



STATE OF HAWAII
Executive Office on Early Learning
2759 South King Street, Room C6
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96826

March 25, 2024

TO: Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

FROM: Yuuko Arikawa-Cross, Director
Executive Office on Early Learning

SUBJECT: Measure: S.B. No. 3279 S.D. 1 H.D. 1 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON EARLY LEARNING'S POSITION: Support

The Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) supports S.B. No. 3279 S.D. 1 H.D. 1 and defers to the Office of Wellness and Resiliency (OWR).

A comprehensive mental health support system is crucial to address acute and chronic mental health issues. The prevalence of these issues is on the rise, particularly as we continue to address the impacts of COVID, and more recently, the Maui wildfires.

EOEL would like to especially note that supporting early mental health and development in the youngest years is critical. Mental health issues, even at this stage of the earliest years, can be caused by biological and/or developmental factors, experiences of trauma such as family violence, child abuse and neglect, parental substance abuse, and experiencing systems of poverty. These issues may result in developmental delays that could have long-lasting and detrimental impacts to children's health and development. As such, it is crucial to ensure implementation factors and supports for our youngest keiki as well.

We look forward to continuing to work with other stakeholders and departments to continue strengthening the systems of support for our youngest keiki across the State. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

TO: Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Representative Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

FROM: Robert G. Peters, Chair
Early Learning Board

SUBJECT: Measure: S.B. No. 3279 S.D. 1 H.D. 1 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH
Date: March 27, 2024
Time: 3:30 p.m.
Place: Via Videoconference, Conference Room 308

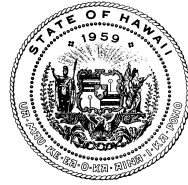
Early Learning Board Position: Support

The Early Learning Board (ELB), the governing board for the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL), supports S.B. No. 3279 S.D. 1 H.D. 1 and defers to the Office of Wellness and Resiliency (OWR).

A comprehensive mental health support system is crucial to address acute and chronic mental health issues. The prevalence of these issues is on the rise, particularly as we continue to address the impacts of COVID, and more recently, the Maui wildfires. As efforts are made to become a trauma-informed care State, mental health support as outlined in this bill will be most important

ELB, along with EOEL, emphasizes the critical importance of supporting early mental health and development in the lives of our youngest keiki. Mental health issues, even at this stage of the earliest years, can be caused by biological and/or developmental factors, experiences of trauma such as family violence, child abuse and neglect, parental substance abuse, and experiencing systems of poverty. These issues may result in developmental delays that could have long-lasting and detrimental impacts to children's health and development. As such, it is crucial to ensure implementation factors and supports for our youngest keiki as well.

We look forward to guiding the continuing to work of the EOEL with other stakeholders and departments to continue strengthening the systems of support for our youngest keiki across the State. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.



STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF WELLNESS AND RESILIENCE
KE KE'ENA KŪPA'A MAULI OLA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
415 S.BERETANIA ST. #415
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

**Testimony of Tia L.R. Hartsock
Director, Office of Wellness and Resilience**

**House Committee on Finance
Wednesday, March 27, 2024, 3:30 p.m., State Capitol, Conference Room 308**

S.B. No. 3279, S.D.1, H.D.1, Relating to Mental Health

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the Committee:

The Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR) in the Governor's Office **SUPPORTS** S.B. 3279 S.D.1 H.D.1, Relating to Mental Health so long as it does not adverse impact priorities identified in the Executive Supplemental Budget Request for FY2025.

Established through Act 291, the overall aim of the OWR is to make Hawai'i a trauma-informed state. OWR is focused on breaking down barriers that impact the physical, social, and emotional well-being of Hawai'i's people. The OWR explores avenues to increase access and availability to mental, behavioral, social, and emotional health services and support.

S.B. 3279 S.D.1 H.D.1 proposes the establishment of the well-being project within the OWR. The measure would allow OWR to accelerate and strengthen the office's mission of creating a trauma-informed state. Since the inception of the OWR, we have initiated training and technical assistance supports with several state departments, specifically around the implementation of trauma-informed care. While the OWR does not provide direct mental health care, we provide technical assistance and training on implementing trauma-informed care in all state agencies, including those who provide direct mental health support services. This bill would allow OWR to expand its work and engage entities beyond state departments to incorporate culturally grounded and community-informed well-being programs.

With the pandemic and Maui wildfires happening so close to one another, OWR understands that Hawai'i is facing cascading trauma, a phenomenon when traumatic events occur one on top of another making it harder for people to recover. More than ever, it is vital that mental health supports that are culturally responsive are established and accessible for all individuals, families, and communities in our state. The OWR appreciates the legislature recognizing the importance of a comprehensive approach through the tier 1 and tier 2 mental health supports and the OWR will be honored to lead the state of well-being project and work closely with other state departments, community organizations, and mental health professionals to strengthen mental health supports for all in our community.

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



SB3279 SD1 HD1 Mental Health Tiers for Wellness

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair

Rep. Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

Wednesday March 27, 2024, 3:30 Room 308

Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition Supports SB3279 SD1 HD1:

ALOHA CHAIR, VICE CHAIR AND DISTINGUISHED COMMITTEE MEMBERS. My name is Alan Johnson. I am the current chair of the Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition (HSAC), a statewide organization for substance use disorder and co-occurring mental health disorder treatment, prevention agencies and recovery-oriented services.

The first tiered approach would help address mental health concerns through developing a culture of wellness while tier 2 could help though by providing those supports to develop better coping skills, especially for our youth who desperately need help.

We recommend that tier 2 include screening to help refer persons to more specialized care.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony and are available for questions



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 3279 SD1 HD1:
RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH**

TO: House Committee on Finance
FROM: Rob Van Tassell, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawaii
Hearing: Tuesday 03/27/2024, 3:30 PM; CR 308 & via videoconference

Chair Yamashita and Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of **SB 3279 SD1 HD1**, which establishes with the Office of Wellness and Resilience the State of Well-being Project to assess and enhance tier 1 and tier 2 mental health support services for all key stakeholder communities across the State. I am Rob Van Tassell, with Catholic Charities Hawaii.

Catholic Charities Hawaii (CCH) is a tax exempt, non-profit agency dedicated to providing social services in Hawaii for over 75 years. CCH has programs serving children, families, elders, homeless, veterans, and immigrants. Our mission revolves around offering services and advocacy for the most vulnerable in Hawaii. Catholic Charities Hawaii has providing counseling services to individuals and families for years.

The project's objective is to urgently address the need for enhanced tier 1 and tier 2 mental health support services for people across Hawaii. Recognizing the pivotal role mental health plays in overall well-being, it is imperative for our state to ensure access to top-tier, trauma-informed mental health care.

Catholic Charities Hawaii supports the Office of Wellness and Resilience and their efforts to make Hawaii a trauma-informed state and ensuring we have an array of effective mental health services. By supporting this bill, we are taking a significant step towards creating a healthier and more resilient community that thrives on the well-being of its residents.

We strongly encourage your backing of this bill and seek your aid in securing its passage during this legislative session.

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



CLARENCE T. C. CHING CAMPUS • 1822 Ke'eaumoku Street, Honolulu, HI 96822
Phone (808) 527-4813



To: House Committee on Finance
RE: SB3279 SD1, HD1 in strong support
Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 308
March 27, 2024; 3:30 pm

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and committee,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) Speaks!, mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **STRONG SUPPORT of Senate Bill 3279 SD1, HD1** relating to Mental Health.

SB 3279 SD1, HD1 establishes the State of Well-being Project within The Office of Wellness and Resilience, (OWR). This project will assess and enhance tier 1 and tier 2 mental health support services across the state and build programs for key stakeholder communities in which well-being programs do not currently exist. Programs will incorporate culturally responsive support systems for key stakeholder communities across the State. It would also appropriate funds to assess and enhance existing mental health training and ongoing support services to various public agencies such as public schools, community centers, and health care centers. Funds would also be used to hire and train mental health specialists and work with approved partner organizations to be culturally grounded and community and trauma-informed.

Tier 1 systems not only provide a common language to define wellness practices but also promote a safe and healthy organizational culture for all. It is designed for all people to set a foundation. Tier 2 mental health support systems identify those at higher risk and therefore require specialized training and support geared to meet those needs. Together, these two tiers of support encompass the core mental health needs of individuals, groups, and communities.

The above purposes align with the OWR's framework to define trauma-informed care and trauma-responsive practice that applies to schools, community centers, health care providers, and other programs that have contact with children and youth. The effort will support trauma-informed care within our systems for the benefit of both the public who interact with these systems, as well as our state workforce. We must continue to make Hawai'i a healing-centered and trauma-informed state in 2024. Mahalo for supporting this bill.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Mai Hall, M.Ed.
Children's Health Coordinator



MAUI

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

VOICE OF BUSINESS

HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, HOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM 308
Wednesday, March 27, 2024 AT 3:30 P.M.

To The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
The Honorable Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Finance

SUPPORT SB3279 SD1 HD1 RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

The Maui Chamber of Commerce **SUPPORTS SB3279 SD1 HD1**.

The Chamber notes that mental illness is one of the most pressing challenges humanity is facing today. The prevalence of both acute and chronic mental illnesses has been on the rise in the State and globally over the past two decades. Untreated mental illness is one of the top predictors of suicide, substance abuse, incarceration, and adult disability. This is especially disconcerting for historically marginalized and under-resourced communities, which are at significantly higher risk of mental illness and also have more limited access to mental health education, resources, and support. Mental illness at the individual level compounds across communities and leads to negative statewide outcomes, including increased joblessness, homelessness, domestic violence, violent crime, and school dropout rates.

Additionally, we have seen the importance of mental health support services given the trauma that many face following the August 8 wildfires. We appreciate this bill as there are gaps in support services that are vital to address. We also encourage the group to consider how to broaden the capacity of the Hawaii State Hospital to not only assist those who have committed a felony, but to the wider community who need critical mental health care.

We support efforts to establish the state of well-being project and a timeline for the project to:

- (A) Assess the tiers of mental health support services that currently exist; and
- (B) Enhance existing well-being programming and, when non-existent, build out culturally grounded and community-informed well-being programming to establish mental health support services for key stakeholder communities across the State.

This is a crucial tool in the toolbox on fighting homelessness and supporting the care for those with mental illnesses.

For these reasons, we **SUPPORT SB3279 SD1 HD1** and respectfully ask that it be passed.

Sincerely,

Pamela Tumpap
President

To advance and promote a healthy economic environment for business, advocating for a responsive government and quality education, while preserving Maui's unique community characteristics.

FROM: EOPA Code Blue Water Solutions

SUBJECT: Support for S.B. No. 3279 as amended

TO: Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Rep. Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair
Honorable Committee Members

Measure: S.B. No. 3279 – RELATING TO MENTAL HEALTH

Hearing Date: Wednesday March 27, 2024

Time: 3:30 am

Location: Conference Room 308

Elected Officials to Protect America (EOPA) Code Blue Water Solutions is a nonpartisan network of current and former elected officials who care deeply about protecting our lands, waters, and democracy while ensuring environmental justice and solving the climate emergency. This legislation originated in many ways from our lawmaker policy teams during our Certificate in Public Leadership we run with the University of San Francisco.

We view this legislation as an important step in climate resilience, given the increase in climate-related disasters. The need is especially urgent after the tragic fires on Maui. S.B. 3279 is uniquely impactful as it focuses on Tier 1 and 2 well-being and mental health.

Tier 1 mental health services include about 90% of the population and provide foundational mental health services for everyone. This includes well-being service provisions that are aimed at the entire system and population. Tier 1 services include early intervention, support, and education so that all stakeholders know how to take care of themselves and their communities. This is the critical starting point for building a shared vocabulary and set of practices to promote positive health outcomes and prevent illness in the future. Tier 1 significantly reduces the burden on Tier 2 and Tier 3 systems. Tier 2 services are targeted at higher-risk groups and are generally 7% percent of the population. Tier 3 involves one-on-one clinical counseling for individuals with conditions that require special attention and generally includes 3% of the population.

Research conducted over the past twenty years in the fields of positive psychology, education, neuroscience, and public health demonstrates the critical importance of Tier 1 mental health support for the health, safety, and success of our communities, schools, and civil institutions.

Hundreds of studies and dozens of meta-analyses provide clear evidence that basic training and practices in emotion regulation, prosocial behaviors, positive psychology, emotional intelligence, and self-awareness will significantly reduce the prevalence of emotional trauma, depression, anxiety, stress, and burnout. This improves relationships, increases academic achievement and job performance, and reduces the risk of maladaptive emotion regulation behaviors like substance abuse, social isolation, and violence.

The positive impact of Tier 1 mental health support systems is particularly effective in improving the health of higher-risk populations and high-burnout and high-turnover occupations.

Providing adults and children with the preventative skills and training to help care for their own basic mental health is more effective and less costly than attempting to reverse mental health issues later with Tier 3 individual care. Focusing on Tier 1 has the ability to reduce the number of Tier 2 and 3 cases, reducing costs and improving the overall health of the community.

S.B. 3279 takes a holistic approach to mental health that can be an example for other states and nations. Hawaii can lead the nation and be the first State of Well-being. Elected Officials to Protect America Code Blue Water Solutions enthusiastically **SUPPORTS** S.B. 3279.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Alex Cornell du Houx". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A' and 'H'.

Alex Cornell du Houx

Frm. State Representative, President of Elected Officials to Protect America,
Professor USF Masters in Public Leadership and Director of the Certificate in Public Leadership,
Marine veteran.

In Support of the State of Wellbeing Bill (SB3279)

Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair, Rep. Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair, and Honorable
Committee Members:

Aloha, my name is Daniel Cordaro, and I am a resident of Honolulu, the Founder & CEO of The Contentment Foundation, and former Yale University faculty member with a Ph.D. in psychology. Over the past decade, I've dedicated my life to researching and implementing universal mental health practices that transform and save lives. Through our work, my team and I have witnessed firsthand the economic and human health benefits of preventative mental health education, impacting over 1.3 million individuals across ten countries worldwide.

I am here today to emphatically endorse SB3279, the State of Wellbeing Bill, as a critical step towards promoting health, wellbeing, and economic prosperity for all of Hawaii.

The problem is clear. Preventable suicide is the second leading cause of death for children globally, and the fourth leading cause of death for our keiki in Hawaii. Nationwide, one in five children and one in six adults struggle with common, everyday mental illness like anxiety and stress. Globally, one trillion dollars and twelve billion working days are lost annually to preventable workplace mental illness, including occupational burnout and compassion fatigue within our educator and first responder communities.

The solution is also clear. Simple, preventative practices at the Tier 1 level can reduce common mental illness symptoms for up to 90% of practitioners. Conservative studies have demonstrated a minimum of 11:1 return on investment for implementing these approaches in schools, and a 6:1 return on investment for high-performance work environments, such as those of our police, firefighters, and EMS workers, who risk their lives for our communities every day.

I am encouraged by the legislation's recognition that therapists alone do not make a State of Wellbeing; it requires empowering entire communities. Our students, educators, families, and first responders need education and skills to help themselves, so that they can in turn uplift everyone around them. Mental health is everyone's responsibility.



For as little as \$30 per person annually or roughly \$20k per school annually, Tier 1 infrastructure offers the lowest cost, highest return opportunities of any other mental health support system available today.

It is vital that the State of Hawaii invests in evidence-based Tier 1 program partners with high fidelity of implementation and rigorous outcome measurements for each stakeholder community. Post-pandemic, many programs and services promise big outcomes, but yield disappointing results. Hawaii has an extraordinary opportunity to become the USA's first State of Wellbeing, and lead the way in integrated approaches to mental health education for schools, first responders, and families nationwide. The State of Wellbeing designation must have substance and meaning, and so it is paramount that the appropriate budget be allocated to support the education, measurement, and professional development incentives for each stakeholder group cited in SB3279.

With deep gratitude and enthusiasm, I urge the legislature to provide the support and budget this bill deserves, enabling Hawaii to lead the mental health revolution worldwide. I am available for advisory and discussion on these matters in whatever ways the legislature may find helpful in the future.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel Cordaro".

Dr. Daniel Cordaro
Founder & CEO
The Contentment Foundation



SB-3279-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2024 6:38:03 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2024 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Heidi Roddenberry	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha, I am writing in strong support of Bill SB3279 because mental health, indeed wellbeing, is crucial for a thriving community. The current mental health crisis facing Hawaii is staggering, especially among youth. According to the state health department, from 2016 to 2020, suicide was the fourth leading cause of fatal injury for children 15 and under. Even across the US, mental health problems affect about one out of every five children that warrant a diagnosis (Costello et al., 2003), and if this is left unaddressed, mental, emotional, and behavioral problems are likely to persist into adulthood, resulting in costly long-term outcomes that can include incarceration (Moore et al., 2009), unemployment (Nielsen et al., 2001), and reliance on public assistance (Fergusson et al., 2007).

The research is clear: Tier 1 mental health tools at the school level can help our keiki, which in turn can help our community both in the short term and long term. By having all Hawaii schools as centers of wellbeing, with teachers and administrators skilled in Tier 1 mental health tools, counselors and other mental health workers will be able to focus on the higher-level interventions that address Tier 2 and Tier 3 needs. “Evidence is strong that school-based interventions can support positive social-emotional outcomes, which are related to academic success as well as healthy transitions to adulthood” (Bruns et al., 2016).

The outdated and ineffective ‘wait to fail’ method is deteriorating our community, and hope lies in favor of prevention and early intervention, especially in a time when mental health resources are not sufficient to meet the growing need, Tier 1 mental health services afford the opportunity to provide services to an entire school population (Carr-Kaffashan et al., 2022). Tier 1 mental health tools taught through school systems produce cost savings by investing in mental health promotion and early intervention versus treatment. Just as it has been shown in healthcare that investing in preventative and primary care can lower costs with higher patient satisfaction, investing in Tier 1 practices can save millions and “ultimately be a district’s most cost-effective endeavor as it affords the opportunity to address mental health concerns before they reach a point of extreme emotional and financial cost (Carr-Kaffashan et al., 2022).

Thank you for your visionary leadership in helping our Keiki and our Ohana.

Mahalo, Heid Roddenberry