

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

February 5, 2023

TO: The Honorable Representative John M. Mizuno, Chair
House Committee on Human Services

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
House Committee on Health & Homelessness

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: [HB 223 HD1](#) – RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES.

Hearing: February 7, 2023, 8:45 a.m.
Conference Room 329 & Videoconferencing, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this measure, similar to administration measures HB 1069 and SB 1367 relating to Act 130, Session Laws of Hawaii 2022, regarding the Safe Spaces for Youth Pilot Program. DHS defers to the Office of Youth Services.

PURPOSE: This bill amends the Office of Youth Services (OYS) safe spaces for youth pilot program by clarifying access to services, providing a definition of homeless youth, and expanding the age of youth that may be served. Appropriates funds. (HD1)

Youth, including minors aged 14-17 and transition-age youth aged 18-24, experiencing housing instability and homelessness, need safe places to seek shelter and receive assistance. The needs of youth are distinct from those of the general homeless population and require a specialized understanding of young adults and adolescents. The proposed pilot administered

by OYS will fill a gap in care and provide more specialized services than can be provided through other DHS homeless programs.

Additionally, this measure adds a new definition of "homeless youth" that is consistent with the "homeless" definition used by the Department of Education (DOE). The DOE definition and this bill's new definition are more expansive than the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) definition because they include youth living temporarily with others or what's referred to as "couch surfing." Under the current HUD definition of "homeless," many runaway youths that are "couch surfing" are not included, and estimates of homeless youth in the statewide Point in Time (PIT) counts are widely considered to be undercounts. For example, the 2022 statewide PIT count estimated only 131 unaccompanied youth on Oahu and 48 unaccompanied youth on the neighbor islands. The definition in this bill will better enable runaway youth and youth at risk of homelessness to access safe spaces.

In addition, this measure requires that youth shelter providers ensure youth under the jurisdiction of the juvenile justice or child welfare systems access available services through those systems as required by the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, as amended. DHS supports this requirement based on recent federal Administration for Children and Families guidance. Connecting youth to services available through the child welfare and juvenile justice systems may give them access to services needed to support a transition to adulthood, health care coverage, housing, higher education, and independent living. Additionally, youth may be more willing to participate in services if they feel they are in a safe environment.

The Safe Spaces For Youth Pilot Program will enhance existing services for runaway and homeless youth statewide. The Pilot Program will also increase coordination between OYS, DHS, DOE, the counties, and other community stakeholders who work with youth.

OYS requested these funds as part of the executive budget bill and respectfully asks the Legislature to appropriate these funds through the executive budget bill.

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

February 6, 2023

TO: The Honorable Representative John M. Mizuno, Chair
House Committee on Human Services

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair
House Committee on Health & Homelessness

FROM: Leanne Gillespie, Executive Director

SUBJECT: HB 223 HD1 – RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES
Hearing: February 7, 2023, 8:45 a.m.
Conference Room 329 & Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Office of Youth Services (OYS) strongly supports this measure.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this bill is to amend Act 130, Session Laws of Hawaii 2022, by expanding the definition of "homeless youth", the age of youth who may be served, and access to services to youth who may be experiencing a myriad of crisis situations and who are at-risk of homelessness. Appropriates funds. This measure is similar to administration bills HB 1069 and SB 1367 RELATING TO ACT 130, Session Laws of Hawaii 2022.

Act 130 created the opportunity for the Office of Youth Services to establish the inter-agency Safe Spaces Pilot Program and physical safe spaces, in each county. This program authorized the OYS to contract with nonprofit organizations who shall have the knowledge, experience, and qualifications, including licenses necessary to operate a shelter for homeless youth for up to ninety (90) days without the consent of the youth's parent or guardian.

This was enacted after the legislature found that runaway and homeless youth are vulnerable to multiple threats, including having unmet basic food and shelter needs, untreated mental health disorders, substance use, significant disruption to their education, sexually transmitted diseases and human immunodeficiency virus infection, sexual exploitation, physical victimization, and suicide. However, the language in Act 130 does not necessarily provide for youth experiencing these situations to participate. The Act is currently limited to youth ages 14 to 24 and who are homeless. The OYS believes that the intent of this Act was to not just

provide services to homeless youth, but to also prevent homelessness by providing access to services for youth experiencing the variety of crisis situations listed above.

During the preliminary assessment and planning stages of Act 130, the Office of Youth Services identified several gaps and draws attention to the following:

1. The current definition of “youth” is limited to the ages 14 to 24 years old. This measure expands the definition of “youth” to include an individual under the age of twenty-five years of age (Page 3, Line 19-20). The OYS is aware of children under the age of 14 needing shelter and does not want to be in a position of denying shelter for any child in need seeking services under this program.
2. The Act limits participation in this program for “homeless youth”. This measure expands participation to “youth at risk of homelessness” or “youth experiencing homelessness” or “homeless youth”.
3. The Act does not define “homeless youth”. This measure provides a comprehensive definition, consistent with that of the Department of Education, to include “Youth at risk of homelessness”, “youth experiencing homelessness” and “homeless youth”, thereby expanding the program to youth who are runaway and/or “couch surfing”.
4. This measure adds language to require shelter providers to ensure that youth in their shelters who are or should be under the jurisdiction of the juvenile justice or child welfare systems, access available services as required by the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act as amended (Page 3, Line 12-18).

This measure appropriates out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$4,496,870 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal years 2023-2024 and the same sum of \$4,496,870 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal years 2024-2025 to fund and operate the safe spaces for youth pilot program, including funding for two full-time equivalent (2.0 FTE) positions and administrative costs for the pilot program that OYS deems necessary for implementation. OYS requested these funds as part of the executive budget bill and respectfully asks the Legislature to appropriate these funds through the executive budget bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.



HAWAI`I YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

677 Ala Moana Blvd., Suite 904

Honolulu, Hawai`i 96813

Phone: (808) 489-9549

Web site: <http://www.hysn.org> E-mail: info@hysn.org

Vonnell Ramos, President
Cyd Hoffeld, Vice President
Sione Ford Naeata, Treasurer
Jefferson Gourley, Secretary

Judith F. Clark, Executive
Director

Network Membership

Bay Clinic

Big Brothers Big Sisters Hawai`i

*Big Island Substance Abuse
Council*

Bobby Benson Center

Child and Family Service

Coalition for a Drug-Free Hawai`i

Collins Consulting, LLC

Domestic Violence Action Center

EPIC `Ohana, Inc.

Family Programs Hawai`i

Family Support Hawai`i

Friends of the Children's Justice

Center of Maui

Get Ready Hawai`i

Hale Kipa, Inc.

Hale `Opio Kaua`i, Inc.

Hawai`i Children's Action

Network

Hawai`i Health & Harm

Reduction Center

Ho`ola Na Pua

Ho`okele Coalition of Kaua`i

Ka Hale Pomaika`i

Kahi Mohala

Kokua Kalihi Valley

Kaua`i Planning and Action

Alliance

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

PHOCUSED

PFLAG—Kona, Big Island

Planned Parenthood of the

Great Northwest, Hawaii

Alaska, Kentucky, Indiana

Residential Youth Services

& Empowerment (RYSE)

Salvation Army Family

Intervention Services

Sex Abuse Treatment Center

Susannah Wesley Community

Center

The Catalyst Group

February 5, 2023

To: Representative John Mizuno, Chair
And members of the Committee on Human Services

Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair,
And members of the Committee on Health and Homelessness

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 223 RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES

Hawaii Youth Services Network, a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, strongly supports HB 223 Relating to Human Services

Act 130 created the opportunity for the Office of Youth Services to establish the inter-agency Safe Spaces Pilot Program and physical safe spaces, in each county. The purpose of this bill is to expand the definition of "homeless youth", the age of youth who may be served, and access to services to youth who may be experiencing a myriad of crisis situations and who are at-risk of homelessness.

This was enacted after the legislature found that runaway and homeless youth are vulnerable to multiple threats, including having unmet basic food and shelter needs, untreated mental health disorders, substance use, significant disruption to their education, sexually transmitted diseases and human immunodeficiency virus infection, sexual exploitation, physical victimization, and suicide. However, the language in Act 130 does not necessarily provide for youth experiencing these situations to participate. The Act is currently limited to youth ages 14 to 24 and who are homeless. The OYS believes that the intent of this Act was to not just provide services to homeless youth, but to also prevent homelessness by providing access to services for youth experiencing the variety of crisis situations listed above.

Homeless youth are the most vulnerable segment of our homeless population because they are children who have not completed their educations, lack employment skills and experience, and have not yet learned the skills needed for adult living. Increasing the safety of our vulnerable youth while on the streets and helping them move into safe and appropriate living situations should be a top priority for our state.

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 style with a large, sweeping initial "J".

Judith F. Clark, MP H
Executive Director

HB-223-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/6/2023 8:13:10 PM

Testimony for HUS on 2/7/2023 8:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
tyler green	Caring Hands Foster Home	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I,Tyler Green Green a Partner of Caring Hands Foster Home support Bill HB 223