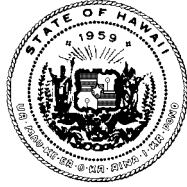


DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



PANKAJ BHANOT
DIRECTOR

CATHY BETTS
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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

March 11, 2020

TO: The Honorable Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair
House Committee on Lower and Higher Education

FROM: Pankaj Bhanot, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 35 SD2 - RELATING TO EDUCATION**

Hearing: March 12, 2020, 2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 309, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of this measure and requests clarification.

PURPOSE: This bill establishes a pilot safe space program within the alternative learning center program in the department of education to support students by providing twenty-four hours per day seven days per week access to emergency crisis services. Makes an appropriation. (SD2)

DHS requests clarification as to what the safe space program for alternative learning center program entails. DHS is learning that the HI-AWARE (Advancing Wellness and Resilience in Education) grant project has been ongoing in different DOE complexes since 2014 and that a final report is forthcoming. DHS is interested in understanding how best to support the needs of the youth described in testimony and will work with the DOE to determine how to sustain the work of the HI-AWARE project.

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



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
OFFICE OF YOUTH SERVICES
1010 Richards Street, Suite 314
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

LATE

March 11, 2020

TO: The Honorable Representative Justin H Woodson, Chair
House Committee on Lower and Higher Education

FROM: Merton Chinen, Executive Director

SUBJECT: **SB 35, SD2 - RELATING TO EDUCATION**

Hearing: Thursday, March 12, 2020 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 309

OFFICE'S POSITION: The Office of Youth Services (OYS) appreciates the intent of the measure, and offers the following comments.

The department of education (DOE) serves approximately 180,000 students daily statewide, many who have experienced adverse childhood experiences (ACE) and trauma that put them at-risk for negative outcomes. Many forms of trauma impact youth, ranging from violence, abuse, family dysfunction, cultural, and historical. Schools are at ground zero in communities, providing a safe haven for many students, and school personnel are poised to know best their students' needs, and what services and resources can help them. OYS is supportive of any efforts to strengthen the various systems of care that serve youth at-risk.

The establishment of a safe space within alternative learning centers needs to be clarified further, especially if the availability includes twenty-four hours and seven days a week.

We recommend that any funding for safe spaces be appropriated to the DOE to procure the necessary services to serve their students in an effective manner.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the measure is to establish a safe space program for alternative learning center program students in the department of education.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.



Adult Friends for Youth

Testimony on SB35 SD2 Relating to Education

**PRESIDENT AND
CHIEF EXECUTIVE
OFFICER**

Deborah L.K. Spencer-Chun, M.S.W.

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**Past Chair of the Board*

Submitted to: Committee on Lower & Higher Education
Representative Justin H. Woodson, Chair
Representative Mark J. Hashem, Vice Chair
Representative Sean Quinlan, Vice Chair

Submitted by: Deborah L.K. Spencer-Chun, M.S.W.
President and CEO of Adult Friends for Youth

Chair Woodson, Vice Chairs Hashem and Quinlan, Members of the Committee:

I support SB35, SD2 relating to Education.

Adult Friends for Youth's (AFY) mission is "Redirecting lives to stop violence in order to strengthen family and community safety, while promoting well-being for all youth so that they can reach their full potential." In our capacity we have had the opportunity to serve some of the highest risk youth in our communities but who are also some of the brightest young people we have ever met. The difference between them and others not at high risk are their circumstances which include but not limited to: exposure to violence, drugs, incarcerated parents as well as siblings, living in distressed neighborhoods, less opportunities and in many cases lack of proper guidance and love.

For the past 34 years, AFY has provided high-risk youth with Redirectional Therapeutic Counseling services on and off Hawaii public school campuses. We are not your typical nine to five program because we are well aware of the fact that many of our youth engage in violence and often high-risk behaviors at all hours. Many youths have arguments with parents and/or guardians, and runaway to get away from the situation. Some argue with their boyfriend/girlfriend and the situation gets very volatile. Others have fights with other youth in and out of their communities. Over the years, AFY Staff have responded at all hours of the night and morning to all of these situations. In some cases, it may take days to resolve. In other cases, they simply need a safe space to calm down and separate themselves from the situation.

For these reasons, AFY advocates for a safe space for these youth to be able to have someone to talk to at all hours when the need arises. For AFY, this bill is a logical step in the right direction. We are not talking about a residential place, but a safe space where our youth can have a "break time" or respite to cool down.

These safe spaces could also be the first step for our youth to get any type of services they may need, short or long term.

Thank you for your time.



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

LATE

Date: 03/12/2020

Time: 02:00 PM

Location: 309

Committee: House Lower & Higher
Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Dr. Christina M. Kishimoto, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: SB 0035, SD2 RELATING TO EDUCATION.

Purpose of Bill: Establishes a pilot safe space program within the alternative learning center program in the department of education to support students by providing twenty-four hours per day seven days per week access to emergency crisis services. Makes an appropriation. (SD2)

Department's Position:

The Hawaii Department of Education (Department) supports the intent of SB 0035, SD 2, and respectfully offers the following comments.

Requiring the establishment of a supplemental safe space pilot program to offer access to a safe haven, twenty-four hours per day, seven days per week emergency crisis services extends beyond the alternative learning program in the Department. However, The Department looks forward to leveraging the skills and experience of the Department of Human Services. Their leadership in planning, implementation and monitoring of the pilot will enable the provision of the twenty-four hours per day, seven days per week support to students outside of the classroom and educational day.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 0035, SD 2.

The Hawai'i State Department of Education is committed to delivering on our promises to students, providing an equitable, excellent, and innovative learning environment in every school to engage and elevate our communities. This is achieved through targeted work around three impact strategies: school design, student voice, and teacher collaboration. Detailed information is available at www.hawaiipublicschools.org.