



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA

**Senate Committee on Health and Human Services**

Friday, March 24, 2023

1:02 p.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

**In Strong Support of**

**SCR No.88, SR79, Relating to the Office of Wellness and Resilience: Establish the Malama 'Ohana Working Group to Identify, Design and Recommend Transformative Changes to the State's Child Welfare System.**

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino and members of the Committee:

The Office of the Wellness and Resilience (OWR) in the Governor's Office is in **STRONG SUPPORT** of SCR No.88 SR79, Relating to the Office of Wellness and Resilience.

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



## TESTIMONY

By: Nā Kama a Hāloa Network

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 Malama ‘Ohana**. 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.

Catholic Charities  
EPIC 'Ohana  
Hale Kipa  
Kamehameha Schools  
Keith Kuboyama, Family Programs Hawai'i  
Shawn Kana'iaupuni, Partners in Development Foundation  
Jamee Miller, 'Ekolu Mea Nui

Deb Marois, Converge Consulting  
Maddy Day LLC & Associates  
Karen Worthington, Worthington Consulting  
Kristina Shibata, EPIC 'Ohana  
Kamaile Miyasato, EPIC 'Ohana  
Kailene Nihipali Sanchez, Resource Caregiver  
Kayla Samson, Parent with lived experience  
Barbie-Lei Burgess, Service Provider  
Kholby Akuna, Former Foster Youth  
Jaque Kelley-Ueoka, Service Provider  
Vivian Kim Seu, 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  
Amanda Mundon, Resource Caregiver  
Diane Keliikoa, EPIC 'Ohana  
Sasha Autele, Parent with lived experience  
Stephanie Hamano, Service Provider  
Jeanne Hamilton, Nā Kama a Hāloa Manager  
Aponi Boyer, Former Foster Youth  
Samantha U'u, Former Foster Youth  
Kristen Bachiller, Parent with lived experience  
Kamaile Miyasato, EPIC 'Ohana



# HAWAI`I YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

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Web site: <http://www.hysn.org> E-mail: [info@hysn.org](mailto: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 21, 2023

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

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SCR 88/SR 79**  
**REQUESTING THE OFFICE OF WELLNESS AND RESILIENCE**  
**ESTABLISH THE MALAMA OHANA WORKING GROUP TO IDENTIFY,**  
**DESIGN, AND RECOMMEND TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGES TO THE**  
**STATE'S CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM**

Hawaii Youth Services Network, a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations supports SCR 88/SR 79 Requesting the Office of Wellness and Resilience Establish the Malama Ohana Working Group to Identify, Design, and Recommend Transformative Changes to the State's Child Welfare System

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

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SCR88 – REQUESTING THE OFFICE OF WELLNESS AND RESILIENCE ESTABLISH THE MALAMA OHANA WORKING GROUP TO IDENTIFY, DESIGN, AND RECOMMEND TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGES TO THE STATE'S CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM.**

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Date: March 24, 2023; Time: 1:02 p.m.; Where: Conference Room 225

State Capitol; 415 South Beretania Street

SUBMITTED BY: Pū‘ā Foundation - Nā Kama a Hāloa Network

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Aloha e Senator Joy Buenaventure, Chair, Senator Henry Aquino, Vice Chair, and Committee Members

Thank you for the opportunity to express our **STRONG SUPPORT for SCR88**. 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.

This joint resolution moves forward the steps necessary for the formation of the working group within the Office of Wellness and Resilience. Providing for community collaboration is key to actualizing improved outcomes for children and families.

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

**SCR-88**

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 11:49:02 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/24/2023 1:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Keola Pagud	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senate Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services,

My name is Keola Pagud and I strongly support SCR 88 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 SCR 88 in order to strengthen our diverse community.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Keola Pagud, MSW

**SCR-88**

Submitted on: 3/23/2023 11:23:10 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/24/2023 1:02:00 PM

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

Comments:

Committee on Health and Human Services

Hearing on March 24, 2023, 1:02pm

Testimony in SUPPORT of SCR88 / SR 79, REQUESTING THE OFFICE OF WELLNESS AND RESILIENCE ESTABLISH THE MALAMA OHANA WORKING GROUP TO IDENTIFY, DESIGN, AND RECOMMEND TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGES TO THE STATE'S CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM.

Dear Chair Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, 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 importance and urgent need for this work in Hawai'i, I ask that you create this work group through SB295 rather than through a resolution. At the same time, I support SCR 88 and SR 79 and urge you to vote yes on these resolutions. 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, Hawai'i 96790



**SCR-88**

Submitted on: 3/23/2023 12:22:49 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/24/2023 1:02:00 PM

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

Comments:

PLEASE INCLUDE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE representation to the list of Malama Ohana invitees!!!

**Ignoring domestic violence is the very first step to falling victim to it** and if you look at all the interpersonal relationship homicides, you'll notice that the majority of these murders had a history or element of domestic violence involved in them!

I have urged every committee this measure has gone before this session to add domestic violence to the list of invited Malama Ohana participants but the measure gets passed unamended.

Does anyone remember that this effort stems from the presumed murder of Ariel Sellers whose adoptive/foster father had a history of domestic violence that was ignored? Isn't the Malama Ohana group's purpose to prevent the next Ariel Sellers, Reef Aikau, Talia Williams, Brayden McVeigh (and others) from happening? If you don't include domestic violence, this collaborative effort is meaningless and the next child's demise is already taking shape.

We have several domestic violence agencies to choose from in this state; *please tap just one of them* to include their expertise in this working group!

Thank you for your time and consideration and apologies for my tone if I sound overly frustrated; domestic violence homicides ARE preventable - you just have to know what to look for and you're not going to know what to look for if you don't have that voice at the table!