the disproportionate number of incarcerated Kanaka Maoli, far, far from their ancestral lands.

SB 231 establishes that the youth commission administrator and makes an appropriation to fund one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) permanent youth commission administrator position.

Community Alliance on Prisons is happy that this is the first bill on which we testify and it is in strong support.

This Commission is a great way to engage our children and youth in civic issues and to help them understand the broader reach of policymaking. We earnestly hope that the administrator will be a person who listens more than talks, guides more than directs, and loves our youth unconditionally!

We urge the committee to support SB 231. Mahalo for this opportunity to testify!