

JAN 17 2025

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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

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RELATING TO FAMILY COURTS.

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

1       SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the United States is  
2 the only country in the world that has not fully established a  
3 minimum age for juvenile delinquency adjudication, in violation  
4 of Article 40 of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of  
5 the Child, which requires nations to set a minimum age below  
6 which children are deemed incapable of transgressing the  
7 criminal law. In the United States, only a bare majority of  
8 states have established any minimum age of delinquency  
9 adjudication, and most states that have set a minimum age have  
10 set it at the low age of ten years old.

11       The legislature finds that young children under the age of  
12 twelve do not have the ability to form mens rea or criminal  
13 intent but should still receive services and treatment when they  
14 engage in what would otherwise be delinquent or criminal  
15 behavior. These children lack the intellectual capability and  
16 maturity to fully understand the consequences of their actions,  
17 as well as the proceedings in juvenile court.



1       Therefore, the purpose of this Act is to establish a  
2       minimum age of twelve before a child may be adjudicated  
3       delinquent.

4       SECTION 2. Section 571-11, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
5       amended to read as follows:

6       "**§571-11 Jurisdiction; children.** Except as otherwise  
7       provided in this chapter, the court shall have exclusive  
8       original jurisdiction in proceedings:

9       (1) Concerning any person who is at least twelve years old  
10       and is alleged to have committed an act before  
11       achieving eighteen years of age that would constitute  
12       a violation or attempted violation of any federal,  
13       state, or local law or county ordinance. Regardless  
14       of where the violation occurred, jurisdiction may be  
15       taken by the court of the circuit where the person  
16       resides, is living, or is found, or in which the  
17       offense is alleged to have occurred;

18       (2) Concerning any child living or found within the  
19       circuit who is:

20       (A) Neglected as to or deprived of educational  
21       services because of the failure of any person or



1                   agency to exercise that degree of care for which  
2                   it is legally responsible;

3           (B) Beyond the control of the child's parent or other  
4           custodian or whose behavior is injurious to the  
5           child's own or others' welfare;

6           (C) Neither attending school nor receiving  
7           educational services required by law whether  
8           through the child's own misbehavior or  
9           nonattendance or otherwise; or

10          (D) In violation of curfew;

11       (3) To determine the custody of any child or appoint a  
12       guardian of any child;

13       (4) For the adoption of a person under chapter 578;

14       (5) For the termination of parental rights under sections  
15       571-61 through 571-63;

16       (6) For judicial consent to the marriage, employment, or  
17       enlistment of a child, when consent is required by  
18       law;

19       (7) For the treatment or commitment of a mentally  
20       defective or mentally ill child, or a child with an  
21       intellectual disability;



(8) Under the Interstate Compact on Juveniles under chapter 582 or the Interstate Compact for Juveniles under chapter 582D;

(9) For the protection of any child under chapter 587A;

(10) For a change of name as provided in section 574-5(a)(2)(C);

(11) Concerning custody or guardianship of an immigrant child pursuant to a motion for special immigrant juvenile factual findings requesting a determination that the child was abused, neglected, or abandoned before the age of eighteen years for purposes of section 101(a)(27)(J) of the federal Immigration and Nationality Act. For the purposes of this paragraph, "child" means an unmarried individual under the age of twenty-one years; and

(12) Concerning emancipation of a minor pursuant to section 577-25".

SECTION 3. Section 571-21, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended to read as follows:

**"§571-21 Complaint; investigation; petition.** (a) Except as provided in subsection (b), whenever the court is informed by



1 any person that a minor is within the purview of section  
2 571-11(1) or (2), the intake officer shall make a preliminary  
3 investigation to determine whether informal adjustment is  
4 suitable under section 571-31.4 or 571-31.5. The court may  
5 authorize the filing of a petition, may make whatever  
6 arrangement for informal adjustment that is suitable under  
7 section 571-31.4, 571-31.5, or 571-31.6; or may take such action  
8 as is otherwise allowed under this chapter. Efforts to effect  
9 informal adjustment may be continued not longer than three  
10 months without review by the judge.

11 (b) In cases of violation of a law or ordinance by a  
12 child, the issuance of a citation or summons, when provided for  
13 by law or ordinance, shall be sufficient to invoke the  
14 jurisdiction of the court, which may proceed to dispose of such  
15 a case with or without preliminary investigation and the filing  
16 of a petition.

17 (c) When a complaint or petition is made or sought to be  
18 filed against a member of the complainant's family, the court's  
19 staff may, when required by the judge or if requested by either  
20 party, process the matter under section 571-31.3.



(d) In children's cases under section 571-11(1) and (2), the petition and all subsequent court documents shall be suitably entitled so as to indicate that the proceeding is in the interest of rather than against the child or minor involved. The petition shall be verified and statements may be made upon information and belief. The petition shall set forth plainly the:

(1) Facts that bring the child within the purview of this chapter;

(2) Name, age, and residence of the child;

(3) Names and residences of the child's parents; and

(4) Name and residence of the child's legal guardian if there is one, of the person or persons having custody or control of the child, or of the nearest known relative if no parent or guardian can be found.

If any of the facts required are not known by the petitioner, the petition shall so state. In cases brought pursuant to section 571-11(2)(A) and (C), a certified copy of the child's school attendance records shall constitute prima facie evidence of the child's nonattendance at school or nonreceipt of educational services. "Certified copy" means a copy signed by



1 the principal and educator of the child whose class the child  
2 did not attend.

3 (e) The family courts may, by suitable orders, provide  
4 regulations concerning the titles, filing, investigation, and  
5 the form and content of petitions and other pleadings in cases  
6 under this chapter, or these matters may be governed by the  
7 rules of court.

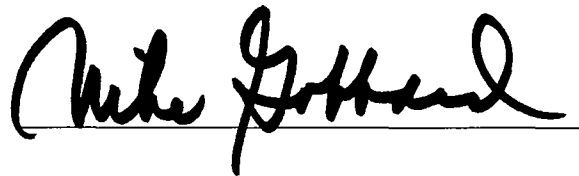
8 (f) A petition alleging delinquency for a violation of law  
9 shall not be filed in a case involving a child under the age of  
10 twelve."

11 SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.

12 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

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INTRODUCED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Gottard", is written over a horizontal line.

# S.B. NO. 691

**Report Title:**

Family Court; Jurisdiction; Juvenile Delinquency Adjudication;  
Children

**Description:**

Establishes a minimum age of twelve for delinquency  
adjudication.

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