



**TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA
THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE, 2024**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

H.B. NO. 1967, RELATING TO THE HUMAN TRAFFICKING VICTIM SERVICES FUND.

BEFORE THE:

HOUSE COMMITTEES ON LABOR AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND ON JUDICIARY AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

DATE: Tuesday, February 13, 2024 **TIME:** 9:30 a.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 309 and Videoconference

TESTIFIER(S): Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or
Julie Ebato, Administrator, Crime Prevention and Justice Assistance Division

Chairs Matayoshi and Tarnas and Members of the Committees

The Department of the Attorney General supports this bill that changes the administration of the Human Trafficking Victim Services Fund from the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to the Department of the Attorney General.

The Department of the Attorney General is committed to combatting all forms of human trafficking and sex trafficking in Hawai'i. The Department's Special Investigation and Prosecution Division was created to fulfill this purpose, as it is a mission-driven unit that investigates and prosecutes human-trafficking and sex-trafficking crimes. As the Department comes into contact with victims of human trafficking, the human trafficking victim services fund may be used to supplement programs, grants, or purchase of service contracts that support or provide comprehensive services to victims of labor trafficking or sex trafficking.

We respectfully ask the Committee to pass this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



JADE T. BUTAY
DIRECTOR

WILLIAM G. KUNSTMAN
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

JOVANIA DOMINGO DELA CRUZ
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
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IN REPLY, REFER TO:
OCS 24.1056

February 12, 2024

To: The Honorable Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair,
The Honorable Andrew Takuya Garrett, Vice Chair, and
Members of the House Committee on Labor & Government Operations, and

The Honorable David A. Tarnas, Chair,
The Honorable Gregg Takayama, Vice Chair, and
Members of the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

Date: Tuesday, February 13, 2024
Time: 9:30 a.m.
Place: Conference Room 309, State Capitol & Videoconference

From: Jovania Domingo Dela Cruz, Executive Director
Office of Community Services – OCS

Position: Support

Re: H.B. 1967 RELATING TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING

I. OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION

This bill would transfer the human trafficking special fund from the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, where it is being administered by the Office of Community Services (OCS), to the Department of the Attorney General.

II. CURRENT LAW

The Office of Community Services has had a special fund for serving human trafficking victims since 2014. However, the sum that was collected was never sufficient to administer services for trafficking victims.

III. COMMENTS ON THE BILL

This bill would transfer the special fund to the Department of the Attorney General where any funds could be consolidated with funds from other sources, in order to provide for reparations to trafficking victims. OCS supports the measure and thanks the committee for the opportunity to testify.



HB 1967, RELATING TO THE HUMAN TRAFFICKING VICTIM SERVICES FUND

FEBRUARY 13, 2024 · LGO/JHA HEARING

POSITION: Support.

RATIONALE: Imua Alliance supports HB 1967, relating to the human trafficking victim services fund, which changes the administration of the Human Trafficking Victim Services Fund from the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to the Department of the Attorney General.

Imua Alliance is a victim service provider for survivors of sex trafficking. Over the past 15 years, we have provided comprehensive direct intervention (victim rescue) services to over 200 victims, successfully emancipating them from slavery and assisting in their restoration, while providing a range of targeted services to over 1,000 victims and individuals at risk of sexual exploitation. During the pandemic, demand for victim services to our organization skyrocketed by 330 percent, driven in part by a fivefold increase in direct crisis calls.

Each of the victims we have assisted has suffered from complex and overlapping trauma, including post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and anxiety, dissociation, parasuicidal behavior, and substance abuse. Trafficking-related trauma can lead to a complete loss of identity. A victim we cared for in 2016, for example, had become so heavily trauma bonded to her pimp that while under his grasp, she couldn't remember her own name. Yet, sadly, many of the victims with whom we work are misidentified as so-called "voluntary prostitutes" and are subsequently arrested and incarcerated, with no financial resources from which to pay for their release.

Sex trafficking is a profoundly violent crime. At least 23 percent of trafficking victims in Hawai'i report being first exploited before turning 18, according to a recent report, with the average age of trafficked keiki's initial exposure to exploitation being 11. Based on regular outreach and monitoring, we estimate that approximately 150 high-risk sex trafficking establishments operate in Hawai'i. In a recent report conducted by the State Commission on the Status of Women, researchers from Arizona State University found that 1 in every 11 adult males living in our state buys sex online. When visitors are also counted, that number worsens to 1 in every 7 men walking the streets of our island home and a daily online sex buyer market of 18,614 for O'ahu and a total sex buyer population for the island of 74,362, including both tourists and residents.

ASU's findings are grim, but not surprising to local organizations that provide services to survivors of sex trafficking. Imua Alliance, for example, has trained volunteers to perform outreach to victims in high-risk locations, like strip clubs, massage parlors, and hostess bars. More than 80 percent of runaway youth report being approached for sexual exploitation while on the run, over 30 percent of whom are targeted within the first 48 hours of leaving home. With regard to mental health, sex trafficking victims are twice as likely to suffer from PTSD as a soldier in a war zone.

Greater than 80 percent of victims report being repeatedly raped and 95 percent report being physically assaulted, numbers that are underreported, according to the United States Department of State and numerous trauma specialists, because of the inability of many victims to recognize sexual violence. As one underage survivor told Imua Alliance prior to being rescued, "I can't be raped. Only good girls can be raped. I'm a bad girl. If I *want* to be raped, I have to *earn* it."

Accordingly, **we support measures to advance our state's fight against sexual servitude, including this bill's placing of the state's Human Trafficking Victim Services Fund within the auspices of the Department of the Attorney General.** That said, we note that the fund had a cash balance of \$2,750 at the end of the 2022-2023 fiscal year. Additional revenue streams beyond criminal fees need to be created to help the fund meet its purpose of serving survivors.

Kris Coffield · Executive Director, Imua Alliance · (808) 679-7454 · kris@imuaalliance.org



February 13, 2024

TO: Representative Scot Matayoshi, Chair
Representative Andrew Garrett Vice Chair and
Members of the Committee on Labor and Government Operations

To: Representative David Tarnas, Chair
Representative Gregg Takayama, Vice Chair and
Members of the Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

LATE

From: Jeanne Y. Ohta, Co-Chair
Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus

RE: HB 1967 Relating to the Human Trafficking Victim Services Fund

POSITION: STRONG SUPPORT

The Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus writes in strong support of HB 1967 Relating to the Human Trafficking Victim Services Fund which would move the Human Trafficking Victim Services Fund from the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to the Department of the Attorney General.

The Department of the Attorney General currently plays an important role in prosecuting traffickers and coordinating victim services. Shifting these funds would place the funds where they may be used more efficiently and focused on the care needed by trafficking survivors.

This measure is a priority for the Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus. The Hawai'i State Democratic Women's Caucus is a catalyst for progressive, social, economic, and political change through action on critical issues facing Hawaii's women and girls.

We respectfully request that the Committee pass this crucial measure. Thank you for the opportunity to submit our testimony in strong support of HB 1967.

HB-1967

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 12:26:34 PM

Testimony for LGO on 2/13/2024 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Stand in SUPPORT