

STATE OF HAWAI‘I
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

**Testimony of the Office of the Public Defender,
State of Hawai‘i to the Senate Committee on Human Services**

February 3, 2022

S.B. No. 3235: RELATING TO SAFE SPACES FOR YOUTH PILOT PROGRAM

Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Ihara, and Members of the Committee:

The Office of the Public Defender supports the intent of S.B. 3235.

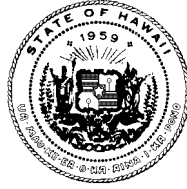
This measure would create a Safe Spaces for Youth Pilot Program. Youth at risk and youth in need of services require safe and supportive emergency housing and shelters. These services are desperately needed to help quell the growing needs of our youth who are living in poverty, who are houseless (some who may have become houseless together with their parents and to no fault of their own), and who are in need of mental health services and treatment.

Youth at risk and youth in need of services are also at risk of being victims of crime (e.g., property crimes, assaults, sexual assaults, and/or human trafficking). They are often preyed upon.

The creation of a Safe Spaces for Youth Pilot Program will also help prevent at risk youth from becoming involved in criminal activity and can help the youth in need obtain access to vital services like mental health treatment and substance abuse treatment and access to safe and supportive housing and educational services.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

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 2, 2022

TO: The Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Committee on Human Services

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 3235 – RELATING TO SAFE SPACES FOR YOUTH PILOT PROGRAM.**

Hearing: Thursday, February 3, 2022, 3:00 p.m.
Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the measure's intent and provides comments.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this measure establishes a Safe Spaces for Youth Pilot Program within the Department of Human Services. Requires the program to collaborate with all state departments that offer services to ensure the well-being of youth in Hawaii to coordinate the identification of youth who are experiencing homelessness and placement of youth with a shelter for homeless youth. Allows the Department of Human Services to contract with a nonprofit organization to provide a shelter for homeless youth. Requires the Department of Human Services to report to Legislature before the Regular Session of 2025. Appropriates funds. Repeals 06/30/2025.

The 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 18 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 limited shelter services available at Kawaihoa Health & Wellness Center available to young adults, 18-24, we recognize the need to develop additional youth outreach, drop-in, and shelter services for unaccompanied minors, including pregnant or parenting minors, whether they are involved with child welfare services or not. Many unaccompanied minors encountered are not involved with CWS.

As defined in this bill, youth focuses on age, not circumstances. The definition of homeless youth and runaway youth can vary; see the federal definition; <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/runaway-and-homeless-youth/federal-definitions>. A safe space for youth may result in unintended consequences of increased runaways.

Concerning family-based strategies, DHS Child Welfare Services has difficulty recruiting and retaining resource homes for older youth, especially those who have been trafficked. Additional resources are needed to coordinate behavioral health training and strategies so that youth will meet knowledgeable peers or staff on their first encounters. Developing outreach programs and additional transitional independent living programs will help stabilize more youth and reconnect them with school, their families, pro-social friends, job training, and employment. These efforts will give youth the opportunities to gain the skills and resources to become successful adults. As the measure advances, we will update the Legislature with resource needs.

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



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
HONOLULU

February 3, 2022

TO: The Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services

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

SUBJECT: **SB 3235 – RELATING TO SAFE SPACES FOR YOUTH PILOT PROGRAM.**

Hearing: Thursday, February 3, 2022, 3:00 p.m.
VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE

POSITION: The Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness appreciates the intent of this measure and respectfully offers comments. The Coordinator defers to the Department of Human Services (DHS) and Office of Youth Services regarding the continuum of current programs to serve homeless youth and young adults.

If this measure proceeds, the Coordinator requests that its passage not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the executive budget request.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to establish the Safe Spaces for Youth pilot program within DHS. The bill requires the program to collaborate with all State departments that offer services to ensure the well-being of youth in Hawaii to coordinate the identification of youth experiencing homelessness and placement of homeless youth with a shelter for homeless youth. In addition, the bill allows DHS to contract with a nonprofit organization to provide a shelter for homeless youth, appropriates funds, and requires DHS to report to the Legislature.

The Coordinator acknowledges the need to increase services for youth experiencing homelessness. Currently, there are a limited number of emergency shelter beds specifically for youth and young adults not actively engaged with the child welfare or criminal justice systems. In 2021, the Coordinator worked with DHS and youth homeless providers to support the passage of Act 23 that expanded the conditions under which unaccompanied minors may

consent to a no-cost emergency shelter. The expanded conditions implemented under Act 23 will sunset next year on June 30, 2023.

While this bill addresses the critical need for youth-focused shelter, shelter is only temporary, and providing stable housing is equally important to ensure long-term stability and positive outcomes. The Corporation for Supportive Housing estimates Hawaii needs 42,944 supportive housing units for transition-age youth – including 28,698 for unaccompanied youth ages 18-24; 5,133 for youth exiting the child welfare system; and 9,113 for justice-involved youth. Without sufficient housing inventory tailored to address their needs, youth participating in the proposed Safe Spaces for Youth pilot program may be discharged to unsheltered homelessness or other unstable environments.

If the intent is to establish safe spaces and housing options for youth experiencing homelessness, another potential vehicle to achieve this goal is the Ohana Zones pilot program. The Ohana Zone pilot program provides flexible funding for homeless services administered in partnership with the counties to address local needs. The Coordinator notes there are different measures to extend and expand the Ohana Zones pilot program, including [SB3168](#) and administrative bills [SB3108](#) / [HB2140](#). Examples of Ohana Zones projects include the [Homeless Outreach and Navigation for Unsheltered \(HONU\)](#) program on Oahu and permanent housing projects such as [Kamaoku Kauhale](#), [Huliau](#), [Kealaula at Pua Loke](#), [Kumuwai](#), and [Hale Maluhia](#). The [Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness annual legislative report](#)¹ provides a detailed overview and evaluation of the Ohana Zones pilot program.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

¹ Report available at: <https://homelessness.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/HICH-Report-to-2022-Legislature-FINAL.pdf>

DAVID Y. IGE
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CRAIG K. HIRAI
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EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
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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 SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES
ON
SENATE BILL NO. 3235

February 3, 2022
3:00 p.m.
Room 225 and Videoconference

RELATING TO SAFE SPACES FOR YOUTH PILOT PROGRAM

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

Senate Bill No. 3235: 1) establishes the Safe Spaces for Youth Pilot Program (SSYPP) within the Department of Human Services (DHS) for a period of three years; 2) requires SSYPP to coordinate with State and county agencies to identify youth experiencing homelessness in each county; 3) requires DHS to contract with nonprofit organizations to provide shelter for homeless youth; 4) authorizes the shelters to provide services to admitted youth for up to 90 days without a parent's or guardian's consent; 5) sets reporting requirements for DHS; 6) provides definitions for clarity; and 7) appropriates an unspecified amount of general funds to DHS in FY 23 to fund SSYPP.

B&F notes that 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.

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

Carole Gruskin, President

Judith F. Clark, Executive Director

Bay Clinic

Big Brothers Big Sisters 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's Justice Center of Maui

Get Ready Hawai'i

Hale Kipa, Inc.

Hale 'Opio Kauai, Inc.

Hawaii Children's Action Network

Hawaii Health & Harm

Reduction Center

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

January 24, 2022

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

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 3235 RELATING TO SAFE SPACES FOR YOUTH PILOT PROGRAM

Hawaii Youth Services Network, a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, support SB 3235 Relating to Safe Spaces for Youth Pilot Program.

The proposed network of safe places for youth was first conceived by the youth who attended the Children and Youth Summit at the Capitol several years ago. It was voted the top priority for legislative action for 3 years in a row indicating its importance to Hawaii's youth.

Nearly half of Hawaii's juvenile arrests are for status offenses such as running away from home or being truant from school. They run away or skip school because they have untreated mental health and substance abuse needs; experience abuse, violence or bullying; or other issues that are not best resolved by a law enforcement approach. Our youth want and need safe places in the community where youth can seek help before they get in trouble with the law.

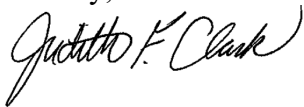
It takes a community to raise a child. The Safe Spaces for Youth Pilot Program will facilitate coordination and collaboration by government, non-profit, and faith-based organizations and caring community members to increase the safety and well-being of our children and youth. It will provide safe environments where adolescents can safely address such issues as peer pressure, unplanned pregnancy, child abuse and neglect, and substance abuse. It will provide young people with ways to deal with problems before they get into trouble and avoid unnecessary arrests for status offenses.

Emergency shelter is a key component providing safe, appropriate living conditions for youth who cannot safely return home. The 24-hour crisis response system will follow the National Safe Place model, in which community partners, such as fire stations and public bus systems are recruited as places where young people can go in an emergency.

While much of the network resources are already in place, funding is needed to ensure 24-hour crisis response capability and an adequate supply of emergency shelter beds; conduct outreach so that youth, families, and service providers are aware of the program and know how to use it; provide training of youth workers; and ensure coordination of services among the various providers.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judith F. Clark". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Judith F. Clark, MPH
Executive Director

**OPPORTUNITY
YOUTH
ACTION HUI**

03 February 2022

Senate Committee on Human Services

Hearing Time: 03:00pm

Location: Virtual

Re: SB 3235, Relating to Safe Spaces for Youth Pilot Program

Aloha e Chair San Buenaventura, Vice-Chair Ihara, and members of the Committee:

We are writing in **strong support** of SB 3235, relating to Safe Spaces for Youth Pilot Program. This bill would establish the Safe Spaces for Youth Pilot Program within the Department of Human Services. It would require the program to collaborate with all state departments that offer services to ensure the well-being of youth in Hawai'i to coordinate the identification of youth who are experiencing homelessness and placement of homeless youth with a shelter for homeless youth. It would allow the Department of Human Services to contract with a nonprofit organization to provide a shelter for homeless youth. And it would require the Department of Human Services to report to Legislature before the Regular Session of 2025. Appropriates funds. Repeals 06/30/2025.

This bill would contribute to the efforts of mitigating the overrepresentation of Native Hawaiian, especially youth, individuals in disadvantageous and dangerous situations, such as homelessness. According to the Partners in Care 2020 O'ahu Point In Time Count (PIT), an annual street and shelter count, about **16%** of Hawai'i's homeless population were children. Furthermore, **51%** of the overall PIT Count identified Native Hawaiian and/or Pacific Islander as either their only race or part of their multiracial background. We believe this measure is a pivotal step in providing helpful and necessary resources to the Native Hawaiian community.

The Opportunity Youth Action Hui is a collaboration of organizations and individuals committed to reducing the harmful effects of a punitive incarceration system for youth; promoting equity in the justice system; and improving and increasing resources to address adolescent and young adult mental health needs.

We seek to improve the continuity of programs and services for youth and young adults transitioning from minor to adult status; eliminate youth homelessness and housing market discrimination against young adults; and promote and fund more holistic and culturally-informed approaches among public/private agencies serving youth.

Please support SB 3235.

SB-3235

Submitted on: 1/28/2022 8:07:17 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/3/2022 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Ann S Freed	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair and members,

Mahalo for this bill. It is so important for homeless and/or parentless youth to have safe spaces to shelter from the street. This is particularly true for Transgendered Youth who are often thrown out of their homes by intolerant parents.

Please pass,

Ann S. Freed

Life-time Feminist in Mililani

**STONEWALL
CAUCUS**

FORMED IN 2001



THE FIRST CAUCUS OF THE
**DEMOCRATIC PARTY
OF HAWAII**

February 3, 2022

Senate's Committee on Health
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

LATE

Hearing: Thursday, February 3, 2022 – 3:00 p.m.

RE: **STRONG SUPPORT for Senate Bill 3235**

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Ihara, and fellow committee members,

I am writing in STRONG SUPPORT to Senate Bill 3235 on behalf of the Stonewall Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii (formerly the LGBT Caucus). SB 3235 would establish the Safe Spaces for Youth Pilot Program within the Department of Human Services. Requires the program to collaborate with all state departments that offer services to ensure the well-being of youth in Hawaii to coordinate the identification of youth who are experiencing homelessness and placement of homeless youth with a shelter for homeless youth. Allows the Department of Human Services to contract with a nonprofit organization to provide a shelter for homeless youth. Requires the Department of Human Services to report to Legislature before the Regular Session of 2025.

Homeless unaccompanied minors need the support that this legislation will provide.

There has been a lot of talk about helping minors that have been sex-trafficked and rightfully so, but if these youths had a safe space to go on every island there is a great chance of them never being sex-trafficked in the first place.

We hope you all will support this important piece of legislation.

Mahalo nui loa,

Michael Golojuch, Jr.
Chair and SCC Representative
Stonewall Caucus for the DPH