



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

February 2, 2020

TO: The Honorable Senator Russell E. Ruderman, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services

FROM: Pankaj Bhanot, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 2351 - RELATING TO DIAPERS**

Hearing: Monday, February 3, 2020, 3:00 p.m.
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent to this bill, and offers comments.

PURPOSE: This bill proposes to establish a pilot diaper benefit program for parents who participate in the first to work program administered by the department of human services.

The first to work program (FTW) is the federally mandated work program that requires work eligible individuals who receive temporary assistance for needy families (TANF) benefits to participate in federally approved activities that prepare or place a TANF recipient into employment. The FTW program is codified in section 346-261, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS).

As part of their participation, a FTW participant can access support services that either addresses barriers or limitations with their ability to satisfactorily participate in the program, or are services needed to support their employment goal as identified in their individualized employment plan. Support services can be in form of services such as child care payments, bus passes, mileage reimbursement, and tuition assistance for vocational

training or schooling. Support services are covered under Hawaii Administrative Rules §17-794.1 and are not considered income for the other assistance programs provided through DHS.

The diaper benefit program described in this bill could also be a support service made available to FTW participants through administrative rules. This would be the preferred method rather than by establishing another program through statute; authorizing the diaper benefit through administrative rules allows greater flexibility to the Department in operationalizing this benefit.

Further analysis is needed to understand the fiscal impact of implementing this benefit, however, the Department believes that if established through FTW, it can be supported through current funding available for support service payments.

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



Hawaii
Children's Action Network Speaks!
Building a unified voice for Hawaii's children

Hawaii Children's Action Network Speaks! is a nonpartisan 501c4 nonprofit committed to advocating for children and their families. Our core issues are safety, health, and education.

To: Senator Ruderman, Chair
Senator Rhoads, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services

Re: **SB 2351-relating to diaper**
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 016
3PM, 2/3/2020

Chair Ruderman, Vice Chair Rhoads, and committee members,

On behalf of Hawaii Children's Action Network Speaks!, I write in support of SB 2351, which would create a stipend for diapers for families with children.

Nationally, 1 in 3 families are unable to afford diapers for their babies and most subsidized assistance programs do not cover the costs of diapers. Babies will go through over 1,000 diapers within the first 3 months of life and the average monthly costs of diapers is \$80. Families with diaper need may try to stretch the diapers they have by changing baby less frequently, which can result in painful diaper rash. Additionally, diaper need affects the mother's health. A 2013 study found that "diaper need was the variable that best predicted postpartum depressive symptoms". Providing a stipend for families will ensure families don't miss work or school because they do not have diapers.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 2351 and respectfully request the committee to support this measure.

Thank you

Kathleen Algire
Director, Public Policy and Research