

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

March 11, 2023

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

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: [SB 295 SD2](#) – RELATING TO THE CHILD WELFARE SERVICES.

Hearing: March 14, 2023, 9:00 am
Conference Room 329 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this measure, provides comments, defers to the Office of Wellness & Resilience regarding necessary resources, and requests an amendment exempting the Malama Ohana Working Group from provisions of Part I, Chapter 92, Hawaii Revised Statutes, to facilitate the work of the working group.

PURPOSE: This bill establishes within the Office of Wellness and Resilience, the Malama Ohana Working Group to seek, design, and recommend transformative changes to the State's existing child welfare system. Allows the Office of Wellness and Resilience to contract with an administrative facilitator to provide necessary support for the Malama Ohana Working Group in carrying out its duties. Requires the Malama Ohana Working Group to report to the Legislature prior to the Regular Session of 2025 and be dissolved upon the adjournment thereof. Appropriates funds. Effective 12/31/2050 (SD2)

The SD1 amended the measure by:

- (1) Inserting a blank appropriation amount;
- (2) Inserting an effective date of December 31, 2050, to encourage further discussion; and

- (3) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

The SD2 further amended the measure by:

- (1) Clarifying that the executive director of EPIC Ohana, Inc. or the executive director's designee and the chief executive officer of Hale Kipa, Inc., or the chief executive director's designee, shall be invited to participate in the working group and serve as co-chairs of the working group; and
- (2) Making technical nonsubstantive amendments for purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

DHS supports the Legislature's and community's efforts to strengthen the child welfare system of care. The system of care involves community advocates, service providers, national and local subject matter experts, DHS, DOH, the Department of Education, the Judiciary, and law enforcement. DHS also works with those we serve; those with lived experience; former foster youth, birth parents, relatives, and resource caregivers.

DHS is a member of the Trauma-Informed Task Force and actively participates in EPIC 'Ohana Inc.'s Nā Kama a Hāloa network. Alongside community partners, DHS has partnered with community stakeholders to drive this initiative. DHS supports the network and community partner's preference to establish the Malama 'Ohana Working Group within the Office of Wellness and Resilience.

Importantly, given such a large membership and the existing relationships between members, to facilitate the work of the Malama 'Ohana Working Group, DHS respectfully requests an amendment exempting the working group from Part I of Chapter 92, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

Also, through our 'Ohana Nui multigenerational framework to end poverty, DHS is working to improve access to community services and our online capabilities. For example, DHS is working to establish a network of family resource centers, including one at Waiawa Correctional Center, that will serve as a community based one-stop for families to seek services and assistance. As a result, communities with family resource centers have lower rates of child abuse and neglect reports.

We look forward to continuing to innovate with the Office of Wellness & Resilience and the Malama 'Ohana Working Group to address the root causes of child abuse and neglect.

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



SB295 SD2
RELATING TO CHILD WELFARE SERVICES
House Committee on Human Services

March 14, 2023

9:00 AM

Room 329

The Administration of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) will recommend to the Board of Trustees **SUPPORT** for SB295 SD2, which would establish the Mālama ‘Ohana Working Group for the purpose of improving the State’s child welfare system.

As the principal public agency in the State responsible for the performance, development, and coordination of programs and activities relating to Native Hawaiians,¹ OHA takes care to note that Native Hawaiian children are disproportionately represented among those in foster care; Native Hawaiian children under the age of 18 comprise roughly 32.6% of the total Native Hawaiian population,² which is itself approximately 21.5% of the total State population,³ yet, Native Hawaiian children comprise 44.6% of all children in foster care.⁴

The Mālama ‘Ohana Working Group will function as a necessary bridge between community voices and their contributions dedicated to the well-being of children in Hawai‘i and the Legislature for greater accountability and transparency of the State’s child welfare system. These communities and community-based organizations have critical first-hand experience in understanding ways to improve existing child welfare services that would not only benefit children in foster care, resource caregivers, support organization and programs, but would also be infinitely beneficial to the State of Hawai‘i in its duty of care to our younger and future generations.

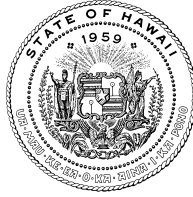
OHA appreciates the opportunity to support this measure and respectfully urges the Legislature to **PASS** SB295 SD2. Mahalo nui loa.

¹ HRS §10-3.

² U.S Census Bureau (2021). American Community Survey 2021 1-Year Estimates. Table S0201 Selected Population Profile in the United States. <https://data.census.gov/table?q=S0201&t=062:Populations+and+People&g=0400000US15&y=2021>. Data pulled on 2/10/2023.

³ U.S Census Bureau (2021). American Community Survey 2021 1-Year Estimates. Table S0201 Selected Population Profile in the United States. <https://data.census.gov/table?t=062&g=0400000US15>. Data pulled on 2/10/2023.

⁴ Epic ‘Ohana Inc., *Get Involved with Mālama ‘Ohana*, available at: <https://www.epicohana.org/new-page-1>; citing to State of Hawai‘i Department of Human Services Databook, Dec. 2021, available at: <https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/DHS-Databook-20212.pdf>.



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA

House Committee on Human Services
Tuesday, March 14, 2023
9:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 329 & Videoconference
In Strong Support of
S.B. No. 295 SD2, Relating to the Child Welfare Services

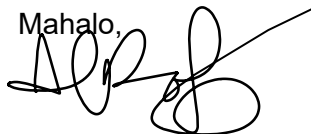
Aloha Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato and members of the Committee:

The Office of the Wellness and Resilience (OWR) in the Governor's Office is in **STRONG SUPPORT** of S.B. No. 295 SD2, Relating to the Child Welfare Services.

Established through Act 291, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2022, OWR will address barriers and build wellness and resilience through trauma-informed, strengths-based strategies and support agencies in their trauma-informed care reform efforts and move toward a collaborative, shared purpose of collective system reform.

The establishment of a working group in the OWR to develop recommendations specifically for the child welfare system will help build a collaborative approach with our system partners and community-based organizations. As the Executive Director of the OWR, weaving the principles of trauma-informed care to guide all aspects of this office, including the involvement of community voice and creating opportunities to collaborate, will be essential in creating a trauma-informed state. I support the purpose of this bill and respectfully request appropriations for the working group to carry out its duties.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **strong support** of this measure.

Mahalo,


Tia L R Hartsock, MSW, MSCJA
Executive Director, Office of Wellness & Resilience
Office of the Governor

March 10, 2023

Testimony in support of Senate Bill 295 Relating to the Child Welfare Services

Aloha Honorable members of the House Committee on Health and Human Services,

My name is Chassidy Shinno and I have been a participant in the Nā Kama a Hāloa Network. I am writing as an individual, and as a Senior Manager at EPIC `Ohana.

I support the establishment of the Mālama `Ohana working group as outlined in SB 295.

In my work at EPIC `Ohana, I have been blessed with the opportunity to work with parent peer supporters who draw on their own personal experiences navigating the CWS system to walk alongside other parents in their CWS journey. I have seen, first-hand, how this powerful engagement impacts families and is beginning to change the hearts and minds of those who provide critical services to these families and their children.

While I strongly believe the work of parent and youth peer support are part of the transformation we seek, there is more that we all need to do as a larger community. Existing services and resources are stretched, especially on the neighbor islands. In addition to more services and resources, we need a collaborative movement as a State to better understand the experiences of CWS-involved families and children. We must find ways to address domestic violence, poverty, substance use, homelessness with an approach that is sensitive to our unique demographic. Western methods do not always fit a community whose people are as culturally diverse as we are in Hawai`i.

The Mālama `Ohana Working Group will engage and uplift the voices of those with lived experience-- birth parents, youth, resource caregivers (aka foster parents) and family members -- bringing a much needed awareness and understanding to others in the community. The Mālama `Ohana Working Group is comprised of dedicated community partners and CWS staff who are ready to formulate transformative solutions.

I ask for your collective support of this game-changing initiative by passing this bill with an effective date upon signing and also funding the hard work to be done. It is like nothing the State has ever seen before. It is time for those with lived experiences in CWS, with the support of their community, to convene courageous and necessary conversations. This is the only way we can protect our keiki now and in the future. With strong commitment and a genuine love for my community, I ask for you to be a part of this incredible movement. Please support HB 295 and the establishment of the Mālama `Ohana Working Group.

Aloha,



Chassidy Shinno

SB-295-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2023 2:56:39 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/14/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Golojuch Jr	Stonewall Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Representatives,

The Stonewall Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai‘i; Hawai‘i’s oldest and largest policy and political LGBTQIA+ focused organization fully supports SB 295 SD 2.

We do request the inclusion of representative for the LGBTQIA+ community in the working group, the participants are listed on page 6.

The needs for LGBTQIA+ youth are different than the needs of their straight and/or cisgender peers.

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



HAWAI`I YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

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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*

March 10, 2023

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

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF
SB 295 SD 2 RELATING TO THE CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

Hawaii Youth Services Network, a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, supports SB 295 SD 2 Relating to the Child Welfare Services.

Hawaiian and Pacific Islander children and youth are consistently overrepresented in the Child Welfare System. Malama Ohana is a collaborative effort to identify the issues and needs of these children and families and develop culturally appropriate approaches to reduce overrepresentation.

Providing staffing support through the Office of Wellness and Resilience will support and enhance the initiative.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Judith F. Clark, MPH
Executive Director



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 295 SD2:
RELATING TO CHILD WELFARE SERVICES**

TO: House Committee on Human Services

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

Hearing: Tuesday 3/14/2023 at 9:00 AM; CR 329 & via videoconference

Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato, and Members, Committee on Health and Human Services

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of **SB 295 SD2**, which establishes the Malama Ohana Working Group under the Office of Wellness and Resilience. We add the following comments: to incorporate an effective date upon signing and that funding include operational cost to facilitate, compile information, and generate reports. 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 75 years. CCH has programs serving children, families, elders, homeless, and immigrants. Our mission is to provide services and advocacy for the most vulnerable in Hawaii. Catholic Charities Hawaii has a long history of providing services for the child welfare system.

The goal of this Malama Ohana Working Group is to pull together the voices affected by the Child Welfare System to recommend and create a healthier and effective system for the children and families in Hawaii. This group will most importantly include the voices of the children and families with lived experience which is crucial to make meaningful recommendations for effective change.

Catholic Charities Hawaii supports this bill to establish and provide funding for the Malama Ohana Working Group. We urge your support for this bill and ask for your assistance in its passing during this legislative session.

Please contact our Director of Advocacy and Community Relations, Shellie Niles at (808) 527-4813 if you have any questions.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide this testimony.





HAWAI'I STATE
COALITION AGAINST
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

March 14, 2023

Members of the House Committee on Human Services:

Chair John M. Mizuno
Vice Chair Terez Amato
Rep. Della Au Belatti
Rep. Greggor Ilagan
Rep. Bertrand Kobayashi
Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi
Rep. Diamond Garcia

Re: SB295 SD2 Relating to Child Welfare Service

Dear Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato, and Members of the House Committee on Human Services:

The Hawai'i State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (HSCADV) addresses the social, political, and economic impacts of domestic violence on individuals, families, and communities. We are a statewide partnership of domestic violence programs and shelters.

On behalf of HSCADV and our 28 member programs statewide, I respectfully submit testimony in **strong support of SB295 SD2**. The child welfare system in Hawai'i affects many community partners and system participants who are concerned about child welfare and advocate for victims of domestic violence. Collaboration between these partners and the Department of Human Services is imperative to successfully addressing the shortcomings of the child welfare system.

This working group will allow the legislature and the State to hear the voices of the community as they share the urgent need to transform the child welfare system through collaboration, transparency, accountability, and reconciliation. This group would bring together invested partners as well as gather the voices of lived experiences that have been impacted by the child welfare system here in Hawai'i. Since much of this work will include hearing from the community and understanding the lived experiences of those impacted by child abuse and neglect and the child welfare system, we believe the organization tasked with bringing the



HAWAI'I STATE
COALITION AGAINST
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

working group to fruition must be steadfast in carrying it out with trauma-informed practices with the appropriate staffing to do it justice.

We believe in the promise of the Malama 'Ohana working group and strongly support this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.

Sincerely,
Angelina Mercado, Executive Director



HALE KIPA

Executive Staff

Venus K. Rosete-Medeiros,
President & CEO
Gwen Okamoto, CFO
Tracy Janowicz, COO
Dori Tyau, CAO
Michelle Jenkins, CPO
Laura Brucia Hamm, CQ/O

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Jean Odo
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Richard J. Sakoda

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www.halekipa.org



Honorable House Human Services Chairs and Committe members,

Aloha, my name is Venus Rosete-Medeiros and I have been a participant in the Nā Kama a Hāloa Network from the very beginning in 2018. I am writing as an individual, and I am also the President & CEO of Hale Kipa. I completely support the establishment of the Mālama ‘Ohana working group.

I am concerned about the families and children in child welfare. Services and resources are stretched, especially on the neighbor islands. Services and resources are needed to deal with issues of domestic violence, substance use disorder, mental health issues, poverty and houselessness. The problems that our children and families face need all of us to work together. We cannot rely on the state government alone. As a member of Nā Kama a Hāloa Network I have witnessed the power of this kind of community collaboration. I served on the Kauhale committee that was able to produce cultural humility and cultural awareness trainings and presentations for CWS workers. We also developed cultural trainings for resource caregivers to help them understand the importance of supporting cultural connections and connecting children under their care to culturally relevant activities and opportunities.

Malama ‘Ohana Working group will engage the voices of those with lived experience as birth parents, youth, resource caregivers and family members both listen to the experiences of overs in the community and come together with community partners and CWS staff to formulate solutions. Having the Mālama ‘Ohana workgroup would be able to engage stakeholders, partners and those with lived experiences from across the State. In order to improve the CWS system, we must make every effort to provide convenient gathering sessions to ensure all voice have a chance to be heard.

The child welfare system is extremely complex and our CWS staff is often pulled in many directions. We have experienced how helpful and innovative community collaboration can be to improving outcomes for children and families. I would also like to request that the work group begin upon signing of the bill, and that funds be appropriated to the Office of Wellness and Resilience to support the work group.

Hale Kipa is committed to continue the work within Nā Kama A Hāloa, Kauhale, and the Mālama ‘Ohana Committee. Please vote in support of HB . This workgroup will only help our State to refine, correct and enhance the services in partnership with our State Department of Child Welfare Services.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify,

Venus Kau‘iokawēkiu Rosete-Medeiros
President & CEO

SB-295-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2023 9:31:09 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/14/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mike Golojuch, Sr.	Rainbow Family 808	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Rainbow Family 808 supports SB 295 but requests that the LGBTQ+ community have a representative. Please pass this bill.

Mike Golojuch, Sr., Secretary/Board Member

SB-295-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/11/2023 5:32:38 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/14/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marilyn Yamamoto	Hawaii Coalition for Child Protective Reform	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Committee members,

The Hawaii Coalition for Child Protective Reform supports this bill.

SB-295-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/12/2023 3:21:49 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/14/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lise Vaughan Sekona	Epic 'Ohana	Support	In Person

Comments:

RE: SB295, SD2 - Relating to the Child Welfare Services

E ka Luna Ho‘omalu Mizuno, ka Hope Luna Ho‘omalu Amato, a me nā Lālā o ke kōmike, aloha!

Thank you for the opportunity to express our **STRONG SUPPORT for SB295 SD2**. We are members of the **Nā Kama a Hāloa network**. Nā Kama a Hāloa is a network of more than 30 community serving organizations and individuals with lived experiences that work collaboratively to improve the lives of native Hawaiian children and families in the child welfare system. The network convenes to address and improve the child welfare system by embedding Native Hawaiian approaches and practices in the daily work of those impacting the lives of keiki Hawai‘i.

The **Mālama ‘Ohana Working Group** was formed and prototyped by the Nā Kama a Hāloa network. Our network asks the legislature to hear the voices of the community to protect the children in and out of the child welfare system. Representation in the working group supports collaboration between service providers with those they serve to lift up the voices of those with lived experience in the child welfare system. We believe that the **Mālama ‘Ohana Working Group** is an important commitment and investment to provide necessary lived experience and community recommendations to improve the child welfare system.

We have experienced how helpful and innovative **community collaboration** can be to improving outcomes for children and families. Since 2018, members of the Nā Kama a Hāloa network have worked with leaders from Child Welfare Services (CWS) to implement several projects that shift certain practices of the child welfare system so that it can approach trauma in families with . These collaborative projects include the following samples of our work:

1. Developed training for new hires to CWS and resource caregivers.
2. Advocated for keeping siblings together.
3. Worked on projects that help resource caregivers and birth parents communicate better so that the children are less traumatized.
4. Formed a small cadre of parents, known as Parent Partners, with lived experience in the child welfare system that have successfully navigated the system. Parent Partners walk alongside parents to speak about their experiences and help parents navigate the system to improve outcomes for their keiki.

We believe that Native Hawaiian culture-based approaches are prudent and sensible solutions to support the development of all vulnerable youth in Hawai‘i, resulting in greater educational, social, health and overall life success.

Thank you for considering our comment and for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.

SB-295-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/12/2023 4:30:06 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/14/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nonohe Botelho	Hawaii Coalition for Child protective Reform	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of SB295. This measure has strong merit and should be passed.

The intent of SB295 is to be more *inclusive* of the Native Hawaiian population as well as others in our community. This measure is beautifully written and shows clear articulate knowledge of the needs of the Native Hawaiian population and the cultural practices that are so deeply ingrained in our culture.

Practices like, Hanai have been part of our culture for generations (prior to pre-colonization). Post colonization Western ideologies intervened giving the government, such as the Department of Human Services and the Child Welfare Services, the power to illegally remove our Keiki without a warrant or court order. Government overreach has devastated our Native Hawaiian Community with severe impact on our families. This must stop.

Finally, SB295 will provide for a working group that is *inclusive* (rather than exclusive) of community members, stakeholders and families that have been negatively and profoundly affected when their Keiki are removed from their Ohana and their Lahui.

Please pass SH295. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Mahalo,

Nonohe Botelho

Independent Consultant/ Victim Advocate

Hawaii Coalition for Child Protective Reform



1130 N. NIMITZ HWY, SUITE C-210, HONOLULU, HI 96817
PHONE: (808) 838-7752 TOLL FREE: (866) 636-1644 FAX: (808) 838-1653

To: House Human Services Committee
From: Laurie Arial Tochiki, Executive Director
Re: Support for SB 295
Date: March 12, 2023

I am Laurie Arial Tochiki and I am the Executive Director of EPIC 'Ohana. I write to express my strong support and commitment to the Malama Ohana Working Group established by SB 295. We respectfully ask that an effective date upon signing be established, so that the work can begin quickly. And we ask for an appropriate of \$250,000 for each year of the working group, to be allocated to the Governor's Office on Wellness and Resilience. The working group will begin immediately to establish a collaborative and collective impact design for the working group. Funding is needed for administrative assistance, facilitation, and for report writing. In addition we are proposing the utilization of convenings to air the stories and the ideas that come from listening sessions that will be conducted throughout the state.

EPIC 'Ohana is the backbone organization for Nā Kama a Hāloa. I have been working in the child welfare system for 40 years. First as an attorney representing parents and children in child welfare cases, then as an employee of the Judiciary where I helped to establish programs relating to families and children, including Kids First. In 1996 I was blessed to serve as one of the founders of 'Ohana Conferencing. The system is much more than the Child Welfare Services offices within the Department of Human Services. The system includes all of the organizations that serve the families and children, it includes the Department of Health and the Department of Education, and it includes our communities and those with lived experience in the system. The Mālama 'Ohana proposal will bring together those directly impacted by the child welfare system in a collective impact process that is desperately needed.

Since 2018, Nā Kama a Hāloa, a network of more than 30 organizations and individuals with lived experiences has worked collaboratively to improve the lives of native Hawaiian children and families in the child welfare system. We started with a conversation about the intersection between child welfare and caring for native Hawaiian children who are over represented in the child welfare system. Leaders from child welfare services, Lili'uokalani Trust, Kamehameha Schools, Casey Family Programs and Annie E. Casey Foundation met and affirmed their shared kuleana for the wellbeing of these children. Since then, our network has implemented several



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projects to try to shift aspects of the child welfare system so that it can work better. We have developed a training for new hires to CWS and resource caregivers. We have advocated for keeping siblings together, and we have worked on projects to help resource caregivers and birth parents communicate better so that the children are less traumatized. An especially powerful project was to form a small cadre of parents who have lived experience in the child welfare system and have successfully navigated the system. They share experiences of substance use disorder, they are all survivors of domestic violence, and some were formerly incarcerated. Now they walk alongside other parents in the system, and they speak about their experiences to help improve child welfare.

Our network asks the legislature to hear the voices of the community for the urgent need for all of us to work collaboratively to protect the children in and out of the child welfare system. And we as a community must also do more than protect, we also need to care for the wellbeing of the children involved in the system.

We ask that the legislature make a commitment to not only listen to the voices of the families and children, but also enable the joint collective problem solving that this crisis needs. Yes, some of the voices are angry. The conversations will be difficult and must be skillfully facilitated. We collectively grieve for the pain that so many children, parents, foster parents and 'ohana feel not only for the poverty, domestic violence, mental health concerns and substance use disorder issues that make our children vulnerable, but also for the workers in the child welfare system that we believe is in crisis. The only solution is to collaborate.

In January, our HI HOPES leadership boards, made up of current and former foster youth who advocate, educate and collaborate for their brothers and sisters in care, met in Kohala, Hawai'i to strengthen their voices and their leadership for the coming year. A 22 year old young man who aged out of the foster care system said that foster care is like being a broken object, placed on a shelf and forgotten. He shared that he burned his way through seven foster homes before he finally received treatment for trauma. Today he is a solid young man and a leader.

These are the voices we will bring to the table in Mālama 'Ohana. The system is complicated and solutions are not simple. But there is wisdom and genius in these voices, and we ask the legislature to listen. We are deeply committed to this project.

SB-295-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/12/2023 11:33:09 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/14/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keith Kuboyama	Family Programs Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Keith Kuboyama, and I have been an active participant in the Nā Kama a Hāloa Network. I am writing as in support of SB 295 on behalf of Family Programs Hawaii, a partner organization in the Network, and as its President and CEO.

I support the establishment of the Mālama ‘Ohana working group. We are concerned about the families and children in child welfare. While CWS is doing a lot to help these families, services and resources are stretched, especially on the neighbor islands. Services and resources are needed to deal with issues of domestic violence, substance use disorder, mental health issues, poverty and houselessness.

We also know that we can only find solutions through community collaborations like the Mālama ‘Ohana working group. We have experienced how helpful and innovative community-based collaboration can be to improving outcomes for children and families. We need Mālama ‘Ohana to bring the voices of those with lived experience, CWS staff and the community together to find solutions to these urgent problems. This effort will require broad community support and input. As a member of Nā Kama a Hāloa Network, I have witnessed the power of this kind of community collaboration.

SB 295 proposes to create a working group (Mālama ‘Ohana) through the state Office of Wellness and Resilience; to hold listening/talk story sessions throughout the state and bring community partners together to improve and help transform the child welfare system. We believe in the merits of SB 295 and ask that funds be appropriated to the Office of Wellness and Resilience to support the efforts of this work group. We would also like to ask that the work group begin meeting upon the signing of the bill.

Thank you for your time and attention to this urgent matter. Mahalo for all the good work you are doing in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Keith Kuboyama, LCSW

Family Programs Hawaii



House Committee on Human Services

Date: March 14, 2023
Time: 9:00 a.m.
Where: Conference Room 329

TESTIMONY

By: Nā Kama a Hāloa Network

RE: **SB295, SD2 - Relating to the Child Welfare Services**

E ka Luna Ho'omalua Mizuno, ka Hope Luna Ho'omalua Amato, a me nā Lālā o ke kōmike, aloha!

Thank you for the opportunity to express our **STRONG SUPPORT for SB295 SD2**. We are members of the **Nā Kama a Hāloa network**. Nā Kama a Hāloa is a network of more than 30 community serving organizations and individuals with lived experiences that work collaboratively to improve the lives of native Hawaiian children and families in the child welfare system. The network convenes to address and improve the child welfare system by embedding Native Hawaiian approaches and practices in the daily work of those impacting the lives of keiki Hawai'i.

The **Mālama 'Ohana Working Group** was formed and prototyped by the Nā Kama a Hāloa network. Our network asks the legislature to hear the voices of the community to protect the children in and out of the child welfare system. Representation in the working group supports collaboration between service providers with those they serve to lift up the voices of those with lived experience in the child welfare system. We believe that the **Mālama 'Ohana Working Group** is an important commitment and investment to provide necessary lived experience and community recommendations to improve the child welfare system.

We have experienced how helpful and innovative **community collaboration** can be to improving outcomes for children and families. Since 2018, members of the Nā Kama a Hāloa network have worked with leaders from Child Welfare Services (CWS) to implement several projects that shift certain practices of the child welfare system so that it can approach trauma in families in ways that work better for all families and keiki. These collaborative projects include the following samples of our work:

1. Developed training for new hires to CWS and resource caregivers.
2. Advocated for keeping siblings together.
3. Worked on projects that help resource caregivers and birth parents communicate better so that the children are less traumatized.
4. Formed a small cadre of parents, known as Parent Partners, with lived experience in the child welfare system that have successfully navigated the system. Parent Partners walk alongside parents to speak about their experiences and help parents navigate the system to improve outcomes for their keiki.

We believe that Native Hawaiian culture-based approaches are prudent and sensible solutions to support the development of all vulnerable youth in Hawai‘i, resulting in greater educational, social, health and overall life success.

Thank you for considering our comment and for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.

EPIC ‘Ohana

Hale Kipa

Kamehameha Schools

Keith Kuboyama, Family Programs Hawai‘i

Deb Marois, Converge Consulting

Jamee Miller, ‘Ekolu Mea Nui

Maddy Day LLC & Associates

Shawn Kana‘iaupuni, Partners in Development Foundation

Amanda Mundon, Resource Caregiver

Kristina Shibata, EPIC ‘Ohana

Kamaile Miyasato, EPIC ‘Ohana

Kailene Nihipali Sanchez, Resource Caregiver

Kayla Samson, Parent with lived experience

April Lum, Resource Caregiver

Ashley Viluan, Parent with lived experience

Lise Vaughan-Sekona, EPIC ‘Ohana

Britney Tavares, Parent with lived experience

Chassidy Shinno, EPIC ‘Ohana

Deanna Gonda, Resource Caregiver

Kimberly Nabarro, Parent with lived experience

Karen Worthington, Worthington Consulting

Diane Keliikoa, EPIC ‘Ohana

Sasha Autele, Parent with lived experience

Stephanie Hamano, Service Provider

Jeanne Hamilton, Service Provider

SB-295-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/13/2023 8:56:00 AM

Testimony for HUS on 3/14/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Britney Tavares	Epic Ohana INC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Mālama ‘Ohana Working group will engage the voices of those with lived experience as birth parents, youth, resource caregivers and family members both listen to the experiences of others in the community and come together with community partners and CWS staff to formulate solutions. I am a parent with lived experience navigating the Child Welfare System

Thank you,

Britney Tavares

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 295, SD2 – RELATING TO THE CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

House Committee on Human Services
Date: March 14, 2023; Time: 9:00 a.m.; Where: Conference Room 329
SUBMITTED BY: Pū‘ā Foundation - Nā Kama a Hāloa Network

E ka Luna Ho‘omalua Mizuno, ka Hope Luna Ho‘omalua Amato, a me nā Lālā o ke kōmike, aloha!

Thank you for the opportunity to express our **STRONG SUPPORT for SB295 SD2**. We are members of the **Nā Kama a Hāloa network**. Nā Kama a Hāloa is a network of more than 30 community serving organizations and individuals with lived experiences that work collaboratively to improve the lives of native Hawaiian children and families in the child welfare system. The network convenes to address and improve the child welfare system by embedding Native Hawaiian approaches and practices in the daily work of those impacting the lives of keiki Hawai‘i.

The **Mālama ‘Ohana Working Group** was formed and prototyped by the Nā Kama a Hāloa network. Our network asks the legislature to hear the voices of the community to protect the children in and out of the child welfare system. Representation in the working group supports collaboration between service providers with those they serve to lift up the voices of those with lived experience in the child welfare system. We believe that the **Mālama ‘Ohana Working Group** is an important commitment and investment to provide necessary lived experience and community recommendations to improve the child welfare system.

We have experienced how helpful and innovative **community collaboration** can be to improving outcomes for children and families. Since 2018, members of the Nā Kama a Hāloa network have worked with leaders from Child Welfare Services (CWS) to implement several projects that shift certain practices of the child welfare system so that it can approach trauma in families with . These collaborative projects include the following samples of our work:

1. Developed training for new hires to CWS and resource caregivers.
2. Advocated for keeping siblings together.
3. Worked on projects that help resource caregivers and birth parents communicate better so that the children are less traumatized.
4. Formed a small cadre of parents, known as Parent Partners, with lived experience in the child welfare system that have successfully navigated the system. Parent Partners walk alongside parents to speak about their experiences and help parents navigate the system to improve outcomes for their keiki.

We believe that Native Hawaiian culture-based approaches are prudent and sensible solutions to support the development of all vulnerable youth in Hawai‘i, resulting in greater educational, social, health and overall life success.

Thank you for considering our comment and for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.

Toni Bissen, Pū‘ā Foundation
2331 Seaview Ave.; Hon., HI 96822
Ofc Ph: 808-945-3570

SB-295-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/13/2023 9:05:50 AM

Testimony for HUS on 3/14/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristen Bachiller	Epic Ohana INC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Mālama ‘Ohana Working group will engage the voices of those with lived experience as birth parents, youth, resource caregivers and family members both listen to the experiences of overs in the community and come together with community partners and CWS staff to formulate solutions. I am a parent with lived experience navigating the Child Welfare System

Thank you,

Kristen Bachiller



**HAWAI'I COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION**

To: House Committee on Human Services
Representative John Mizuno, Chair
Representative Terez Amato, Vice Chair
And Members of the Committee

From: Micah Kāne, Chief Executive Officer & President - Hawai'i Community Foundation

Re: Testimony in Support of SB295 Relating to Child Welfare Services
Tuesday, March 14, 2023, 9:00 A.M.

The Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF) strongly supports Senate Bill 295 (SB295). SB295 continues the purpose of the Office of Wellness and Resilience that was created through the Legislature last year and implemented in 2023. The Malama Ohana Working Group can be a part of the Office of Wellness' impact to the State's wellbeing. This is a key area within HCF's CHANGE Framework under the "H" sector of Health, and work around child mental health and welfare. We will continue to support ideas and efforts that can bring systemic change to Hawaii for the betterment of our future. SB295 provides a solid investment of government resource, support, and confidence into this area.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB295.

SB-295-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2023 2:41:13 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/14/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeanne Hamilton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support SB295. I believe the proposed work will help Hawai'i improve supports for children and families. Please support this bill, make it effective upon signing, and provide funding for the work.

As the Statewide Initiative Manager for Nā Kama a Hāloa, I witness the power of

- Listening to people with diverse perspectives (lived experience in child welfare, Child Welfare Services leadership and staff, people from Native Hawaiian-serving organizations, and provider staff)
- Bringing together people with diverse perspectives and sharing our mo'olelo and stories
- Aligning our vision and
- Moving our work forward in concrete ways to better serve Hawaiian keiki and 'ohana.

The proposal for the Mālama 'Ohana provides the opportunity for us to work in a similar fashion to better leverage 'ohana and community strengths in partnership with the formal child welfare system.

Together, we can take powerful steps to transform child welfare and better serve our families.

Mahalo for listening and for your support,

Jeanne Hamilton

SB-295-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/11/2023 1:29:28 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/14/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dara Carlin, M.A.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Stand in Support but still request inclusion/invitation for **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE** representation please!!!

SB-295-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/12/2023 9:00:36 AM

Testimony for HUS on 3/14/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kimberly Nabarro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB295 SD2

I am Kimberly Nabarro and I have been a participant in the Nā Kama a Hāloa Network. I am writing as an individual, and I am a Parent Partner at EPIC Ohana.

I support the establishment of the Mālama ‘Ohana working group. The problems that our children and families face need all of us to work together. We cannot rely on the state government alone. As a member of Nā Kama a Hāloa Network I have witnessed the power of this kind of community collaboration.

I am concerned about the families and children in child welfare. Services and resources are stretched, especially on the neighbor islands. Services and resources are needed to deal with issues of domestic violence, substance use disorder, mental health issues, poverty and houselessness.

We need Malama ‘Ohana to bring the voices of those with lived experience, and the community together to find solutions to these urgent problems.

The Malama ‘Ohana Working group will engage the voices of those with lived experience as birth parents, youth, resource caregivers and family members both listen to the experiences of others in the community and come together with community partners and CWS staff to formulate solutions.

I am a Native Hawaiian mother, I have had Child Welfare involvement with all 6 of my children with my first involvement in 2003. I want to be able to share my experience, my challenges and solutions that I wish were available to me while I was navigating the system.

The voices of those with lived experience is so important to help transform the system and may be the missing piece to address the continual increase of Native Hawaiian families in the CWS.

I also request that the work group begin upon signing of the bill, and that funds be appropriated to the Office of Wellness and Resilience to support the work group.

Mahalo,

Kimberly Nabarro

March 13, 2023

RE: SB 295

Aloha Chair and Committee Members of Human Services,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 295 and the establishment of the Malama 'Ohana Working Group within the Office of Wellness and Resilience. My name is Taliesin Sumner-Longboy, I have been a direct service provider for over 5 years on Hawai'i island and will be graduating from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's Thompson School of Social Work in May 2023. In my work with organizations such as Catholic Charities Hawai'i and PARENTS, Inc. I've had the opportunity to witness first hand the need to explore and utilize culturally sensitive, community-based approaches to address disparities and shortcomings within Hawai'i's Child Welfare System.

The development and implementation of community-based support for children and parents in the Child Welfare System has historically been treated inconsequential and neglected in Family Service Plans despite the positive outcomes associated with community-based support such as reduced recidivism and higher rates of family reunification. Furthermore, research by Godinet, Arnsberger, & Garlock (2011) necessitates funding to explore and address the disparities and shortcomings of Hawai'i's Child Welfare Services, specifically for Native Hawaiian children who are overrepresented in the system.

The Malama 'Ohana Working Group is further supported by the success of EPIC 'Ohana, Inc.'s Nā Kama a Hāloa network that was established in 2018 which resulted in cultural training programs, an increase in children being placed with siblings, and an increase of parent involvement in their child's care alongside Resource Caregivers. The Malama 'Ohana Working Group would be a crucial step in assessing and addressing Child Welfare System concerns in order to better serve the vulnerable families of Hawai'i. I implore you to support this bill and its passage in this legislative session.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Taliesin Longboy', written in a cursive style.

Taliesin Sumner-Longboy

SB-295-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/12/2023 9:35:00 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/14/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Karen Worthington	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Committee on Human Services Hearing on Feb. 9, 2023, 9am

Support for SB295 SD2, related to child welfare services and establishing the Mālama 'Ohana Working Group

Dear Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato, and Committee Members,

I write to share my strong support for establishing the Mālama 'Ohana Working Group within the Office of Wellness and Resilience. Because of the urgent need for this work in Hawai'i, I ask that you require the work group to begin its work as soon as the bill is signed. I also urge you to appropriate funds to the Office of Wellness and Resilience to support the work group.

The working group brings together child welfare service members and community servicing organizations with parents, children, resource caregivers and family members with lived experience in the child welfare system. As a consultant and Children's Policy Lawyer who has worked on improving child welfare systems in several states and at the national level, I believe this approach of establishing the Mālama 'Ohana Working Group is a unique, powerful, and effective way to seek, design, and recommend transformative changes to the Hawai'i child welfare system. I strongly support the collaboration of service providers with those they serve to improve the outcomes for children in the child welfare system.

Mahalo for your thoughtful consideration of this request. Please contact me at karen@karenworthington.com if I can be of further assistance.

Best regards,

Karen Worthington, JD, Certified Child Welfare Law Specialist (CWLS)

66 Puakea Place

Kula, Hawaii 96790

SB-295-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/12/2023 9:44:36 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/14/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keola Pagud	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Representative Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Terez, and the House Committee on Human Services members,

My name is Keola Pagud and I strongly support SB 295 SD2 in order to establish the Malama 'Ohana Working Group. As a foster youth alumus and a human services professional, I have been involved in advocacy and direct service for over a decade. The challenges facing Child Welfare Services (CWS) are complex but are able to be understood by engaging the fuller child welfare community. I've seen the positive impacts of youth-adult partnerships in ensuring safety and assisting youth toward becoming healthy and connected youth. I have been able to witness the support of parents who have experienced CWS who want to share about the honest strengths and challenges of their experience. I kindly ask you to consider passing SB 295 SD2 in order to strengthen our diverse community.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Keola Pagud, MSW

SB-295-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/13/2023 8:25:52 AM

Testimony for HUS on 3/14/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deb Marois	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify and provide comments on SB295, relating to Child Welfare Services. I am writing as an individual and community development consultant who specializes in cross-sector collaboration in the health and human services sector. I joined EPIC 'Ohana Inc.'s Nā Kama a Hāloa network in 2021 to participate in improving outcomes for native Hawaiian children in the child welfare system.

I strongly support the establishment of the Mālama 'Ohana Working Group to seek, design, and recommend transformative changes to the Hawai'i child welfare system. The perspective of people with lived experience are essential for collaborative problem-solving, as is participation from across the spectrum of community based organizations and formal institutions involved in child welfare. Please contact me at deb@convergecert.com if I can be of further assistance.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Deb Marois, Makawao

SB-295-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/13/2023 8:39:02 AM

Testimony for HUS on 3/14/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deanna Gonda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in support of SB295. I am concerned about the families and children in child welfare. Services and resources are stretched, especially on the neighbor islands. Services and resources are needed to deal with issues of domestic violence, substance use disorder, mental health issues, poverty and houselessness. We need Mālama ‘Ohana to bring the voices of those with lived experience, and the community together to find solutions to these urgent problems.

Mahalo,

Deanna Gonda

TO: House of Representatives, Committee on Human Services

HEARING: Tuesday, March 14, 2023
9:00 AM
Conference Room 329 and Videoconference

FROM: Sharla-Ann Fujimoto

RE: In SUPPORT of SB 295 SD2 - Relating to Child Welfare Services

My name is Sharla-Ann Fujimoto. I am a resource caregiver in West Hawai'i whose role is to help care for children in the foster care system. I have also been working with foster youth through several non-profit organizations for the last 14 years and am currently the Board Advisor for the HI H.O.P.E.S. Initiative ("Initiative") Youth Leadership Board in West Hawai'i. The Initiative's mission is to educate, advocate, and collaborate with community partners on behalf of youth in foster care and to help those transitioning from foster care (also known as "aging out") work towards achieving successful outcomes as adults.

I would like to submit testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 295 SD2 and its intent to establish the Mālama 'Ohana Working Group to seek, design, and recommend transformative changes to the State's existing Child Welfare System (CWS) within the Department of Human Services (DHS).

Foster youth are amongst the nation's most vulnerable population. They come into the system by no fault of their own, and they are often left without the much-needed support resources needed as they navigate the system from removal to exiting foster care. This leads them to face poorer outcomes as adults such as homelessness, incarceration, pregnant or parenting at early ages, and overdependence on the public welfare system. Many of these negative outcomes could be avoided if adequate support and resources are provided to foster youth and their parents while their CWS case is still open.

Foster youth, birth parents, resource caregivers, service providers, and the State Social Workers are expected to work together to help the family achieve reunification. However, the enormous difficulty of reaching and engaging the CWS Social Worker paired with high staff turnover / low staffing in CWS offices, inadequate Administrative support, and minimal funding provided to all Child Welfare Services offices statewide makes it nearly impossible to help families achieve reunification within the one year time period they are required to by federal law. This leads to many foster youth being adopted out of care, placed under legal guardianship, or age out of the system at age 18.

Throughout my time working with youth in foster care, I have seen horrific amounts of injustice and harm done to these extremely vulnerable youth. Many of the foster youth I have worked with over the years have shared their frustrations with me because they have no idea what is going on with their case because they've barely seen or heard from their social worker since removal. Many of these youth have had to fend for themselves to get

the things they need, or they just settle to “go without,” which is something that no young person should have to experience. Other youth have been horribly mistreated in their resource homes, and when the youth was calling and trying to reach out for help, the only thing they could do was leave a voicemail on an already overloaded answering machine. Birth parents and resource caregivers have very similar experiences of not having any engagement with the social worker, which causes progress to slow down and increases the frustration of all. The point of this is not to place blame on the social workers, but it is to make one thing very clear: foster youth need more support.

As a professional that works with current and former foster youth and as a resource caregiver of several foster children, the Mālama 'Ohana work group will uplift the voices of those with lived experiences (i.e., foster youth and their parents) to help identify the most pressing issues and concerns that plague those that are involved with the System. This work group will also increase the much-needed communication and collaboration between everyone involved to come up with actionable solutions that could help save lives.

We must do better for the keiki (children) of our 'āina (land). My hope is that the success of this project will inspire the citizens of State of Hawai'i to fight for this much needed change in our State's Child Welfare System. In closing, I strongly encourage this committee to support the passage of SB295 SD2.

With my sincerest gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sharla-Ann Fujimoto', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Sharla-Ann Fujimoto

SB-295-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/13/2023 9:01:08 AM

Testimony for HUS on 3/14/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daiquiri Miyasato	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To: House Committee on Human Services

Hearing: Tuesday, March 14, 2023

9:00 am

From: Kamaile Miyasato

RE: **In Support of SB295, SD2 – Relating to Child Welfare Services**

My name is Daiquiri Kamaile Miyasato and I am humbled and grateful for the opportunity to share my support for SB295 and its intent to establish Malama ‘Ohana Working Group.

Through my experience as a member of Nā Kama a Hāloa network and employee of EPIC ‘Ohana, Inc., I have witnessed the power of those with lived experience in the child welfare system to be transformational. The youth and parent voices have and will continue to change the way we practice and show up to support our families and keiki. We need to make an effort to hear the voices of all communities and connect, build relationships and align together to support the effort of keeping our keiki safe. The time is now. These efforts will not happen overnight but this will be the beginning to the change we need. We cannot do this alone, we need a solid infrastructure to sustain this effort.

Thank you for this opportunity to share this testimony in support of this measure.

SB-295-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/13/2023 10:47:01 AM

Testimony for HUS on 3/14/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shana Wailana Kukila	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha,

This testimony is in strong support of SB295 SD2, which establishes the Mālama 'Ohana Working Group in the Office of Wellness & Resilience. A big mahalo to the introducers of this bill, and we expect the outcomes and recommendations of the group to be accepted, honored, and acted upon by the Hawai'i State Department of Human Services Child Welfare Services.

A federal and state level audit of the Child Welfare agency is long overdue, and should be conducted simultaneously with this working group for maximum impact and results.

With the rise in family violence and missing and murdered women and children in Hawai'i, the safety of our community is in crisis, and the DHS needs help to reform itself to meet the needs of our people at this critical time.

There is ample data from past and present audits, child welfare cases with missing, murdered, and injured children in the DHS system that there is no more time to ignore the plight of so many vulnerable families in Hawai'i. Many who have not had a voice in the system, including domestic violence victims, those with language and speech barriers, the poor, and the disabled.

The time to act is now, before another innocent life is lost. The State of Hawai'i's Child Welfare System has gone on too long without proper oversight and compliance to its own mandates to follow federal and constitutional law to protect vulnerable families. It has shown a pattern and practice of targeting the poor, the disabled, Hawaiian mothers and children, as well as other minorities. There are deeply held, system wide intrinsic biases embedded in DHS culture that places children with perpetrators of violence and exposes domestic violence victims to revictimization by taking their children away. There is no standard followed for domestic violence victims and their children, and no protocol to ensure social workers are not revictimizing the family by using the system as a weapon instead of a remedy or safe place.

There also needs to be more oversight into foster and adoptive placements, because there is evidence of foul play in more than one case that begs further investigation of any possible link

between internal corruption at child welfare services and sex trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation of children or any other criminal activity involving state employees.

As for the working group, a member of the disabled advocacy community should be at the table, as well as the Hawai'i State Coalition Against Domestic Violence and the State (and County) Commission on the Status of Women should be assigned a seat to represent women and girls' protections.

Mahalo nui for this opportunity to testify on behalf of myself, my kupuna, my keiki, my 'ohana, and my community.

Shana W. Kukila

Hilo, Hawai'i

SB-295-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/13/2023 11:50:46 AM

Testimony for HUS on 3/14/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marty Oliphant	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

House Committee on Human Services

Date: March 14, 2023

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Where: Conference Room 329

TESTIMONY

By: Nā Kama a Hāloa Network

RE: SB295, SD2 - Relating to the Child Welfare Services – Strong Support

Aloha Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato, and Committee Members of the House Committee on Human Services,

My name is Marty Oliphant and I am a member of the Nā Kama a Hāloa network. I want to express my strong support for **SB295 SD2**. Nā Kama a Hāloa is a network of more than 30 community serving organizations and individuals with lived experiences that work collaboratively to improve the lives of native Hawaiian children and families in the child welfare system. The network convenes to address and improve the child welfare system by embedding Native Hawaiian approaches and practices in the daily work of those impacting the lives of keiki Hawai'i.

The **Mālama `Ohana Working Group** was formed and prototyped by the Nā Kama a Hāloa network. Our network asks the legislature to hear the voices of the community to protect the children in and out of the child welfare system. Representation in the working group supports collaboration between service providers with those they serve to lift up the voices of those with lived experience in the child welfare system. We believe that the **Mālama `Ohana Working Group** is an important commitment and investment to provide necessary lived experience and community recommendations to improve the child welfare system.

We have experienced how helpful and innovative **community collaboration** can be to improving outcomes for children and families. Since 2018, members of the Nā Kama a Hāloa network have worked with leaders from Child Welfare Services (CWS) to implement several projects that shift certain practices of the child welfare system so that it can approach trauma in families with . These collaborative projects include the following samples of our work:

1. Developed training for new hires to CWS and resource caregivers.
2. Advocated for keeping siblings together.
3. Worked on projects that help resource caregivers and birth parents communicate better so that the children are less traumatized.
4. Formed a small cadre of parents, known as Parent Partners, with lived experience in the child welfare system that have successfully navigated the system. Parent Partners walk alongside parents to speak about their experiences and help parents navigate the system to improve outcomes for their keiki.

We believe that Native Hawaiian culture-based approaches are prudent and sensible solutions to support the development of all vulnerable youth in Hawai‘i, resulting in greater educational, social, health and overall life success.

Thank you for considering our comment and for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.

SB-295-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/13/2023 3:39:07 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/14/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dezza	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senators,

My name is Dezza Santos, I am a student who is currently learning and majoring in AA Human Services at UH Maui writing in regards to Senate Bill 295. I firmly agree to support the act of Malama ‘Ohana in which they find the best ways to collaborate between the state and community to better serve child welfare services. I feel as though the contribution to develop a more effective community to be heard and take more responsibility for the children’s well-being and welfare will be the best for the keiki’s mental health and safety of their lives. There have been incidents throughout the years of children in homes that are so horrible that’ll sometimes lead to a very unfortunate death. The possibility of trying to prevent that and provide safety to homes all around, especially ones in the system has my full support. I’d like to thank you for your consideration of my comments about the Malama ‘Ohana working group.

Mahalo,

Dezza Santos