

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR

GLORIA CHANG
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
P.O. BOX 150
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND
MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT (OFAM)

WRITTEN ONLY
TESTIMONY BY CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES, &
HOMELESSNESS
ON
HOUSE BILL NO. 1932

February 10, 2022
9:00 a.m.
Room 329 and Videoconference

RELATING TO CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

House Bill No. 1932: 1) establishes a child welfare services case management pilot program within the Department of Human Services (DHS) to develop a modern case management software solution; 2) requires the branch administrator of the Child Welfare Services Branch (CWSB) or a designee to administer the program and for DHS to contract with a qualified child welfare software provider for the development of the software solution; 3) sets requirements for features to be included in the software solution and reporting requirements for CWSB; and 4) appropriates an unspecified amount of general funds to DHS in FY 23 for the pilot program.

B&F notes that Act 40, SLH 2019, as amended by Act 6, SLH 2020, and Act 9, SLH 2020, lapsed and reauthorized \$22,622,000 in general obligation (G.O.) bond funds and \$37,012,000 in federal funds for the Modernization of Public Assistance Eligibility System capital improvement project in FY 20.

The G.O. bond funds have been released and DHS is in the process of procuring services to develop its planned Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System, which will include or integrate with other DHS information technology systems or applications to provide most of the features required of the bill's proposed software solution.

B&F also notes that, with respect to the general fund appropriation in this bill, the federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act requires that states receiving Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) II funds and Governor's Emergency Education Relief II funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

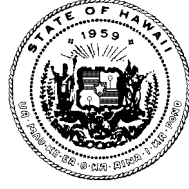
Further, the federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act requires that states receiving ARP ESSER funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

The U.S. Department of Education has issued rules governing how these maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements are to be administered. B&F will be working with the money committees of the Legislature to ensure that the State of Hawai'i complies with these ESSER MOE requirements.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

February 9, 2022

TO: The Honorable Representative Ryan I. Yamane, Chair
House Committee on Health, Human Services, & Homelessness

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 1932 – RELATING TO CHILD WELFARE SERVICES.**

Hearing: February 10, 2022, 9:00 a.m.
Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the intent of this measure and provides comments. DHS respectfully requests that any appropriation not reduce or replace priorities identified in the executive budget.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill requires the child welfare services branch of the department of human services to establish a pilot program to develop a modern case management software solution compatible with existing child welfare technology and appropriate funds.

The intent of this bill is aligned with the DHS objectives to support a modern, web-based technology that can support the Child Welfare Services (CWS) Branch. However, a pilot project is not necessary as DHS is currently developing the new Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS). CCWIS will modernize CWS data systems to provide business functionalities that will include tracking caseloads, creating case plans, providing triggers and alerts for monthly face-to-face visits, and allowing families secured online access to their case information.

The federal Administration monitors the CCWIS project for Children and Youth (ACYF). In addition to monitoring, ACYF provides guidance and technical support to the department so that delays and problems in building CCWIS are addressed and mitigated as DHS transitions from the development and planning stage to the implementation stage of CCWIS.

Youth formerly in care may already access a web portal to submit applications for extending foster care support, access vital documents, and case information. Additionally, effective February 1, 2022, web-based functionalities that create and manage Family Service Plans online became available to CWS workers and contracted providers.

DHS also procured a licensing solution that allows the public to submit online applications to become resource caregivers (fka foster parents). This public online application feature has been available since July 2021; see rcg.hawaii.org. On-going work with this contracted provider will eventually allow relative, and general resource caregivers access to online portals and the ability to share information with DHS.

Appropriating funds for a modern web-based technology software pilot will assist with supporting costs associated with piloting new software solutions. Additional funds could be used to fund positions needed for the full implementation of CCWIS. DHS currently has a request in the executive budget for one permanent FTE to support CCWIS.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

HB-1932

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 7:16:25 PM

Testimony for HHH on 2/10/2022 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Marilyn Yamamoto	Hawaii Family Advocacy Team	Oppose	No

Comments:

Representative Yamane,

I oppose this bill because the proper research has not been done to justify throwing money at the department. Instead, I would suggest that the Hawaii Legislature read Richard Wexler's research and journalistic reports on child welfare for the past 40 years, including his most recent piece on the death of Ariel Sellers.

The USA Today recently published a one-year investigation of child welfare in Florida that confirms exactly what Wexler asserts. Children removed to foster care needlessly are ten times higher than what the public is led to believe. Hawaii data also confirms.



Binti, Inc.
1212 Broadway
Suite 200
Oakland, CA 94612

February 10, 2022

TO: Representative Ryan Yamane
Health, Human Services, and Homelessness Committee

FR: Binti

RE: HB1932 Relating to Child Welfare Services - **SUPPORT**

HB1932 is an important bill that impacts the Department of Human Services' ability to improve outcomes for children who have experienced the foster care system in Hawaii.

I appreciate the opportunity to offer Binti's views regarding HB 1932, a bill that will help to empower the caseworkers to better monitor and protect the children on their caseloads. Binti currently provides software for the state of Hawaii that helps to recruit, and license foster families, which is also used in over 190 agencies across 26 states nationwide. As a former social worker, I can personally attest to the need for improved technology to help support the increasing caseloads seen by the child welfare system. In addition, human service agencies are facing a staffing shortage that is reaching crisis levels throughout the state of Hawaii and across the country. Cutting-edge software solutions can help to reduce workloads while improving outcomes for children and families.

The number of children experiencing the foster care system in Hawaii has been increasing substantially while caseworkers are becoming more and more overloaded trying to maintain these increasing caseloads. Unfortunately, this results in fewer in-person visits to children and families, decreased child and family involvement in case planning, less support for families, and more opportunities for children and families to fall through the cracks. As discussed directly in the Bill, Hawaii has faced some of these challenges in the past 5 years, with increased numbers of kids in foster care and reduced strength ratings of child & family involvement in case planning and mental/behavioral health of the child. Workers' percentage of monthly visits to children in care has also consistently been below the national standard.

Outdated systems that are designed entirely for compliance and not to support the caseworker's day to day needs result in workers finding other means to track their work such as spreadsheets, word documents, and handwritten notes. All these factors combined can result in tragic outcomes that might otherwise have been avoided had the caseworkers and families been supported by systems that had safeguards in place to ensure best practices across the agency.

Binti is a mission-driven company focused on increasing equality of opportunity and giving every child a fair chance at life, and we are therefore in support of the proposed bill that will help to increase positive outcomes for children and families across the state of Hawaii. A thoughtfully and deliberately designed case management system can directly support not only the caseworkers but also the families and children themselves. Managed case plans can be established by workers and shared directly with other stakeholders through their respective portals within the system.

As this bill outlines, having portals specifically for families and older youth also helps to ensure the best possible outcomes for children by supporting the families they are matched with. Enabling a foster family to have immediate access to relevant information such as allergies, education plans, and other health information for the children placed in their homes empowers them to provide the best possible care for the child which in turn can help to improve outcomes and permanency. Empowering older youth to access and participate in their case encourages buy-in from the youth and

also supports collaboration between the youth and the team serving them, resulting in more successful placements and permanency plans.

Utilizing modern user-friendly software that is compatible with existing child welfare technology will reduce the paperwork and data entry requirements for caseworkers, thus empowering them to spend more time conducting face-to-face visits and working closely with the families and children that require extra care. Workers should be able to easily see their caseload. Children or families that have requirements coming due should be surfaced in a helpful way while enabling caseworkers to complete documentation directly within the system.

Binti strongly supports HB 1932 and asks the Hawaii Legislature to empower your child welfare services to improve outcomes for children and families by establishing this case management pilot program. We ask that you vote YES on HB 1932.

Thank you for considering our comments and concerns.

Kristin Atwood
Enterprise Account Executive, and former Social Worker
Binti
Kristin@binti.com