



*The Judiciary, State of Hawai‘i*

**Testimony to the Thirty-First State Legislature, 2021 Regular Session**

**Senate Committee on Human Services**

Senator Joy A San Buenaventura, Chair

Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair

Thursday, February 11, 2021, 3:00 P.M.

VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

State Capitol, Conference Room 225

by

Judge Christine E. Kuriyama

Deputy Chief Judge, Senior Judge

Family Court of the First Circuit

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY**

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**Bill No. and Title:** Senate Bill No. 543, Relating to Human Trafficking.

**Purpose:** Establishes a statewide coordinator and program within the department of the attorney general to provide services and assistance to sexually exploited children and victims of human trafficking. Requires the attorney general to submit reports to the legislature. Requires the children's justice program to coordinate the investigation and case management of human trafficking cases, including cases involving the sexual exploitation of children.

**Judiciary's Position:**

The Judiciary strongly supports Senate Bill No. 543 and appreciates the Legislature's recognition that the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) is a serious problem here in Hawai‘i and throughout the United States.

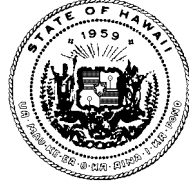


The Judiciary supports this bill for the following reasons:

1. The commercial sexual exploitation of our children has become more prevalent in cases before the Family Court. Youth involved in the foster care system are especially vulnerable to becoming involved in sex trafficking. These issues also arise in Family Court cases on the juvenile, domestic violence, child abuse, and other calendars.
2. This bill provides for a dedicated statewide coordinator within the Department of the Attorney General who could devote his/her full time and energy to working with stakeholder agencies and nonprofit organizations in developing a comprehensive plan for law enforcement, prevention, and assisting victims of human trafficking. A coordinated and collaborative approach is essential to be able to combat the sexual exploitation of children.
3. This bill provides for a comprehensive plan for public awareness and training on prevention and identification of victims. Being aware of the indicators of human trafficking/sexual exploitation, and knowing what to do, is the first step in assisting victims.
4. This bill provides for an analysis of the existing data specific to the commercial sexual exploitation of children. This data piece is critical to understanding the true breadth and scope of the problem in the State of Hawai'i. Only with accurate data are we able to properly pursue needed funding and allocate resources to effectively respond.
5. This bill provides for the Department of the Attorney General to prepare a comprehensive report to the Legislature prior to the 2022 session on the State's efforts to address CSEC. This will be a significant step in gathering and analyzing information on the State's efforts thus far in addressing CSEC. Much work has already been put forth while there is so much more to accomplish. Having a comprehensive report with the components stated in the bill will provide a detailed inventory of resources, outlined best practices, and recommendations for moving forward.
6. This bill amends HRS Chapter 588, relating to the Children's Justice Program, to include human trafficking and cases involving the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify 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 9, 2021

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

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 543 – RELATING TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING.**

Hearing: Thursday, February 11, 2021, 3:00 p.m.  
Conference Room 225 , State Capitol

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this measure, provides comments, and defers to the Department of Attorney General and the Judiciary.

**PURPOSE:** Establishes a statewide coordinator and program within the Department of the Attorney General to provide services and assistance to sexually exploited children and victims of human trafficking. Requires the attorney general to submit reports to the legislature. Requires the children's justice program to coordinate the investigation and case management of human trafficking cases, including cases involving the sexual exploitation of children.

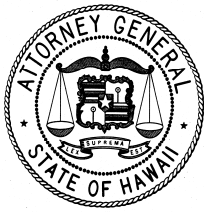
Act 16 (Session Laws of Hawaii (SLH) 2017) brought Hawaii's law into compliance with the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 and the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act of 2010 (CAPTA). Act 16 (SLH 2017), amongst other things, amended section 350-1, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), to add "severe forms of trafficking in persons" and "sex trafficking" to Hawaii's definition of "child abuse and neglect."

The DHS works to ensure that sex trafficked children and youth are identified and receive appropriate services and protections; regardless of parental abuse or neglect. DHS has

a contracted provider that provides victim centered, trauma-informed comprehensive services that are individualized and responsive to the needs, values, culture, and gender identity statewide for minor victims of all forms of human trafficking. The provider also promotes public awareness of sexual exploitation of children through trainings for the community, for DHS staff, and DHS resource caregivers.

Establishing a statewide coordinator and program within the Department of the Attorney General is an important step to address the needs of victims and bring accountability for perpetrators of commercial sexual exploitation of children and human trafficking.

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



**TESTIMONY OF  
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
THIRTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE, 2021**

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**ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:**

S.B. NO. 543, RELATING TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING.

**BEFORE THE:**

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

**DATE:** Thursday, February 11, 2021      **TIME:** 3:00 p.m.

**LOCATION:** State Capitol, Room 225, Via Videoconference

**TESTIFIER(S):** Clare E. Connors, Attorney General, or  
Farshad M. Talebi, Deputy Attorney General

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Chair San Buenaventura and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General (Department) supports this bill.

The purposes of this bill are to (1) create a human trafficking program within the Department of the Attorney General, (2) establish a statewide human trafficking coordinator, and (3) require the children's justice program to coordinate the investigation and case management of human trafficking cases.

Successfully combating human trafficking requires a comprehensive multidisciplinary response between law enforcement, state agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector. Statewide leadership and coordination through the Department will help Hawai'i thoroughly assess this complex problem and develop strategic solutions.

No appropriation is required. The Department already has designated a deputy attorney general to begin implementing a statewide human trafficking program.

This issue is a priority for the Department, and we respectfully ask the Committee to pass this bill.

**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 11, 2021

S.B. No. 543: RELATING TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Chair San Buenaventura and Members of the Committee:

The Office of the Public Defender supports S.B. No. 543.

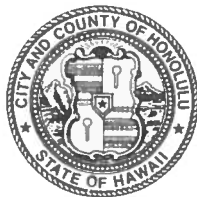
The creation of a statewide human trafficking coordinator within the Department of the Attorney General is needed to address the needs of victims of human trafficking, including sexually exploited children. Our Juvenile Division is often tasked with providing legal counsel and representation to children who may have ended up in the Juvenile Justice System but who are also in need of coordinated and targeted help to prevent or to extricate themselves from sexual exploitation. These issues are very difficult and complex and involve interagency cooperation. These children require specialized therapy and coordinated assistance. We support this measure as we are hopeful that services for the juveniles we help and advocate for will improve and be better able to make a positive difference in their lives through the creation of better counseling programs, case management, and better services for these youth.

Often sexually exploited children end up in the Juvenile Justice System and are assigned a deputy public defender who is tasked with providing legal advice and counsel. Sexually exploited juveniles often have ongoing law violation or status offenses in the Family Court system that necessitate the need for ongoing access to their legal counsel. Sexually exploited juveniles may not always want to open up to judges, counselors or juvenile probation officers, who they often perceive as being part of the system that they may not trust. For any sexually exploited juvenile who has ongoing law violation or status offenses, we will continue to provide legal services and expect that any coordinated system or statewide effort for sexually exploited juveniles will guarantee and facilitate access to legal counsel if requested.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

POLICE DEPARTMENT  
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

801 SOUTH BERETANIA STREET · HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
TELEPHONE: (808) 529-3111 · INTERNET: www.honolulu-pd.org



RICK BLANGIARDI  
MAYOR

SUSAN BALLARD  
CHIEF

JOHN D. MCCARTHY  
AARON TAKASAKI-YOUNG  
DEPUTY CHIEFS

OUR REFERENCE PJ-GK

February 11, 2021

The Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair  
and Members  
Committee on Human Services  
State Senate  
Hawaii State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street, Room 225  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair San Buenaventura and Members:

SUBJECT: Senate Bill No. 543, Relating to Human Trafficking

I am Major Phillip Johnson of the Narcotics/Vice Division of the Honolulu Police Department (HPD), City and County of Honolulu.

The HPD supports Senate Bill No. 543, Relating to Human Trafficking.

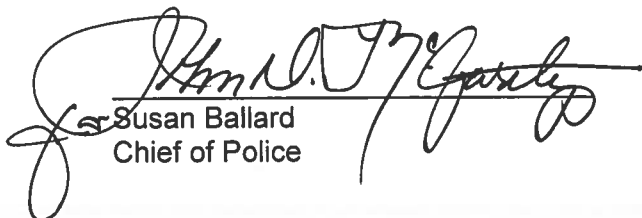
Sharing resources and coordinating efforts among service providers and law enforcement is paramount in the rescue of a most vulnerable population, our youth. The HPD supports a multidisciplinary response to sex trafficking cases that is both victim-centered and offender-focused. We also support the establishment of a statewide coordinator and program within the Department of Attorney General that addresses the needs of sexually exploited children and victims of human trafficking.


The HPD urges you to support Senate Bill No. 543, Relating to Human Trafficking.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

APPROVED:

Sincerely,

  
Susan Ballard  
Chief of Police

  
Phillip Johnson, Major  
Narcotics/Vice Division



## SB 543, RELATING TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING

FEBRUARY 11, 2021 · SENATE HUMAN SERVICES  
COMMITTEE · CHAIR SEN. JOY A. SAN  
BUENAVENTURA

**POSITION:** Support with amendments.

**RATIONALE:** Imua Alliance supports and suggests amendments for SB 543, relating to human trafficking, which establishes a statewide coordinator and program within the Department of the Attorney General to provide services and assistance to sexually exploited children and victims of human trafficking; requires the Attorney General to submit reports to the Legislature; and requires the Children's Justice Program to coordinate the investigation and case management of human trafficking cases, including cases involving the sexual exploitation of children.

Imua Alliance 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. During the pandemic, demand for victim services to our organization has skyrocketed by 330 percent, driven in part by a fivefold increase in direct crisis calls from potential trafficking victims.

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. Imua Alliance, 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 Imua Alliance 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 stop sexual slavery, including by establishing a statewide anti-trafficking coordinator and related program within the Attorney General's office, as well as strengthening statewide services coordination to deliver trauma-informed care to child victims of sex trafficking. As indicated above, sex trafficking victims are

typically trauma bonded to their abusers. Trauma-attached coercion is like Stockholm Syndrome, involving a powerful emotional dependency on the abusers and a shift in world- and self-view that results in feelings of gratitude and loyalty toward the abusers and a denial, dismissal, or minimization of the coercion, violence, and exploitation that victims have suffered. Trauma-attached victims require placement in a coordinated continuum of care to “break” their trauma bonds, receive rehabilitative services, and reintegrate into society in a healthy manner. It is common for victims to need long-term care before recognizing the extent of the trauma they’ve suffered, much less feel emotionally and physically secure enough to participate in criminal investigations.

That said, **we urge your committee to amend this measure’s definition of “human trafficking” to include labor trafficking under part VIII of HRS Chapter 707, sex trafficking under HRS section 712-1202, promoting prostitution under HRS section 712-1203, and solicitation of a minor for prostitution under HRS section 712-1209.1.** Referencing our state’s anti-trafficking statutes in the measure’s definition of human trafficking, alongside the federal laws currently contained in the bill, will ensure that all potential trafficking victims are covered by the scope of the proposed statewide anti-trafficking program.

**Kris Coffield · Executive Director, Imua Alliance · (808) 679-7454 · [kris@imuaalliance.org](mailto:kris@imuaalliance.org)**



## CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

### **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 543: RELATING TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

**TO:** Senate Committee on Human Services

**FROM:** Rob Van Tassell, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawaii

**Hearing:** **Thursday, 2/11/21; 3:00 pm; via videoconference**

Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Ihara, and Members, Committee on Human Services:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony **in support** of SB 543, which establishes a statewide coordinator and program within the department of the attorney general to provide services and assistance to sexually exploited children and victims of human trafficking. It requires the attorney general to submit reports and the Children's Justice Center program to coordinate the investigation and case management of human trafficking cases, including those involving sexual exploitation of children. I am Rob Van Tassell, with Catholic Charities Hawaii.

Catholic Charities Hawaii (CCH) is a tax exempt, non-profit agency that has been providing social services in Hawaii for over 70 years. CCH has programs serving elders, children, families, homeless, and immigrants. Our mission is to provide services and advocacy for the most vulnerable in Hawaii.

Children are the most vulnerable in our society. Human trafficking and sexual exploitation of children must be stopped. We need to make this a priority and provide assistance to children to help them recover from this tragedy. The proposed bill would provide more coordination and services to this population which is being targeted by the predators in our society. Establishing a statewide coordinator in the Department of the Attorney General will give more focus statewide to this issue and the needs of these children. Support is needed for the Children's Justice Center for them to expand their services to reach more of these children.

We urge your support for this bill.

Please contact our Legislative Liaison, Betty Lou Larson at (808) 373-0356 or [bettylou.larson@catholiccharitieshawaii.org](mailto:bettylou.larson@catholiccharitieshawaii.org) if you have any questions.





**Parents And  
Children Together**  
BUILDING THE RELATIONSHIPS THAT MATTER MOST

**TO:** Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Ihara, and Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services

**FROM:** Ryan Kusumoto, President & CEO of Parents And Children Together (PACT)

**DATE/LOCATION:** February 11, 2021; 3:00 p.m., Conference Room 225/Video Conference

**RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 543 RELATING TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

**We ask you to support SB 543 which establishes a statewide coordinator and program within the department of the attorney general to provide services and assistance to sexually exploited children and victims of human trafficking and requires the children's justice program to coordinate the investigation and case management of human trafficking cases, including cases involving the sexual exploitation of children.**

Youth who are sexually exploited experience indelible trauma. We thank the Department of the Attorney General for making the issue of trafficking a priority and wholeheartedly support the coordination of these efforts through the Department. Human trafficking, particularly the sexual exploitation of children, rips away at the very fabric of our communities. Creating a program and coordinator within the department, as well as coordinating efforts, is critical to effectively addressing this issue.

Founded in 1968, Parents And Children Together (PACT) is one of Hawaii's not-for-profit organizations providing a wide array of innovative and educational social services to families in need. Assisting more than 18,000 people across the state annually, PACT helps families identify, address and successfully resolve challenges through its 18 programs. Among its services are: early education programs, domestic violence prevention and intervention programs, child abuse prevention and intervention programs, childhood sexual abuse supportive group services, child and adolescent behavioral health programs, sex trafficking intervention, poverty prevention and community building programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding **SB 543**, please contact me at (808) 847-3285 or [rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org](mailto:rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org) if you have any questions.

Executive Director  
Cindy Shimomi-Saito

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Joshua A. Wisch

Date: February 11, 2021

To: The Honorable Joy San Buenaventura, Chair  
The Honorable Les Ihara Jr., Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Human Services

From: Cindy Shimomi-Saito, Executive Director  
The Sex Abuse Treatment Center  
A Program of Kapi'olani Medical Center for Women & Children

RE: Testimony in Support of SB 543, Relating to Human Trafficking

Hearing: Thursday February 11, 2021, Via videoconference

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

The Sex Abuse Treatment Center (SATC) is in **support of SB 543**, Relating to Human Trafficking. This bill would create a human trafficking program within the Department of the Attorney General, establish a statewide human trafficking coordinator, and require the Children's Justice Center to coordinate the investigation and case management of human trafficking cases.

The SATC supports this measure as a coordinated system of care is critical to effectively combat human trafficking in our State. We, however, respectfully ask for the inclusion of additional language that would ensure the program assess, respond, and report out equally on both adult and child sex trafficking, not only on O'ahu, but in all counties statewide. This will enable us to truly understand the scope of the problem of sex trafficking in Hawai'i and work toward effective solutions.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**SB-543**

Submitted on: 2/11/2021 1:33:15 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/11/2021 3:00:00 PM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jessica Munoz	Testifying for Ho'ola Na Pua	Support	No

Comments:

Testimony in support of: SB543, Relating to Human Trafficking

Submitted by: Ho'Å• la NÄ• Pua

Aloha Chair Buenaventura, Vice Chair Ihara, and honorable committee members,

Ho'Å• la NÄ• Pua is in support of implementing a statewide coordinator and programs dedicated to case management strategies, protocols, and a victim-centered response in order to address the needs of survivors of human trafficking. Additionally, our organization supports the direct communication between the department attorney general to the legislator on State efforts assessing exploitation and human trafficking. Furthermore, our organization supports the continued efforts of the Children's Justice Center to coordinate investigations and case management of all youth trafficking cases.

Combining human trafficking efforts under the umbrella of the Attorney General's office will benefit multiple support organizations, including ours, to better assist human trafficking survivors and their families. In this way, we can effectively consolidate multi-disciplinary team efforts. Ho'Å• la NÄ• Pua, especially, can better coordinate treatment, program referrals, and individualized care through one comprehensive program as well.

It is imperative to develop and implement a dedicated program to assist victims of human trafficking led by a statewide coordinator. Aligning with the need for more comprehensive data and resources for the community, this program will benefit our state by the development of:

- Statewide strategies to prevent human trafficking.

- Plans that will provide assistance to victims of human trafficking.
- Comprehensive training on how to prevent, identify, and address human trafficking.
- Awareness of human trafficking and the availability of state and national services.

Hopefully, through this program we can establish and maintain cooperation between agencies in coordination with investigations regarding human trafficking, reduce the revictimization of trafficking victims through multiple interviews, and organize therapeutic and treatment programs for victims of human trafficking and their families. We ask the legislature to consider and adopt this bill.

Respectfully,

Ho'Å• Ia NÄ• Pua

**SB-543**

Submitted on: 2/8/2021 5:37:59 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/11/2021 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Eileen M Gawrys	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Imperative!



Bridget Conlon

Thursday, February 11, 2021

### Support for SB543, Relating to Human Trafficking

My name is Bridget Conlon, and I am a high school student living in Kailua. I strongly support SB543, Relating to Human Trafficking, to establish a statewide coordinator and program within the department of the attorney general to provide services and assistance to sexually exploited children and victims of human trafficking. This bill is a major step in ensuring protection and support for victims of sex trafficking and other forms of human trafficking.

The issue of sex trafficking and other forms of human trafficking is much more serious than most people understand. There is an estimated 4.5 million victims of sex trafficking globally, and the most vulnerable targets are children or those under the age of 18<sup>1</sup>. The majority victims of sex trafficking are minors that range from 14-16 years old with many of them being first trafficked at 11 years old<sup>2</sup>.

The aspect of sex trafficking that most concerns me is that it is a global industry, and anyone can be effected. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section<sup>3</sup>, everyone, especially children, is vulnerable to becoming a trafficking victim, regardless of their racial or socioeconomic background. By implementing this legislation, I believe that all Hawai'i residents will be better protected.

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<sup>1</sup> End Slavery Now. *Sex Trafficking*. End Slavery Now. Accessed Feb. 9, 2021, available at <http://www.endslaverynow.org/learn/slavery-today/sex-trafficking>

<sup>2</sup> Ho'ola Na Pua. *Sex Trafficking in Hawai'i*. Ho'ola Na Pua Accessed Feb. 9, 2021, available at <https://hoolanapua.org/trafficking-research/>

<sup>3</sup> Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section. *Child Sex Trafficking*. U.S Department of Justice. Accessed Feb. 9, 2021, available at <https://www.justice.gov/criminal-ceos/child-sex-trafficking>

Victims of sex trafficking can suffer from lifelong trauma. Often, the fact that they are victims of sex trafficking can go unidentified or misidentified as other issues, and minors may only be treated for surface problems such as drug and alcohol abuse, STDs, mental illness, and/or teen pregnancy<sup>4</sup>. It is vital that we are able to support survivors of trafficking and protect other potential victims in the future. I urge the committees and senate to pass SB543, Relating to Human Trafficking. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Bridget Conlon

Bridget Conlon  
1227 Akamai St.  
Kailua, HI 96734  
bconlon21@punahou.edu

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<sup>4</sup> Shared Hope International. *What is Sex Trafficking?*. Shared Hope International. Accessed Feb. 9, 2021, available at <https://sharedhope.org/the-problem/what-is-sex-trafficking/?scrlybrkr=0a772766>

Chair Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura  
Vice Chair Senator Les Ihara Jr.  
Committee on Human Services

On the following measure:

S.B. 543 RELATING TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Thursday, February 11, 2021

3:00 p.m.

Conference Room 225

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

Aloha, my name is Taryn Adams-Leon and I am a student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. I am testifying in support of the Senate Bill 543 and the establishment of a statewide coordinator and program within the department of the attorney general to provide services and assistance to sexually exploited children and victims of human trafficking.

Human trafficking and the exploitation of youth here in Hawai'i has been a problem for many years and since the COVID-19 pandemic, has only gotten worse. This is due to the financial disparities that individuals are currently facing because of COVID-19, making them at higher risk for becoming trafficked and/or exploited, including our youth.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic and the closure of schools that stopped in person teaching, it has put youth at an even higher risk to be trafficked and/or exploited as schools are no longer able to look out for their students and report any red flags. In addition, because much of the human trafficking and sexual exploitation here in Hawai'i takes place online, youth are at an even higher risk than others as most, if not all, of their learning has switched to virtual learning which increases their time spent on the computer/internet.

I am in strong support of this bill because as discussed above, individuals, especially youth here in Hawai'i, are at a higher risk of being trafficked and sexually exploited due to the pandemic. Therefore, there is an urgency to establish a coordinator and program to help these victims. I strongly believe that the coordinator and program will be able to provide the support

that these individuals are not currently able to receive from their schools and/or communities because of COVID-19.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony,

Taryn Adams-Leon

**SB-543**

Submitted on: 2/10/2021 11:03:43 AM

Testimony for HMS on 2/11/2021 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Sandra A. Simms	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Greetings,

I am in full support of this measure to insure that we secure a path for the safety and well being of children who are being exploited and trafficked for sexual purposes. Sadly, even with the advent of Covid, this trend is increasing rather than abating and it is imperative that we do all we can to stem this tide. You are in possession of the disturbing data on these matters so it is not necessary for me to repeat it. Protecting our children is preserving our future and I strongly urge passage of this bill..

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra A. Simms

Before the  
Committee on Human Services  
Chair Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura  
Vice Chair Senator Les Ihara Jr.

On the following measure:

S.B. 543 RELATING TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Thursday, February 11, 2021

3:00 p.m.

Conference Room 225

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice-Chair Ihara, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Cassandra Dimailig, a Master's in Social student at the Thompson School of Social Work and Public Health. I am testifying in support of Senate Bill 543 relating to human trafficking and the establishment of a statewide coordinator and program within the department of the attorney general to provide services and assistance to sexually exploited children and victims of human trafficking.

Child and Family Services (CFS) in Hawai'i conducted a survey in 2020 in which 26.7% out of over 300 individuals reported sex trafficking. Out of those surveyed, 25% individuals reported child sex trafficking, and 27% reported their first sex trafficker was a family member. This percentage is an alarming amount considering these were only individuals who sought out services from professionals at CFS. CFS also states that out of those surveyed, two-thirds of those reported being homeless, and 64% of sex trafficking victims identified a being all or some Native Hawaiian.

I strongly believe in this bill, and the opportunity to provide further services and assistance to victims of sexually exploited children and of human trafficking. This bill will provide support to those who have been affected by human trafficking in Hawai'i. The prevention strategies will limit the trafficking there is in Hawai'i, with an additional focus on marginalized populations. Senate Bill 543 will not only educate about human trafficking in

Hawai'i but truly give the victims the specific aid and assistance they need. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

Thank you,  
Cassandra Dimailig

**SB-543**

Submitted on: 2/10/2021 12:35:56 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/11/2021 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Karen M Radius	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

My name is Karen Radius. I am a retired Family Court Judge. I submit this testimony in my individual capacity as a concerned citizen.

I strongly support this bill and its companion House Bill 722.

I serve as the volunteer co-chair of the current Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) Steering Committee which was formed by a written agreement between the primary state agencies/branches of government serving children and youth, Family Court, Department of Human Services, Department of Health, and Department of Education, as well as state and county law enforcement agencies on Oahu. Federal agencies also participate. Our primary purpose is to establish an understanding of the issues facing our youth and families, assess the scope of the problem and determine best practices to provide timely response to the victims and better coordination between agencies and service providers as well as better communication and effective prosecution of perpetrators who traffick Hawaii's kids.

While much has been accomplished in this area in the past few years, all of the agencies and service providers are stretched thin. All work on this issue is in addition to their regular responsibilities. There is much more attention and focus that needs to be given to this issue.

SB 543 would establish a designated coordinator within the Office of the Attorney General who could devote his/her full energy and time to create a system to collect and analyze good data about the scope of the problem and work with the various agencies to create a comprehensive plan. The bill requires the coordinator to make a report to the legislature. This would be integral to the legislature, agencies and citizens making wise decisions.

While in the past Family Court on Oahu generally had 4 -6 prostitution cases charged against minors yearly most of whom were arrested in stings. But the problems our youth were facing were hiding in plain sight. Since June 2017 when DHS established their mandated reporting line to report suspected cases of commercial sexual exploitation of minors until December 31, 2020 there have been hundreds of suspected cases reported regarding youth as young as age 6 up through age 17, with reports from each of the islands and all neighborhoods. While not all reported cases are



confirmed or some of the children located, one can clearly see that this is an issue faced by many of our children and families. We believe that there may be even more children caught up in this that have not been reported or located.

SB 543 also makes clear that the Children's Justice Center shall include in its mission services to children who are victims of human trafficking/CSEC. They have begun to do so and need to continue.

Children exposed to CSEC have a long and difficult road to healing, but they can survive and flourish with the right kind of support.

This bill is a needed step in our continued efforts on their behalf.

SB 543 is essential to clarify the scope of what Hawaii faces and to create a coordinated thoughtful plan for our kids and for adults as well.

**SB-543**

Submitted on: 2/10/2021 3:25:13 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/11/2021 3:00:00 PM

**LATE**

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
LaTasia Franklin	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support the passing of this bill.