



## *The Judiciary, State of Hawai‘i*

### Testimony to the Thirty-Second Legislature, 2024 Regular Session

#### Senate Committee on Government Operations

Senator Angus L.K. McKelvey, Chair

Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

Tuesday, February 13, 2024

State Capitol, Conference Room 225

by

Adriane Abe

Program Specialist

Office of the Deputy Chief Court Administrator, First Circuit

#### **WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY**

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**Bill No. and Title:** Senate Bill No. 3094, Relating to Peer Support Specialists.

**Purpose:** Establishes a working group to create a statewide framework for peer support specialists. Appropriates funds for hiring an administrative facilitator to provide necessary support for the peer support specialist working group in carrying out its duties and compensation for peer support specialists on the working group for time spent on working group meetings and related work and travel expenses.

#### **Judiciary's Position:**

The Judiciary supports Senate Bill No. 3094 and appreciates the Legislature’s recognition of the value Peer Support Specialists provide in the delivery of effective behavioral health services.

The Judiciary supports this bill for the following reasons:

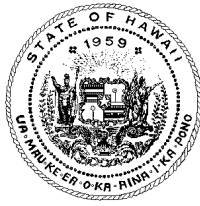
1. This bill provides for a multidisciplinary working group to develop a framework for the inclusion of peer support specialists in the service array for the state.



Senate Bill No. 3094, Relating to Peer Support Specialists  
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services  
Senate Committee on Government Operations  
Tuesday, February 13, 2024  
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2. This bill provides deliverables for the working group to develop a framework which includes role clarification and definitions for peer support specialists; and the development of a trauma informed model of supervision which will be important to ethically and effectively deliver services with the assistance of peer support specialists.
3. There are examples of jurisdictions across the country where peer support specialists have been successfully incorporated into the service array providing hope, encouragement, and support that a peer with lived experience brings.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I  
**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS  
AND REHABILITATION**  
*Ka 'Oihana Ho'omalu Kalaima  
a Ho'oponopono Ola*  
1177 Alakea Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii'i 96813

**TOMMY JOHNSON**  
DIRECTOR

**Melanie Martin**  
Deputy Director  
Administration

**Pamela J. Sturz**  
Deputy Director  
Correctional Institutions

**Sanna Muñoz**  
Deputy Director  
Rehabilitation Services  
and  
Programs

No. \_\_\_\_\_

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 3094  
RELATING TO PEER SUPPORT SPECIALISTS.

by

Tommy Johnson, Director  
Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

Senate Committee on Government Operation  
Senator Angus L.K. McKelvey, Chair  
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

Tuesday, February 13, 2024; 4:00 p.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 225 & via Videoconference

Chair McKelvey, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 3094, which proposes to establish a working group within the Office of Wellness and Resilience to create a statewide framework for peer support specialists.

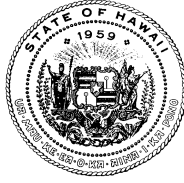
DCR supports this measure for the following reasons:

- As the newly redesignated DCR, our focus is to shift from what historically has been a punitive model, to a rehabilitative, restorative, and reentry-focused system. In making this paradigm shift, peer support specialists, especially those with lived experiences, will play an integral role in the delivery of effective mental and behavioral health treatment.
- Research has shown that peer support is effective in reducing, among other things, substance use and depression. Many in our custody could benefit from peer support specialists who have lived through similar social, behavioral, and economic challenges. Creating a safe environment to share similar experiences will help to establish trust in others.

- Studies have also shown that peer support increases social functioning and social support. For those in our facilities, this type of assistance is key to successful reentry into the community. Such success may empower those released from our custody to become productive members of our community, thereby reducing recidivism.

The establishment of a working group to develop and make recommendations for a standardized framework for peer support specialists is a step in the right direction to serve individuals in need.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 3094.



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**  
**KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO**  
P. O. Box 3378  
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378  
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB3094**  
**RELATING TO PEER SUPPORT SPECIALISTS**  
SENATOR ANGUS L.K. MCKELVEY, CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Tuesday, February 13, 2024, 4:00 pm, Conference Room 225 and Videoconference

1 **Fiscal Implications:**

2 There are no fiscal implications for this measure.

3 **Department Position:**

4 The Department supports this measure and offers the following comments.

5 **Department Testimony:**

6 The Department of Health, Adult Mental Health Division (AMHD) provides the following  
7 testimony on behalf of the Department.

8 The Department supports SB 3094 which proposes the creation of a working group that  
9 will consist of state department decision-makers, community organizations, and people  
10 with lived experience to create a statewide framework for standardizing Peer Specialist  
11 roles, ethics, training, and data measurements that demonstrate Peer Specialists  
12 support as an invaluable and proven evidenced-based model of care. In addition, the  
13 Department supports the intention of this bill to identify standards for supervision; to  
14 develop a state inventory of certified Peer Specialists, and a sustainability plan to ensure  
15 current and future peer support expansion and opportunities.

1 The AMHD offers two Peer Specialist trainings: Hawaii Certified Peer Specialist and  
2 Hawaii Certified Forensic Peer Specialist training. The trainings are offered to adults with  
3 lived mental health experience. Many also have lived experience with homelessness,  
4 and forensic involvement, and most have been in long-term recovery from substance  
5 abuse issues. There are currently 27 newly certified Hawai'i Certified Peer Specialists  
6 and 17 Forensic Peer Specialists throughout the Islands. AMHD is the only program in  
7 Hawai'i that certifies Adults with Mental Illnesses as Peer Specialists.

8 Additionally, the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division (CAMHD) trains and  
9 certifies youth and parents with lived experience working with children with mental  
10 illnesses. The Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division (ADAD) trains and certifies Peer  
11 Specialists with lived experience recovering from drug abuse issues. This unique  
12 certification status allows any DOH Peer Specialist hired by any Medicaid-qualified  
13 agency to bill for their services.

14 Until recently, the Department was unaware that there were other Peer Specialist  
15 training programs in communities throughout the state. This workgroup would assist  
16 with ending this disconnect and offer benefits to the participants and the State. The  
17 AMHD would be honored to participate and collaborate with the listed participants in  
18 this measure.

19 The Department recognizes the following key points written in SB3094 that ensure the  
20 workgroup's efficacy:

- 21 • The workgroup includes a representative from MedQuest. Medicaid billing for Peer  
22 Specialist services is an enigma that only a few providers have figured out. This  
23 workgroup would support the sharing of this knowledge. Being able to bill Medicaid  
24 for peer support, rather than relying on temporary grants and special project state

- 1 monies, would bring in funding for the expansion of Peer Specialist positions, allow  
2 for sustainability, and save State funds for other needed projects.
- 3 • Provides an avenue to discuss and adopt supportive methods for supervision, self-  
4 care, and continuing education creating Peer Specialists.
  - 5 • Creates Peer Specialist empowerment, prevents professional fatigue, and  
6 encourages employment effectiveness and tenure.
  - 7 • Identifies best practices to expand and document peer support opportunities in all  
8 state agencies, not just in the field of mental and behavioral health.
  - 9 • Creates a framework to expand peer support collaboratively, allowing state  
10 departments, community partners, and peers to collectively identify what they need  
11 to onboard peer support specialists and standardize training and certification.
  - 12 • Stimulates collaboration on how the State can best sustain peer support programs  
13 by collectively identifying funding streams.
  - 14 • Allows compensation of workgroup members with lived experience and limited  
15 income to participate.
  - 16 • Peer support is one of the six guiding principles of trauma-informed care that has  
17 numerous positive behavioral outcomes. (Learn more about the benefits of peer  
18 support specialists: [https://www.samhsa.gov/brss-tacs/recovery-support-  
tools/peers.](https://www.samhsa.gov/brss-tacs/recovery-support-<br/>19 tools/peers.))

20 **Offered Amendments:**

21 The Department suggests the addition of representation from the Veteran’s Administration  
22 (VA) and the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). Both the Administration and the  
23 organization have organized Peer Support programs.

- 1 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.





EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

**House Committee on Human Services**

Tuesday, February 13, 2024

4:00pm

State Capitol, Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

**In Support of**

**S.B. No. 3094, Relating to Peer Support Specialists**

Aloha Chair McKelvey, Vice Chair Gabbard

The Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR) in the Governor's Office **STRONGLY SUPPORTS** S.B. No. 3094, Relating to Peer Support Specialists.

Established through Act 291 (Session Laws of Hawai'i 2022) 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. OWR explores avenues to increase access and availability to mental, behavioral, social, and emotional health services and support.

Peer support specialists are people who have lived experience receiving services from systems of care that assist others experiencing similar situations. Peer support is one of the six guiding principles to a trauma-informed approach; through shared understanding, respect, and mutual empowerment, peer support specialists help people in their healing process. The OWR strongly believes that increasing opportunities for peer support specialists to provide assistance in the healing journey of trauma-survivors is an integral piece of making Hawai'i a trauma-informed state.

S.B. 3094 establishes a working group that will develop a framework for peer support specialists in the State. Department of Health currently administers the Hawai'i Certified Peer Specialist (HCPS) program that supports the recovery of people with mental illness. The goal of the working group is to create a framework that will expand peer support beyond mental health. The bill proposes to do so by convening State departments, community partners, and peers to collectively identify what they need to onboard peer support specialists in their departments, including training and certification. If S.B.3094 passes, the OWR will be honored to assist with the creation of a framework that incorporates the voices of lived experience and expertise, including how the state can support peers support specialists in a trauma-informed, healing centered way.

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

Mahalo

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

To: Senate Committee on Government Operations  
RE: SB3094 in strong support  
Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 225  
February 13, 2024; 4:00pm

Aloha Chair McKelvey, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the committee,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) Speaks!, mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **STRONG SUPPORT of Senate Bill 3094** relating to Relating to Peer Support Specialists.

SB3094 proposes the creation of a working group that will consist of state department decision-makers, community organizations, and people with lived experience to create a statewide framework to expand the role of peer support specialists within our state systems. The bill proposes to identify best practices to expand peer support opportunities in all state agencies, not just in the field of mental and behavioral health.

Peer support is one of the six guiding principles of trauma-informed care that has numerous positive behavioral outcomes. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration ([SAMHSA](#)) cites peer support as effective workers who provide non-clinical, strengths-based support in non-judgmental practices that advance recovery for those in similar situations. This would also create a framework to expand peer support in a collaborative manner, allowing state departments, community partners and peers to identify collectively what they need to onboard peer support specialists in their departments, including training and certification.

Establishing a working group within the Office of Wellness and Resilience would elevate the voices of those experts with lived experience in the child welfare system to lend their voices to the state in a trauma informed, healing-centered way. It is time we listen to our community voices. Mahalo for your support on HB2405.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Mai Hall, M.Ed.

Children's Health Coordinator



### Our Mission

Increase Hawai'i's investments in its youngest keiki by collaborating with elected officials and serving as a trusted partner and reliable resource for information on issues related to Hawai'i's youngest keiki and families.



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Greg Auberry  
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#### Hawai'i County

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Kahi Moreman  
Angela Thomas



### Contact Info

700 Bishop Street, Suite 1701  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 93813

info@committokeiki.org  
CommitToKeiki.org

Date: February 11, 2024  
To: Committee on Government Relations  
Senator Angus L.K. McKelvey, Chair  
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

From: Commit to Keiki  
Re: Support for **SB3094**, Relating to Peer Support Specialist Working Group

**Commit to Keiki strongly supports passage of SB3094**, which would establish a working group to develop and make recommendations for a framework for peer support specialists in the State.

Commit to Keiki has three key priorities to support early childhood development and the health and wellbeing of Hawai'i's youngest keiki and their families. Priorities include

1. Child Care and Early Learning
2. Early Childhood Mental Health
3. Family Violence Prevention

Peer support specialists are critical for our 'ohana with keiki prenatal to age five. Parents and caregivers may be experiencing parenting challenges which put keiki at risk for abuse, they may be struggling with intimate partner violence or they may be working through substance abuse issues.

Peer support specialists provide the lived expertise to come alongside parents and caregivers to provide encouragement, expertise and lessons learned. Peer support specialists impact behavioral outcomes and play a critical role in preventing family violence, mental health and substance use challenges. We strongly urge you to support **SB3094**.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



## **SB3094 Peer Specialists**

### COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Senator Angus L.K. McKelvey, Chair

Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

Tuesday Feb 13, 2024, 4:00 Room 225

### **Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition Supports SB3094:**

*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.*

**Peer Specialists are people who have been successful in the recovery process who help others experiencing addiction** as well as psychiatric disorders such as PTSD and depression. They have been trained to counsel or assist others with that condition.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Since peer specialists are for addiction as well as co-occurring disorders, and also that DOH: ADAD also has a peer support specialist program in their division, we recommend adding to the task force:

Amend to add:

**Section 2: (8)** A member of the department of health's alcohol and drug abuse division presenting the administrator of the peer support specialist program carried out with the division; ~~(8)~~ (9) The administrator of med-QUEST, or the administrator's designee; and then renumber so forth.

Peer Specialists in all forms of behavioral health services add value by contributing to others their shared experience of recovery and are exceptionally good at addressing diverse viewpoints. They can positively and constructively challenge individuals and groups to help them in their recovery journey to improve.

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



National Alliance on Mental Illness Hawaii  
A State Organization of NAMI

TO: The Honorable Angus L.K. McKelvey  
Chair, Senate Committee on Government Operations  
The Honorable Mike Gabbard  
Vice Chair, Senate Committee on Government Operations

FROM: Trisha Chaung  
Advocacy Manager, NAMI Hawaii

RE: SB 3094 – RELATING TO PEER SUPPORT SPECIALISTS

HEARING: February 13, 2024 at 4:00 PM

POSITION: **NAMI Hawaii supports SB 3094**

NAMI Hawaii is the state organization for The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), the nation’s largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. Our national organization started as a small group of families gathered around a kitchen table in 1979; today, we are an alliance of 600 local affiliates and 49 state organizations who work within the community to raise awareness and provide support/education to those impacted by mental illness.

NAMI Hawaii has services and volunteers in all counties. Our free education programs and support groups are led by individuals with lived experience (individuals with mental illness and/or family members of individuals with mental illness) and the majority of our staff, board members, and volunteers have lived experience. We not only understand the worth and positive impact of peer support; it’s our subject matter expertise and primary way of serving the people of Hawaii.

The mental health and substance use workforce must be sufficient in supply, diversity, and cultural competency to meet the needs of people with mental illness. By sharing their personal experiences, peer support workers build trust, connection, and understanding, helping current patients to become more hopeful for and engaged in their recovery journey. Considerable research demonstrates that peer support improves patient outcomes, including reducing the need for inpatient and emergency services and the frequency of recurrent psychiatric hospitalizations.

Peer support for *a patient’s support system* also has the potential to improve patient outcomes. NAMI’s flagship program, the evidence-based NAMI Family-to-Family, is a form of extended peer support for the loved ones of an individual with mental illness, and has demonstrated increases in problem-solving skills, coping skills, and feelings of empowerment, all of which aids in the navigation and utilization of an often labyrinthine mental healthcare system.

**NAMI Hawaii writes in support of SB 3094, with one recommendation.** We recommend that the peer support specialist working group also include an individual who is an *unpaid* caregiver (and the scope of “caregiver” can also extend beyond conservatorship and towards a holistic support system) of an *adult* who currently receives mental health services and lives in recovery. This inclusion will strengthen the working group’s capacity to address the role of caregiver peer support specialists. **We submitted testimony in support of companion bill HB 2405, but our recommendation was not included in its amendments; we hope that the Senate Committee on Government Operations will consider our recommendation.**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 3094.

Date: February 11, 2024

To: Committee on Government Relations  
Senator Angus L.K. McKelvey, Chair  
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

From: Early Childhood Action Strategy

Re: Support for **SB3094**, Relating to Peer Support Specialist Working Group

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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 passage of SB3094**, which would establish a working group to develop and make recommendations for a framework for peer support specialists in the State.

Early Childhood Action Strategy believes that peer support specialists are the linchpin for parents and caregivers working through parenting challenges and people experiencing mental health and/or substance use challenges. They are the liaison between those who need assistance and those providing services and are the most trusted in the equation. We have seen the evidence in the following two programs:

1. ECAS works closely with EPIC `Ohana's Makua Allies program, designed with the inclusion of peer specialists, to ensure pregnant women experiencing substance use disorder get the help they need AND can keep their babies upon delivery. The program has been enormously successful due to the inclusion of peer specialists, who have the lived expertise to help navigate the experience.
2. ECAS also works closely with Family Hui Hawai`i, another peer-to-peer support program that provides parents and caregivers with parenting support in a safe and supported space. Due to the peer-to-peer support model, retention in the program is high and positive parenting tools are adopted by families, reducing rates of family violence and child abuse and neglect.

The Federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration identified peer support as one of the six guiding principles of trauma-informed care and improving behavioral health outcomes. Peer support can play a critical role in preventing family violence, mental health and substance use challenges. Towards this end, we strongly urge you to support **SB3094**.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



1130 N. NIMITZ HWY, SUITE C-210, HONOLULU, HI 96817  
PHONE: (808) 838-7752 TOLL FREE: (866) 636-1644 FAX: (808) 838-1653

February 13, 2024

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB3094 Re Peer Support Specialists

EPIC 'Ohana is a non profit organization serving families and children in the child welfare system, and youth experiencing social and emotional challenges. We employ Parent Partners and Makua Allies. These are birth parents with lived experience in the child welfare system, and/or with perinatal substance use disorder. We also employ Youth Partners who work with the young people served by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division of the Department of Health, with foster youth served by Child Welfare Services, and youth served at the Youth Outreach Center for Homeless youth. What we have learned in the last few years is incredible power of lived experience to engage peers in services, and provide hope in ways that no one else can. The impact is tremendous. We also support the efforts of the Pū'ā Foundation to establish a culturally based certification and training program for peer support specialists in many arenas including justice involved men and women, and parents. And we partnered with the Early Childhood Action Strategy network and the Association for Infant Mental Health, Hawai'i, and Zero to Three Court to find ways to collaborate and integrate the services of peer support specialists into these services.

Peer support is an anchor in the articulated guiding principles of trauma-informed care. (Learn more about the benefits of peer support specialists: <https://www.samhsa.gov/brss-tacs/recovery-support-tools/peers>.) What we realize is that the tremendous impact of this work needs both champions and support. There are obstacles to the utilization of peer support in state agencies and in contracts with the state. There are nationally articulated standards for peer certification and training, that EPIC follows, but should be discussed across agencies. Employers, including state agencies, must have an understanding of how to effectively work with peer support specialists and integrate them into programs in ways that are trauma informed.

And, community based organizations and state agencies employing peer support specialists need sustainable funding sources. At this time, many of our programs are funded by short one, two, three, or at best six year demonstration or pilot project funding.

This bill proposes to identify best practices to expand peer support opportunities across the continuum of care, creates a framework for the collaborative expansion of peer support, allowing us all to work together to enrich our community with this vital service.

Please pass SB3094.

Laurie Arial Tochiki, JD, Ph.D

Executive Director





**To: Committee on Government Operations**

**Hearing Date/Time: Tuesday February 13th, 2024 4:00 PM**

**Re: Testimony in Support of SB 3094**

**From: Heather Lusk, Hawaii Health and Harm Reduction Center**

Dear Chair McKelvey, Vice Chair Gabbard and members of the committee

The Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHHC) **supports SB 3094** which would establish working group to create a statewide framework for peer support specialists. Peer support specialists have been shown to be very effective when properly trained and supported – and that is what SB 3094 would do, is create a standard across the islands and across disciplines.

HHHC's mission is to *reduce harm, promote health, create wellness and fight stigma in Hawaii and the Pacific*. We focus our efforts on those disproportionately affected by social determinants of health, including but not limited to: people living with and/or affected by HIV, hepatitis, substance use, and the transgender, LGBTQ and the Native Hawaiian communities.

HHHC has been hiring peers since our inception as we know that those who have walked the path previously can be the most effective supporters for those facing challenges. Over 80% of our workforce identifies as having lived experience and there are unique issues to supervising and empowering peers, getting paid for their services, and providing training and support that meets their needs. SB 3094 would, for the first time, create standards, best practices and collaboration amongst all of the entities supporting peer work in the islands and is much needed to support this growing field.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Heather Lusk, Executive Director, Hawaii Health and Harm Reduction Center





**STATE OF HAWAII**  
STATE COUNCIL  
ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES  
1010 RICHARDS STREET, Room 122  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
TELEPHONE: (808) 586-8100 FAX: (808) 586-7543

February 13, 2024

The Honorable Senator Angus L.K. McKelvey, Chair  
Senate Committee on Government Operations  
The Thirty-Second Legislature  
State Capitol  
State of Hawai'i  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Senator McKelvey and Committee Members:

**SUBJECT: SB3094 RELATING TO PEER SUPPORT SPECIALISTS**

The Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities is in **SUPPORT OF SB3094**, which establishes a working group to create a statewide framework for peer support specialists. Appropriates funds for hiring an administrative facilitator to provide necessary support for the peer support specialist working group in carrying out its duties and compensation for peer support specialists on the working group for time spent on working group meetings and related work and travel expenses.

My journey has shown me just how crucial trauma-informed care and peer-to-peer support are, especially for individuals like me with developmental disabilities navigating systems like Child Welfare Services (CWS). I've been through multiple placements in CWS foster homes while trying to cope with overwhelming grief and trauma. It's crystal clear to me now that what's needed most is a compassionate and understanding approach to care.

Trauma-informed care has been a game-changer for me. It's all about recognizing how trauma affects every aspect of our lives and creating spaces that prioritize safety, trust, and empowerment. Given my past, understanding the roots of my trauma and knowing what might trigger it is absolutely vital for providing support that truly helps. Trauma-informed approaches don't just acknowledge what I've been through—they actively work to prevent any further harm by fostering environments of empathy and understanding.

Now, as a Grief and Trauma Facilitator at Kids Hurt Too Hawaii, I get to share my own journey of healing with others who are going through similar struggles. By opening up about my experiences with grief and trauma, I not only validate what others are going through but also show them that there's hope and resilience on the other side. Peer support creates this

The Honorable Senator Angus L.K. McKelvey, Chair  
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incredible space where we can connect on a level that's deeper than words, sharing insights, coping strategies, and endless encouragement.

Bringing trauma-informed care and peer-to-peer support into organizations like Kids Hurt Too Hawaii is not just a nice to have it is an absolute must. These principles don't just enrich the support we provide to individuals with developmental disabilities; they also create a sense of belonging and understanding that's so desperately needed. My dedication to this cause is fueled by the belief that these approaches can truly make a difference in nurturing healing and resilience, even in the face of the toughest challenges.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **support of SB3094**.

Sincerely,

James Labrie  
Chair

Daintry Bartoldus  
Executive Administrator