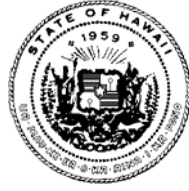


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

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

February 7, 2023

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

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: [HB 1365](#) – RELATING TO THE CHILD WELFARE SERVICES.

Hearing: February 9, 2023, 9:00 a.m.
Conference Room 329 & Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) provides comments and requests two amendments. DHS suggests general fund amounts for section 3.

PURPOSE: The bill establishes the Malama Ohana working group to seek, design, and recommend transformative changes to the State's child welfare system. Appropriates funds to increase the procurement of contracted services to provide additional support and resources to families receiving benefits from the State's adoption assistance and permanency assistance programs. Requires the working group to submit a report to the 2025 Legislature.

Regarding section 2, DHS supports establishing a temporary work group, the Malama 'Ohana working group, regardless of where it lands. DHS notes that other measures place it within the Office of Wellness & Resilience (SB295/HB330 and SB1211/HB330) or the Children's Trust Fund (SB294).

The Department already has working relationships with many of the named members of the Malama 'Ohana working group, and several are DHS contracted providers. DHS is also a member of the Children's Trust Fund Advisory Committee (per section 350B-6(c), Hawaii

Revised Statutes (HRS)), the Nā Kama Hāloa work group, and the Trauma-Informed Task Force (Act 209, Session Laws of Hawaii 2021).

DHS is concerned with Section 2(d), which exempts members of the working group from Chapter 84, HRS, Standards of Conduct, and we respectfully request that this provision be deleted. Instead, we suggest an amendment exempting the working group from Part I of Chapter 92, HRS, due to the ongoing working relationships, including the contractor-vendor and supervisory relationships of proposed members. Exempting the temporary work group from Part I of Chapter 92, HRS, will facilitate the group's important work while avoiding issues of proper notice, agendas, or lack of quorum that often plague new work groups.

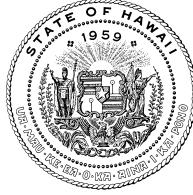
Regarding section 3, DHS suggests amounts approved by the 2022 Legislature in HB2424 HD1 SD2 CD2 for \$8,000,000 for each fiscal year of the biennium as follows:

\$8,000,000 or so much thereof for fiscal year 2023-2024 and the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2024-2025 for the procurement of contracted services to provide additional support, resources, and monitoring of families receiving benefits from the State's adoption assistance program and permanency assistance program, for the purposes of assisting with family strengthening and the maintenance of a safe home environment for adopted children. The sums shall be expended by the Department of human services for the purpose of this Act; provided that:

- (1) \$1,000,000 shall be expended for the development and maintenance of necessary information technology systems, including the establishment of two full time equivalent (2.0 FTE) positions;
- (2) \$1,200,000 shall be expended to increase compensation to fill vacancies and retain employees in existing child welfare services branch investigator, case manager, and social worker positions; provided that any increase in compensation shall be subject to collective bargaining with the objective of expeditiously filling all vacancies;
- (3) \$800,000 shall be expended for the Department of human services to contract with a third party for enhanced permanency support services, including additional training for resource caregivers, wellness visits within a year of adoption or guardianship of children formerly in foster care, respite care, and enhanced supportive services to assist with family strengthening and maintenance of a safe home environment for adopted children;

- (4) \$100,000 shall be expended for the establishment of one full time equivalent (1.0 FTE) planner or project specialist position to administer and monitor additional service contracts and assist with additional service coordination, data collection, and analysis of the new program; and
- (5) \$250,000 shall be expended for the Malama Ohana working group established pursuant to section 4 of this Act, including for the Department of human services to contract with an administrative facilitator to provide necessary support for the working group in carrying out its activities.

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



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA

House Committees on Human Services
Thursday, February 9, 2023
9:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 329 & Videoconference
In Support and offering comments on
H.B. No. 1365, Relating to Child Welfare Services

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

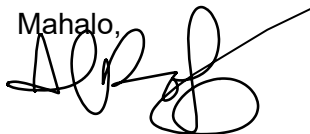
The Office of the Wellness and Resilience (OWR) in the Governor's Office **SUPPORTS** H.B. No. 1365, Relating to Child Welfare Services and offers comments.

I support the establishment of a Mālama 'Ohana Working Group. However, I request the committee consider either:

- (a) deleting Mālama 'Ohana Working Group from HB1365 and move forward with HB330; or
- (b) amend HB1365 to establish the working group within the Office of Wellness and Resilience.

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. I strongly support the collaboration of service providers with those they serve to improve the outcomes for children in the child welfare system.

Thank you for considering these comments and for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the intent of this measure. I am available for any questions.

Mahalo,


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



Date: February 7th, 2023

To: House Committee on Human Services
Representative John M. Mizuno, Chair
Representative Terez Amato, Vice Chair

From: Early Childhood Action Strategy

Re: Testimony in Support of HB1365– Relating to Child Custody Evaluators

Aloha and thank you for hearing this Bill. Early Childhood Action Strategy (ECAS) is a statewide cross-sector collaborative designed to improve the system of care for Hawai'i's youngest children and their families. ECAS partners work to align priorities for children prenatal to age eight, streamline services, maximize resources, and improve programs to support our youngest keiki.

ECAS strongly supports HB1365, which establishes the Malama Ohana working group to seek, design and recommend transformative changes to the State's child welfare system. This bill also appropriates funds to increase procurement of contracted services to provide additional support and resources to families receiving benefits from the State's adoption assistance and permanency assistance programs. **HB1365** requires the working group to submit a report to the 2025 Legislature.

Policies are most effective when government works in collaboration with direct services providers and families. Representation on the proposed working group is reflected of those that work with and support the DHS Child Welfare System and inclusive of those with lived expertise. The recommendations to "establish a child welfare system that is trauma-informed, sustains a community-based partnership and is responsive to the needs of children and families in the child welfare system and among the larger community" is a win-win for community and for the Child Welfare System.

Children have the greatest chance to develop to their full capacity when they live in safe, secure and nurturing homes. Young children who endure abuse and neglect and are exposed to intimate partner violence often need extensive supports that adopting families need to facilitate. Costs for support and treatments can be extensive and many families struggle to pay for them. ECAS further champions this bill because it increases the amount of money provided to families receiving benefits from the State's adoption assistance and permanency programs.

Mahalo for your continued support to improve the health, safety and learning of our youngest keiki's. We appreciate you supporting **HB1365**.



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 Committee on Human Services
HEARING: Thursday, February 9, 2023 9:00 AM
FROM: Laurie Arial Tochiki
RE: HB 1365

We are grateful for the inclusion of Mālama 'Ohana in HB 1365. This bill is similar to HB 2424 which passed the 2022 legislative session, but was vetoed by Governor Ige. We respectfully ask:

- That the Mālama 'Ohana proposal be deleted from HB1365 and that HB330 move forward, so that the project can be considered independently, and so that the process can be hosted by the Office of Wellness and Resilience.
- OR in the alternative, we ask that HB 1365 pass with an amendment that instead of the Department of Human Services, the process be hosted by the Office of Wellness and Resilience.

The proposals are essentially the same except that HB 330 has the Office of Wellness and Resilience as the host of the project rather than the Department of Human Services. HB 330 has some other small changes regarding working group membership, a termination date and ethics responsibilities that were suggested by colleagues and collaborators. The companion bill is SB 295 which has heard by the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services on January 30, 2023.

We discussed the Mālama 'Ohana proposal in a network convening in October 2022. We also consulted with Tia Hartsock, chair of the Task Force for Wellness and Resilience, and spoke to the task force on Wellness and Resilience. Through these discussions we concluded that the Office of Wellness and Resilience is the most appropriate host for the Mālama 'Ohana process.

HB 1365 also includes financial resources for CWS that are badly needed and we support the financial aspect of HB 1365.

I am Laurie Arial Tochiki and I am the Executive Director of EPIC 'Ohana. EPIC 'Ohana is the backbone organization for Nā Kama a Hāloa. 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, 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. 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.



Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks! is a nonpartisan 501c4 nonprofit committed to advocating for children and their families. Our core issues are safety, health, and education.

To: Representative Mizuno, Chair
Representative Amato, Vice Chair
House Committee on Human Services

Re: HB1365, relating to Child Welfare Services
9:00 a.m., Feb. 9, 2023

Aloha Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato and committee members:

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) Speaks!, mahalo for the opportunity to **testify and provide comments on House Bill 1365, relating to Child Welfare Services.**

HCAN Speaks! supports the creation of the Mālama 'Ohana working group. We believe that 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 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 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 that the Office of Wellness and Resilience would be best suited to make this working group a reality.**

House bill 330 provides language that would establish the working group in the Office of Wellness Resilience. **We prefer the language in HB 330 for the Mālama 'Ohana working group.** If HB 1365 does proceed, we respectfully ask the committee replace the department of human services with the Office of Wellness and Resilience in section 2(a) of the bill.

Mahalo again for the opportunity to testify.

Ke'ōpū Reelitz
Director of Early Learning and Health Policy



February 9, 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: HB1365 Relating to Child Welfare Services

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 **support of HB1365**.

This bill is similar to HB2424 which passed during the 2022 legislative session, but was vetoed by Governor Ige. We respectfully ask:

- That the Mālama 'Ohana proposal be deleted from HB1365 and that HB330 move forward, so that the project can be considered independently, and so that the process can be hosted by the Office of Wellness and Resilience.
- OR in the alternative, we ask that HB1365 pass with an amendment that instead of the Department of Human Services, the process be hosted by the Office of Wellness and Resilience.

The proposals are essentially the same except that HB330 has the Office of Wellness and Resilience as the host of the project rather than the Department of Human Services. HB330 has some other small changes regarding working group membership, a termination date and ethics



responsibilities that were suggested by colleagues and collaborators. The companion bill is SB295 which was heard by the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services on January 30, 2023.

HB 1365 also includes financial resources for CWS that are badly needed and we support the financial aspect of HB1365.

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

Sincerely,
Angelina Mercado, Executive Director

HB-1365

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 9:32:37 AM

Testimony for HUS on 2/9/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shellie Niles	Catholic Charities Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support the establishment of a Mālama 'Ohana Working Group. However, I request that the committee consider either: (a) deleting Mālama 'Ohana Working Group from HB1365 and move forward with HB330; or alternatively (b) amend HB1365 to establish the working group within the Office of Wellness and Resilience. 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. 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.

HB-1365

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 9:33:23 AM

Testimony for HUS on 2/9/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeanne Hamilton	EPIC 'Ohana	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support the establishment of a Mālama 'Ohana Working Group. However, I request that the committee consider either: (a) deleting Mālama 'Ohana Working Group from HB1365 and move forward with HB330; or alternatively (b) amend HB1365 to establish the working group within the Office of Wellness and Resilience. 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. 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.

With appreciation,

Jeanne Hamilton

EPIC 'Ohana, Inc.

HB-1365

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 10:37:52 AM

Testimony for HUS on 2/9/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chassidy Shinno	EPIC Ohana	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable Members of the House Human Services Committee,

I strongly support the establishment of a Mālama 'Ohana Working Group. However, I request that the committee consider either: (a) deleting Mālama 'Ohana Working Group from HB1365 and move forward with HB330; or alternatively (b) amend HB1365 to establish the working group within the Office of Wellness and Resilience. 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. 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.

With appreciation,

Chassidy Shinno, EPIC `Ohana

HB-1365

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 11:21:30 AM

Testimony for HUS on 2/9/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sasha Autele	EPIC Ohana Inc.	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a parent partner at EPIC 'Ohana. As a peer with lived experience in the child welfare system, I strongly support the establishment of a Mālama 'Ohana Working Group. However, I request that the committee consider either: (a) deleting Mālama 'Ohana Working Group from HB1365 and move forward with HB330; or alternatively (b) amend HB1365 to establish the working group within the Office of Wellness and Resilience. 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. 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.

HB-1365

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 3:15:33 PM

Testimony for HUS on 2/9/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Schatzi Cope	EPIC 'Ohana Inc.	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support the establishment of a Mālama 'Ohana Working Group. However, I request that the committee consider either: (a) deleting Mālama 'Ohana Working Group from HB1365 and move forward with HB330; or alternatively (b) amend HB1365 to establish the working group within the Office of Wellness and Resilience. 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. 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.

With appreciation,

Schatzi Cope



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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Aloha United Way
Kaua'i United Way
Hawai'i Island United Way



Honorable House Committee Chair Mizuno and House Committee 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 others 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.

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 339. 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

HB-1365

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 2:26:55 PM

Testimony for HUS on 2/9/2023 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Fully SUPPORT this bill

HB-1365

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 10:10:12 AM

Testimony for HUS on 2/9/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nicole Trost	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I strongly support the establishment of a Mālama 'Ohana Working Group. However, I request that the committee consider either: (a) deleting Mālama 'Ohana Working Group from HB1365 and move forward with HB330; or alternatively (b) amend HB1365 to establish the working group within the Office of Wellness and Resilience. 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. 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.

With appreciation,

Nicole Trost

HB-1365

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 10:17:29 AM

Testimony for HUS on 2/9/2023 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha, My name is Kamaile Miyasato and I have been an active participant in the Nā Kama a Hāloa Network. I am writing as an individual, and I am an employee of EPIC 'Ohana.

I strongly support the establishment of a Mālama 'Ohana Working Group. However, I request that the committee consider either: (a) deleting Mālama 'Ohana Working Group from HB1365 and move forward with HB330; or alternatively (b) amend HB1365 to establish the working group within the Office of Wellness and Resilience. 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. 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.

HB-1365

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 11:00:39 AM

Testimony for HUS on 2/9/2023 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Stand in SUPPORT & applaud the incorporation of Native Hawaiian practices which contains much wisdom.

Please include domestic violence community representation into this Malama Ohana working group!

HB-1365

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 11:17:29 AM

Testimony for HUS on 2/9/2023 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

2/8/2023

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

Support for and comments on HB1365, 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. At the same time, I request that the committee consider either:

(a) deleting Mālama 'Ohana Working Group from HB1365 and move forward with HB330;

or alternatively

(b) amend HB1365 to establish the working group within the Office of Wellness and Resilience.

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

HB-1365

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 11:25:52 AM

Testimony for HUS on 2/9/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kayla Samson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a parent partner at EPIC 'Ohana. As a peer with lived experience in the child welfare system, I strongly support the establishment of a Mālama 'Ohana Working Group. However, I request that the committee consider either: (a) deleting Mālama 'Ohana Working Group from HB1365 and move forward with HB330; or alternatively (b) amend HB1365 to establish the working group within the Office of Wellness and Resilience. 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. 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.

With appreciation,

Kayla Samson

HB-1365

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 11:32:04 AM

Testimony for HUS on 2/9/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chassidy Kruse	EPIC Ohana	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a parent partner at EPIC 'Ohana. As a peer with lived experience in the child welfare system, I strongly support the establishment of a Mālama 'Ohana Working Group. However, I request that the committee consider either: (a) deleting Mālama 'Ohana Working Group from HB1365 and move forward with HB330; or alternatively (b) amend HB1365 to establish the working group within the Office of Wellness and Resilience. 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. 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.

With appreciation,

Chassidy Kruse

Parent Partner EPIC `Ohana

1130 N. Nimitz Hwy, Suite C-210

Honolulu, HI 96817

808-342-8245

HB-1365

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 12:17:41 PM

Testimony for HUS on 2/9/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vivian Kim Seu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

I am a Parent Partner at EPIC Ohana, As a peer lived experience in the child welfare system, I strongly support the establishment of Malama Ohana Working Group. When I was navigating the system it didnt have all these resources that would strengten the families and provide resources for families to sustain their credabilty to be productive memebers to society. However I request that the committee considr either (a) deleting Malama Ohana Working Group from HB1365 and move forward with HB330; or alternatively (b) amend HB1365 to establish the working group with the office of Wellness and Resilience.

The working group brings together child welfare service members and community sevicng organizations with parents,children,resource caregivers and family members with lived exprience in the child welfare system. I strongly support the collaboration of services providers with those they serve to Malama those families,children & caregivers to improve the outcomes for children in the child welfare system. Mahalo

HB-1365

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 1:59:25 PM

Testimony for HUS on 2/9/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amanda Mundon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support the establishment of a Mālama 'Ohana Working Group. However, I request that the committee consider either: (a) deleting Mālama 'Ohana Working Group from HB1365 and move forward with HB330; or alternatively (b) amend HB1365 to establish the working group within the Office of Wellness and Resilience. 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. 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.

With appreciation,

Amanda Mundon

HB-1365

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 4:42:07 PM

Testimony for HUS on 2/9/2023 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

I strongly support the establishment of a Mālama 'Ohana Working Group. However, I request that the committee consider either: (a) deleting Mālama 'Ohana Working Group from HB1365 and move forward with HB330; or alternatively (b) amend HB1365 to establish the working group within the Office of Wellness and Resilience. 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. 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.

With appreciation,

Ashley Viluan

Parent Partner

EPIC OHANA INC

HB-1365

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 10:37:50 PM

Testimony for HUS on 2/9/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Raquel Gali	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I strongly support the establishment of a Mālama 'Ohana Working Group. However, I request that the committee consider either: (a) deleting Mālama 'Ohana Working Group from HB1365 and move forward with HB330; or alternatively (b) amend HB1365 to establish the working group within the Office of Wellness and Resilience. 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. 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.

With appreciation,

Raquel Gali

HB-1365

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 11:26:29 PM

Testimony for HUS on 2/9/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lise Vaughan Sekona	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Representatives.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my support for the establishment of the Malama Ohana working group as set forth in HB330 rather than HBI365. I humbly request that the committee consider either: (a) deleting Mālama 'Ohana Working Group from HB1365 and move forward with HB330; or alternatively (b) amend HB1365 to establish the working group within the Office of Wellness and Resilience. I support HB330 and the establishment of the working group within the Office of Wellness and Resilience because the Office is charged with finding public and private collaborations to promote wellness and resilience in the state. This mission is in alignment with the vision and intended results of the working 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. 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.

With appreciation,

Lise Vaughan-Sekona

HB-1365

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 5:46:35 AM

Testimony for HUS on 2/9/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kailene Nihipali Sanchez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support the establishment of a Mālama 'Ohana Working Group. However, I request that the committee consider either: (a) deleting Mālama 'Ohana Working Group from HB1365 and move forward with HB330; or alternatively (b) amend HB1365 to establish the working group within the Office of Wellness and Resilience. 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. 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.

With appreciation,

Kailene Nihipali Sanchez

TO: Human Services Committee

HEARING: Thursday, 02/09/23
9:00 AM
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE
Conference Room 329

FROM: Sharla-Ann Fujimoto

RE: In SUPPORT of HB1365 - Relating to Child Welfare Services

My name is Sharla-Ann Fujimoto. I am a resource caregiver for youth in foster care and a Board Advisor for the HI H.O.P.E.S. Initiative Youth Leadership Board in West Hawai'i. The HI H.O.P.E.S. Board works locally to create more opportunities for foster youth and support tasks that help lead to successful outcomes for foster youth transitioning out (also known as "aging out") of the foster care system.

I would like to submit testimony in support of House Bill 1365 with the following considerations. I strongly support the establishment of a Mālama 'Ohana Working Group. However, I request that the committee consider either: (a) deleting Mālama 'Ohana Working Group from HB1365 and move forward with HB330; or alternatively (b) amend HB1365 to establish the working group within the Office of Wellness and Resilience.

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. This leads them to face poorer outcomes as adults such as homelessness, incarceration, and are often pregnant or parenting at early ages. Many of these negative outcomes can be avoided if adequate support and resources are provided to foster youth and their parents when their Child Welfare cases are still open.

Birth parents, resource caregivers, and foster youth are left to navigate complex situations on their own for several reasons including their inability to reach their social worker, high staff turnover, low staffing in offices, inadequate administrative support, and minimal funding provided to all Child Welfare Services offices statewide. There are currently so many birth parents, foster youth, and resource caregivers who haven't seen or heard from their social worker in months and have no idea what is happening with their case. Many community members, myself included, have lodged complaints to Section Administrators because social workers cannot be reached, but even those concerns are often not addressed, leaving the issues and concerns unresolved or making us feel like we have to take matters into our own hands to help the foster youth in our home.

As a resource caregiver, my role is to provide a safe and stable home for the youth in foster care. To continue doing this, social workers must connect with us and the children in our homes. Children in foster care have needs far greater than what resource caregivers are able to provide alone. Resource caregivers need the extra support and resources from the

social worker to sustain these placements and keep the resource caregivers from experiencing burn out as well.

For me, it is frustrating as caregiver when you reach out to the social worker for help and support multiple times, but don't get any return phone calls or e-mails. It's also even more frustrating when you are reaching out to the social worker on behalf of the foster youth, only to have your calls and text messages unreturned. I can handle my phone calls not being returned, but we have to do better for the youth in foster care.

I have been working in the field for over ten years. In that time, I have seen horrific amounts of injustice and harm done to our extremely vulnerable foster youth. I have worked with many foster youth that have been in care for over a year, and they report seeing their worker only once or twice since their removal from their family. 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 calling to reach out for help, the only thing they could do was leave a voicemail on an already overloaded answering machine. The point of this is not to place blame, but it is to make one thing very clear: foster youth need the support of their social worker.

I understand that the role of the Child Welfare Services Social Worker is not an easy one—they are expected to be ever present for everyone and connect to the many individuals and systems involved in the case. I've seen the social workers in West Hawai'i do the best that they can with each case, but the truth is that they just don't have enough time to see parents and children when they have over 150 people they have to see face-to-face each month. Some workers are too busy that they don't get to check their voicemail for over a month because they're out in the field or because there's so many other things that have to get done that they don't want to deal with it. The high demands and stress of this job leaves our social workers vulnerable to burn out.

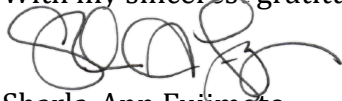
As a professional that works with current and former foster youth and as a resource caregiver of several foster children, I believe that this bill supports the federal mandate to ensure that children do not "linger" in the foster care system. By allowing the necessary resources and support to create the Mālama 'Ohana work group, I wholeheartedly believe that they will be able to help support Child Welfare and help them connect to their surrounding communities to increase staff and staff support. My hope is that this will ultimately reduce the harm against foster youth, promote reunification when safe and appropriate, timely responses to all involved with the foster youth, retain the workers we have, and lessen the amount of burn out these workers have faced from carrying high and unmanageable caseloads.

The Mālama 'Ohana work group would bring together Child Welfare Services members and community servicing organizations with parents, children, resource caregivers and family members with lived experience in the child welfare system to collaborate and brainstorm strategies to make our system a truly transformative and healing one—not one that perpetuates the trauma and stigma that comes with foster care. This is why I strongly

support the collaboration of service providers with those they serve to improve the outcomes for children in the Child Welfare system.

My sincere 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. We have to do better for the keiki (children) of our 'āina (land). In closing, I strongly encourage this committee to support the passage of HB1365.

With my sincerest gratitude,

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

Sharla-Ann Fujimoto