

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

Rick Collins, President

Judith F. Clark, Executive Director

Bay Clinic

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Hawaii

Big Island Substance Abuse Council

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

Kokua Ohana Aloha (KOA)

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

March 9, 2020

To: Representative Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
And members of the Committee on Human Services

Testimony in Support of SB 2344 SD 1 Relating to Minors

Hawaii Youth Services Network, a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, supports HB 2344 SD 1 Relating to Minors

Enabling minors to consent for admission to an emergency youth shelter ensures that they are able to escape the dangers of living on the streets in those rare circumstances in which consent from a parent or guardian cannot be obtained.

The intent of this bill is to allow an unaccompanied minor to be admitted to a shelter that houses adults when no beds are available in youth shelters.

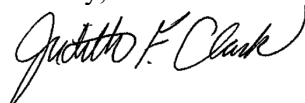
There is no doubt that more youth shelter beds are needed. Youth homelessness providers encounter more than 400 youth on the streets annually.

Housing a minor in a shelter designed to serve young adults up to age 24 who have similar developmental, educational, and workforce preparation needs is reasonable. Residential Youth Services and Empowerment (RYSE) is an example of a shelter program that could be suitable for some minors.

Hawaii Youth Services Network has concerns, however, about placing a minor in a facility that are geared to serve chronically homeless adults, especially those with large numbers of residents with mental health and substance abuse concerns. Services and staffing in such facilities are not designed for unaccompanied minors and cannot meet their unique needs. We feel that there is risk of abuse and exploitation in such facilities.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Judith F. Clark, MPH
Executive Director



Residential Youth Services & Empowerment

March 9, 2020

TO: The Honorable Rep. Joy A San Buenaventura, Chair
Committee on Human Services & Homelessness

The Honorable Rep. Nadine K. Nakamura, Vice Chair
Committee on Human Services & Homelessness

FROM: Carla Houser, Executive Director
Residential Youth Services & Empowerment (RYSE)

SUBJECT: SB2344 Relating to Minor Consent to No Cost Emergency Shelter

Hearing: Wednesday, March 11, 2020
State Capitol, Conference Room 329

POSITION: RYSE strongly supports this measure.

As a homeless youth service provider, I have watched a growing number of unaccompanied youth take care of themselves on the street at a very young age for far too long. The 2018 UH Center on Family *Street Youth Survey* found the average age a young person first experiences homelessness on Oahu is 14 years old and over 77% of these youth had experience physical, mental and sexual abuse. It is time we step up our efforts to deal with this issue and capitalize on the strengths and resilience of our young people.

We continue to criminalize minors who run away from abusive homes as status offenders and their only path to shelter currently is to reunite with family or to enter the foster care system. Hawaii also has no emancipation path for unaccompanied youth. Many unaccompanied homeless youth have developed a mistrust of services following negative experiences with adults and/or fear social service agency notification or legal intervention. So, they stay hidden in plain sight, utilizing trusted, low barrier drop in centers and street outreach workers to meet their basic needs of food and clothing. At night, they often partner up with older adults and often find themselves forced to engage in unlawful, exploitative activities just to sleep safely.

Our current model of allowing these unaccompanied minors to linger on the streets

and not providing the necessary resources to address the trauma they've faced is not working. The recently released Child & Family Service report *Sex Trafficking Experiences Across Hawaii* shows that 23% of the sex trafficking victims were first sex trafficked before they turned 18 years old. Of the participants that were first sex trafficked as children: 39% had experienced homelessness, 44% reported addiction to drugs and 70% reported having a mental health diagnosis. 24.7% of the victims said they were forced to exchange sex for a place to stay.

By the time these youth turn 18 and can enter a shelter catering to adolescent specific needs, it's often too late. The trauma of living on the streets has compounded. Their substance use, mental health and sexual exploitation has been exacerbated because of a need to survive.

This bill is the first step in creating a mechanism to shelter these unaccompanied minors, giving them respite from the streets and time to make choices that improve their current situation with the appropriate safeguards and staffing in place.

In 2019, our outreach team had multiple encounters with 21 unaccompanied minors living on our streets of Oahu. None of those youth were identified on the Department of Human Services Missing Children's website and they often live in or around homeless encampments with older chronically homeless individuals. These unaccompanied minors want to go back to school, they want help with their substance use, and they want mental health services. They may not trust the child welfare system to resolve their situation and they need a different approach.

I find it alarming that any state agency would not want assistance from homeless youth providers to identify these unaccompanied youth and assist with providing the appropriate wrap around services to address the trauma before and during street life. The intent for homeless youth providers to coordinate with child welfare services to ensure these youth have a fighting chance. We want the ability to notify CWS without, necessarily, a removal response. We want to better partner with intake at CWS so that we have open communication and eyes on these kids as they navigate their way out of homelessness. The idea should be to intervene early, with services targeted toward the particular needs of young people — before homelessness becomes chronic, and it's much harder to move them off the street.

Through a collaboration of both state agencies and private organizations and a coordinated system of care, this measure will provide temporary stable housing as well as supportive connections to caring adults and services that can guide at risk youth from the streets towards a productive life and brighter future.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Sincerely,
Carla J. Houser!
Carla Houser
Executive Director, RYSE



SB 2344, SD1, RELATING TO MINORS

MARCH 11, 2020 · HOUSE HUMAN SERVICES AND
HOMELESSNESS COMMITTEE · CHAIR JOY A. SAN
BUENAVENTURA

POSITION: Support.

RATIONALE: IMUAlliance supports SB 2344, SD1, relating to sex trafficking, which expands conditions for a minor to consent to no-cost emergency shelter and related services, establish certain requirements by a shelter, and requires effort to leave a shelter for minors on each island.

IMUAlliance is one of the state's largest victim service providers for survivors of sex trafficking. Over the past 10 years, we have provided comprehensive direct intervention (victim rescue) services to 150 victims, successfully emancipating them from slavery and assisting in their restoration, while providing a range of targeted services to over 1,000 victims and individuals at risk of sexual exploitation. Each of the victims we have assisted has suffered from complex and overlapping trauma, including post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and anxiety, dissociation, parasuicidal behavior, and substance abuse. Trafficking-related trauma can lead to a complete loss of identity. A victim we cared for in 2016, for example, had become so heavily trauma bonded to her pimp that while under his grasp, she couldn't remember her own name. Yet, sadly, many of the victims with whom we work are misidentified as so-called "voluntary prostitutes" and are subsequently arrested and incarcerated, with no financial resources from which to pay for their release.

Sex trafficking is a profoundly violent crime. At least 23 percent of trafficking victims in Hawai'i report being first exploited before turning 18, according to a recent report, with the average age of trafficked keiki's initial exposure to exploitation being 11. Based on regular outreach and monitoring, we estimate that approximately 150 high-risk sex trafficking establishments operate in Hawai'i. In a recent report conducted by the State Commission on the Status of Women, researchers from Arizona State University found that 1 in every 11 adult males living in our state buys sex online. When visitors are also counted, that number worsens to 1 in every 7 men walking the streets of our island home and a daily online sex buyer market of 18,614 for O'ahu and a total sex buyer population for the island of 74,362, including both tourists and residents.

ASU's findings are grim, but not surprising to local organizations that provide services to survivors of sex trafficking. IMUAlliance, for example, has trained volunteers to perform outreach to victims in high-risk locations, like strip clubs, massage parlors, and hostess bars. More than 80 percent of runaway youth report being approached for sexual exploitation while on the run, over 30 percent of whom are targeted within the first 48 hours of leaving home. With regard to mental health, sex trafficking victims are twice as likely to suffer from PTSD as a soldier in a war zone. Greater than 80 percent of victims report being repeatedly raped and 95 percent report being physically assaulted, numbers that are underreported, according to the United States Department of State and numerous trauma specialists, because of the inability of many victims to recognize sexual violence. As one underage survivor told IMUAlliance prior to being rescued, "I can't be raped. Only good girls can be raped. I'm a bad girl. If I *want* to be raped, I have to *earn* it."

Accordingly, we support measures to advance our state's ability to crack down on sexual slavery, including this measure's expansion of access to emergency shelters for minors. **Hawai'i currently lacks a dedicated emergency shelter for sex trafficking victims, leaving a glaring gap in our state's continuum of care for survivors.** Currently, if IMUAlliance and our strategic partners rescue a victim from slavery, we are forced to rely on a patchwork system of services. While our partners—including the federal Department of Homeland Security, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Hawai'i Departments of Health, Education, and and Human Services, county police departments, and nongovernmental organizations like Ho'ola Na Pua—do an excellent job of caring for victims, the lack of a shelter space inhibits agency coordination, impedes the provision of immediate safety, and, in some cases, prevents victims from being properly identified because less trauma-

informed alternatives—sometimes including juvenile detention centers—are viewed as the only available spaces in which to house them in a crisis.

Victims frequently require a “cool down” period once out of bondage, during which they may require emergency medical attention, psychological care, trauma counseling, and addiction services (for the many victims whose pimps use illegal drugs as a way of coercing them into sexual exploitation), all of which are best facilitated from the centralized location. If our state’s goal is to fully treat victims as victims, rather than as criminals, we must begin working to establish a place for their healing to begin immediately upon being delivered from captivity.

SB-2344-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2020 2:33:10 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/11/2020 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Younghi Overly	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

SB-2344-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2020 2:43:46 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/11/2020 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jane Anderson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support passage of SB2344 relating to minors. We need to provide no cost emergency shelter to young people under the age of 18. They are at great risk of experiencing trauma while living on the streets as minors. Many do not have a safe home to return to. If we do not rescue these young people, we further risk having them establish themselves as part of the perpetual homeless population we see so often in our community today. We must address this problem now!!

Thank you,

Jane Anderson

SB-2344-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2020 3:52:30 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/11/2020 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jared Watumull	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am writing in support of this Bill. Homelessness is something that affects people of all ages and to keep our youngest and most vulnerable from being able to seek help just due to their age is not right. There are organizations that are out there that are willing and able to provide support they just need the laws to support them. I urge you to pass this measure to help the people of Hawaii.

SB-2344-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2020 4:30:46 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/11/2020 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Vickie Parker Kam	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members and thank you for listening to testimony today.

I am writing in very strong support for SB2344 SD1 Relating to Minors. As a former "throw away" child in another state, I can testify from the heart that when we, as children, are faced with no support from our birth families we have to hope for the kindness of strangers. Many times I was faced with dealing with adults and bureaucracy that I was ill equipped to understand or trust. This bill will give the minor in these types situations a moment of grace. A moment of safety. Please, know that sometimes the adults that are supposed to love and protect minors either can't or won't. These children should not be placed in a situation to be returned to these adults. Let them have emergency shelter and services until their safety and stability are ensured.

I honestly appreciate your consideration of this bill. Through my life experiences, I decided to become an educator to help children look to their future, to know that there is a light at the end of the tunnel. If this bill passes, it would support one of our most vulnerable populations and future contributing members of society. Please give them a chance to breath safely for a moment while they and the adults look at next steps.

Much much mahalo to you all for considering supporting SB2344 SD1.

Sincerely, Vickie Kam

SB-2344-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2020 6:56:36 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/11/2020 10:00:00 AM

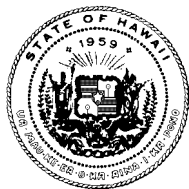
Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
skip Adams	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

The current system in the state of Hawaii allows unaccompanied minors to linger on the streets and does not provide appropriate resources and safeguards for this disenfranchised portion of the population. We need to take action earlier to help break the chronic cycle of homelessness and provide the necessary support these unaccompanied minors require. It is triage for our this critical portion of the homeless population.

This bill is the first critical step in providing the most important resource - shelter for these unaccompanied minors. Providing a safe place from the streets allows them to improve their current situation .

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



PANKAJ BHANOT
DIRECTOR

CATHY BETTS
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

LATE

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96808

March 10, 2020

TO: The Honorable Representative Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness

FROM: Pankaj Bhanot, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 2334 SD1 - Relating to Minors**

Hearing: March 11, 2020, 10:00 a.m.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of this bill and provides comments. As this and other measures move through the committees, DHS is open to discussing possible immediate and longer-term options with legislators, stakeholders, providers, and youth. In the short term, DHS will look at possible options through amending administrative rules.

DHS appreciates the intent of the amendments of the Committee on Human Services, however, providing appropriate "no cost" emergency shelter and related services on every island does not necessarily require statutory amendment to subsection 346-17.6(b), Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS); however, such a mandate will require appropriations.

DHS also comments that instead of narrowly focusing on subsection (b) of section 346-17.6, that the entire section 346-17.6, HRS, be considered as other points of amendment that may increase shelter and related services for unaccompanied homeless minors. The definition subsection 346-17.6(h), HRS, currently provides,

For purposes of this section:

"Minor" means a person less than eighteen years of age.

"No cost emergency shelter and related services" means accommodation at no cost for a continuous period

of no more than thirty days, unless extended for emergency purposes and in compliance with subsection (b), including beds, meals, individual showering facilities, transportation to and from the place of shelter, and any of the following services as deemed appropriate by the provider:

- (1) Assistance with reunification with the family, legal guardian, or legal custodian of the minor;
- (2) Referral to safe housing;
- (3) Individual, family, and group counseling;
- (4) Assistance in obtaining clothing;
- (5) Access to medical and dental care, and mental health counseling;
- (6) Education and employment services;
- (7) Recreational activities;
- (8) Case management, advocacy, and referral services;
- (9) Independent living skills training; and
- (10) Aftercare services, as those services are defined in title 45 Code of Federal Regulations section 1351.1.

"Provider" means any child placing organization, or child caring institution authorized by the department under section 346-17 to receive or place minor children for care and maintenance and to provide related services, health care, or supplies to these minors.

If the intent of the Legislature is to allow to provide more access to shelter through additional kinds of providers and shelter services, then consideration to amend "provider" perhaps should be the focus of an amendment.

PURPOSE: Expands conditions for a minor to consent to no-cost emergency shelter and related services, establish certain requirements by a shelter, and requires effort to leave a shelter for minors on each island. (SD1)

DHS supports minors having greater access to shelter and the ability to independently consent to shelter. The Street Youth Study done by UH Center on the Family, Waikiki Health, and Hale Kipa in 2017 showed that “...youth aged 12-17 are at higher risk than adults of becoming homeless,” and that the “average age of the first homeless episode was 14.1 years”.

http://uhfamily.hawaii.edu/publications/brochures/3ff7d_street%20youth%20study-013118_final.pdf

Safety of Hawaii's minors is a priority. DHS is interested in working with the Legislature, stakeholders, and community to develop appropriate shelter, housing programs and related services for unaccompanied youth under 18 who are experiencing homelessness. Currently, there are limited emergency shelters specifically to serve minors under 18¹ or independent living programs for minors not involved with Child Welfare Services (CWS). As a result, some minors seek shelter with older adults and leave themselves vulnerable to being victimized. With improved homeless data and shelter services available at Kawaihoa Health & Wellness Center available to young adults, 18-24, we recognize the need to develop additional youth drop in and shelter services for unaccompanied minors, including pregnant or parenting minors, whether they are involved with child welfare services or not, as many of the minors encountered are not involved with CWS.

We learn from advocates that emergency shelter that meet basic needs and other supported housing options with some flexibility are needed; however, reducing the number of transitions and finding a stable permanent housing solution should be the goals. New York State has developed three kinds of shelter and residence options for homeless youth: Runaway & Youth Homeless Shelter, Interim Family Homes, and Transitional Independent Living Support Program residences. See <https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/youth/rhy/program-descriptions.asp>. Host homes are used in other communities, <https://www.pointsourceyouth.org/host-homes>. Once sheltered, access to health care, mental health, substance abuse, and other services, such as G.E.D. classes, are necessary.

Additionally, DHS Child Welfare Services has difficulty recruiting and retaining resource homes for older youth, especially those who have been trafficked; so, developing additional

¹Note: current DHS service provider does hold a limited number of beds available for homeless minors who are not CWS involved – with notice to the agency.

shelter and transitional independent living support programs would increase capacity to assist unsheltered youth.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

LATE

SB-2344-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2020 10:21:10 AM

Testimony for HSH on 3/11/2020 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
JR Dowd	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

LATE

SB-2344-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2020 10:31:19 AM
Testimony for HSH on 3/11/2020 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Stephanie Hall Morin	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

LATE

SB-2344-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2020 10:39:16 AM

Testimony for HSH on 3/11/2020 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
donald erway	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
HONOLULU

LATE

March 11, 2020

TO: The Honorable Representative Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness

FROM: Scott Morishige, MSW, Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness

SUBJECT: **SB2344 SD1 – RELATING TO MINORS**

Hearing: Wednesday, March 11, 2020, 10:00 a.m.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

POSITION: The Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness appreciates the intent of this measure, offers comments, and defers to the Department of Human Services (DHS).

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to expand conditions for a minor to consent to no-cost emergency shelter and related services, establish certain requirements by a shelter, and requires effort to leave a shelter for minors on each island.

The intent of this measure appears to align with the goals of the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness (HICH) ten-year strategic plan, which includes a specific focus on improving access to services that address youth development, including strengthening support for homeless minors under the age of 18. In addition, service providers report that it is often difficult to build rapport and trust with unaccompanied minors due to fear that they will be reported to child welfare services or law enforcement, as well as the lack of immediate beds to offer to this population. If this bill proceeds, the Coordinator is open to discussions with key stakeholders to identify and recommend strategies to address the barriers to service for unaccompanied homeless minors.

"No cost emergency shelter," as defined in section 346-17.6, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), limits the stay in shelter to no more than 30 days, unless extended for emergency purposes. In contrast, other shelter programs for homeless youth ages 18-24, such as the RYSE Youth Access Center, do not have a defined maximum period of stay. Homeless emergency shelters for adults and families also do not have a defined maximum period of stay. In addition,

“provider,” as defined in section 346-17.6, HRS, is limited only to child placing organizations or child caring institutions authorized by DHS. If the intention of this measure is to expand emergency shelter options for unaccompanied minors beyond what is currently authorized by law, this measure as currently drafted may not achieve this.

The Coordinator notes that recent programs being implemented in Hawaii may assist in adding bed capacity and services for homeless minors. In particular, Partners in Care – the Continuum of Care (CoC) for Oahu – was recently awarded a three-year \$3.8 million Youth Homelessness Development Program (YHDP) grant to support innovative strategies to address youth homelessness, including the needs of unaccompanied minors. DHS and the Hawaii Department of Education (DOE) currently serve on the YHDP steering committee and are providing feedback regarding the implementation of these funds. The RYSE Youth Access Center, partially funded through the Ohana Zone program, is also beginning to strengthen the network of youth homeless services on Oahu.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

LATE

SB-2344-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2020 6:53:58 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/11/2020 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mike Golojuch, Sr.	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support SB2344.

Mike Golojuch, Sr.

LATE

SB-2344-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2020 11:53:13 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/11/2020 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ian	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Nakamura, and members of the Committee,

I am a volunteer member of the RYSE's Executive Board and I am submitting testimony in **strong support** of Senate Bill 2334 Senate Draft 1 in my own individual capacity. This important measure would expand conditions for a minor to consent to no-cost emergency shelter and related services.

I care deeply about the issue of youth homelessness because of my experiences as a teenager during The Great Recession. Like many families, my family was hit hard by the economic downturn. To help with the bills I took on two jobs shortly after turning seventeen and watched as my family's savings for my college educated evaporate and we teetered on the brink of foreclosure. This narrow escape opened my eyes to the very real problems of poverty, especially those experienced by young people in Hawaii. While my family was able to come together, too many sixteen and seventeen-year-olds are not as fortunate.

Meaningfully expanding the circumstances under which young people can consent to an emergency shelter will have an immediate positive impact. Right now, shelters like RYSE have to close their doors to deserving people simply based on their age. This current model of allowing these unaccompanied minors to linger on the streets and not providing the necessary resources to address the trauma they've faced is not working. By the time these youth turn 18 and are finally allowed to enter a shelter catering to adolescent-specific needs, it is often too late. The trauma of living on the streets has compounded.

This measure provides an additional mechanism to shelter unaccompanied minors to be safe and to improve their current situation. For these reasons, I ask you to please vote to pass this Senate Bill 2344 Senate Draft 1.

Best Regards,

Ian Ross
Submitting in my individual capacity.