

MAR 08 2024

SENATE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE AUDITOR TO CONDUCT A PROGRAM AUDIT OF THE STATE'S
CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES SYSTEM.

1 WHEREAS, ensuring the wellbeing, safety, and stability of
2 Hawaii's children and families is a top priority for the State;
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5 WHEREAS, numerous state and county agencies are involved in
6 the State's child protective services system, including the
7 Department of Human Services, Department of the Attorney
8 General, Judiciary, and county police departments; and
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10 WHEREAS, the Department of Human Services' most recent
11 report on child abuse and neglect, published in 2021, found that
12 more than ten thousand cases of child abuse were reported in the
13 State between 2017 and 2021; and
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15 WHEREAS, recent high-profile cases of child abuse and child
16 murder in Hawaii have suggested that the victims were failed by
17 the State's child protective services system; and
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19 WHEREAS, a comprehensive assessment is needed to determine
20 how the State's child protective services system can be
21 improved; and
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23 WHEREAS, Article VII, Section 10 of the Hawaii State
24 Constitution and section 23-4, Hawaii Revised Statutes, task the
25 Auditor with carrying out program and performance audits of
26 government agencies; and
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28 WHEREAS, the Auditor has carried out previous performance
29 audits and follow-up audits of the State's child protective
30 services and child welfare services systems; now, therefore,
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32 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-second
33 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2024,
34 that the Auditor is requested to conduct a program audit of the
35 State's child protective services system, including child
36 protection roles in the Department of the Attorney General,



1 Department of Human Services, family courts, and county police
2 departments; and

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4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, for purposes of the audit, the
5 Auditor is requested to consult with the National Conference of
6 State Legislatures Child Protection Reform Project, National
7 Resource Center of Child Maltreatment, or other national
8 entities with child welfare expertise; and

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10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Auditor is also requested
11 to consult with parents, foster parents, healthcare providers,
12 educators, and other stakeholders; and

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14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the audit is requested to
15 address:

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17 (1) Whether effective communication exists among the
18 various agencies involved in child protective
19 services;
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21 (2) Whether agency staff receive adequate training on
22 identifying child abuse and neglect;
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24 (3) Whether each agency has a manageable caseload;
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26 (4) The adequacy of each agency's child protection
27 resources; and
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29 (5) The effectiveness and efficiency of decision-making
30 processes in the child protective services system,
31 including decisions related to:
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33 (A) Screening;
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35 (B) Case selection;
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37 (C) Child safety, including methods to keep a
38 maltreated child safe and the conditions under
39 which the child should be placed outside the
40 home;
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42 (D) Reunification of the child and family; and



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(E) The termination of child protective services involvement; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the audit is requested to include a review of recent cases of recurring child abuse and neglect; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Auditor is requested to provide specific recommendations to guide any necessary reforms to the State's child protective services system; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Auditor is requested to submit all findings and recommendations to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2025; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Auditor, Attorney General, Director of Human Services, Administrative Directors of the First through Fifth Circuit Courts, and Chief of each county police department.

OFFERED BY: Kurt Fervella

