
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO COLD CASE INVESTIGATIONS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that Hawaii has hundreds
2 of unsolved murders, including some cases more than forty years
3 old. According to the nonprofit organization Project: Cold
4 Case, the State reported 2,182 homicides between 1965 and 2023,
5 and 728 of those cases remain unsolved. Native Hawaiian,
6 Pacific Islander, and other Indigenous persons are
7 disproportionately represented among homicide victims and
8 missing persons cases, including unsolved "cold cases."
9 Nationally, the United States Department of Justice estimates
10 that there are more than four thousand two hundred unsolved
11 cases of missing and murdered Indigenous persons.

12 The legislature recognizes that, while each county in the
13 State has a cold case unit, additional resources and personnel
14 may be needed to assist with the investigation of decades-old
15 crimes. The legislature also recognizes the value in
16 coordinating efforts and sharing information among federal,
17 state, tribal, and other agencies.



1 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to establish a cold
2 case investigation unit within the department of the attorney
3 general to assist federal, state, county, and tribal law
4 enforcement, and other cold case units, in investigating
5 unsolved homicide, missing person, and other cases that have a
6 nexus to the State.

7 SECTION 2. Chapter 28, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended
8 by adding a new part to be appropriately designated and to read
9 as follows:

10 **"PART . COLD CASE INVESTIGATION UNIT**

11 **\$28- Cold case investigation unit.** (a) There is
12 established in the department of the attorney general a cold
13 case investigation unit.

14 (b) The unit shall employ attorneys, investigators, and
15 other personnel as necessary to promote the effective and
16 efficient conduct of the unit's activities. Except for the
17 attorneys, all other employees of the unit shall be subject to
18 chapter 76.

19 (c) The purpose of the cold case investigation unit shall
20 be to assist federal, state, county, and tribal law enforcement
21 agencies, and cold case units within the office of a prosecutor,



1 including law enforcement agencies and cold case units in other
2 states, in investigating unsolved cases where the crime took
3 place in this State or where the victim was a resident of this
4 State.

5 (d) Cases investigated by the cold case unit may include
6 unsolved homicides, sexual offenses, sexually motivated
7 offenses, missing persons, and cases of unidentified remains;
8 provided that the unit shall prioritize the investigation of
9 cases having a Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, Native
10 American, Native Alaskan, or other indigenous victim.

11 (e) The cold case investigation unit may accept
12 investigation requests and may proactively offer assistance to a
13 law enforcement agency or cold case unit; provided that the unit
14 shall not assist with an active criminal investigation."

15 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
16 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much
17 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the
18 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year
19 2026-2027 for the establishment and operation of a cold case
20 investigation unit within the department of the attorney
21 general.



H.B. NO. 610

1 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
2 of the attorney general for the purposes of this Act.

3 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

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INTRODUCED BY:

Karai Souza

JAN 17 2025



H.B. NO. 610

Report Title:

AG; Cold Case; Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples;
Appropriation

Description:

Establishes and appropriates money for a Cold Case Investigation Unit within the Department of the Attorney General. Prioritizes unsolved cases involving an Indigenous victim.

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