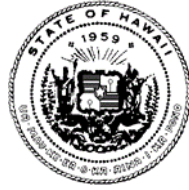


JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



RYAN I. YAMANE  
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

TRISTA SPEER  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

February 6, 2025

TO: The Honorable Representative David A. Tarnas, Chair  
House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 560 – RELATING TO THE JUDICIARY.**

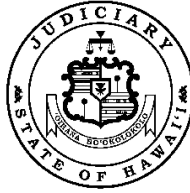
Hearing: February 7, 2025, 2:05 p.m.  
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference, State Capitol

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of the measure, defers to the Judiciary, and provides comments.

Funds for civil legal, mediation, and other services assist low-income and vulnerable residents in navigating the legal process and avoiding long-term consequences that result without representation or assistance. These programs also promote confidence in the civil justice system and the rule of law. Eviction mediation programs set during the COVID-19 pandemic proved successful in assisting residents and landlords to resolve their housing disputes without further court intervention. Maintaining housing stability is the foundation of overall well-being and community resilience. Conversely, housing instability impacts employment, education, physical and mental health, and the quality of life of those impacted.

**PURPOSE:** Appropriates funds to the judiciary for services contracted with community-based organizations that deliver essential services, streamline judicial processes, and support the judiciary's capacity to effectively meet the needs of vulnerable households.

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



## *The Judiciary, State of Hawai‘i*

### **Testimony to the Thirty-Third Legislature, 2025 Regular Session**

#### **House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs**

Representative David A. Tarnas, Chair

Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

Friday, February 7, 2025 at 2:05 p.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 325

by

Rodney A. Maile

Administrative Director of the Courts

#### **WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY**

---

**Bill No. and Title:** House Bill No. 560, Relating to the Judiciary

**Purpose:** Appropriates funds to the judiciary for services contracted with community-based organizations that deliver essential services, streamline judicial processes, and support the judiciary's capacity to effectively meet the needs of vulnerable households.

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

The Judiciary supports the intent of House Bill No. 560 to appropriate funds to the Judiciary for services contracted with community-based organizations. Courts and programs of the Judiciary contract with organizations across the state for important services for court-users and clients. This includes anger management classes, emergency shelter services, adult and juvenile sex offender assessment and treatment services, adult and juvenile substance use treatment services, mental health assessments for juveniles, certain mental health services, mediation and dispute resolution services, victim advocacy for child physical abuse and child sex trafficking, domestic violence intervention services, sober living and treatment services, and more.

The Judiciary respectfully requests that any appropriation for this measure not supplant Judiciary priorities nor biennium budget requests.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



## HAWAI`I YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

677 Ala Moana Blvd., Suite 904

Honolulu, Hawai`i 96813

Phone: (808) 489-9549

Web site: <http://www.hysn.org> E-mail: [info@hysn.org](mailto:info@hysn.org)

Vonnell Ramos, President  
Cyd Hoffeld, Vice President  
Sione Ford Naeata, Treasurer  
Greg Tjapkes, Secretary

Judith F. Clark, Executive  
Director

### *Network Membership*

*Access to Independence*  
*Big Brothers Big Sisters Hawai`i*  
*Bobby Benson Center*  
*Child and Family Service*  
*Coalition for a Drug-Free Hawai`i*  
*Domestic Violence Action Center*  
*EPIC `Ohana, Inc.*  
*Friends of the Children's Justice*  
*Center of Maui*  
*Get Ready Hawai`i*  
*Hale Kipa, Inc*  
*Hale `Opio Kaua`i, Inc.*  
*Hawai`i Children's Action*  
*Network*  
*Hawai`i Health & Harm*  
*Reduction Center*  
*Hawaii Island Community`*  
*Health Center*  
*Ho`ola Na Pua*  
*Ho`okele Coalition of Kaua`i*  
*Ka Hale Pomaika`i*  
*Kokua Kalihi Valley*  
*Kaua`i Planning and Action*  
*Alliance*  
*Lines for Life Youth Line*  
*Maui Youth and Family Services*  
*Na Pu`uwai Molokai Native*  
*Hawaiian Health Care*  
*Systems*  
*P.A.R.E.N.T.S., Inc.*  
*Parents and Children Together*  
*PHOCUSED*  
*Piha Wellness and Healing*  
*Planned Parent*  
*Great Northwest, Hawaii*  
*Alaska, Kentucky, Indiana*  
*Residential Youth Services*  
*& Empowerment (RYSE)*  
*Salvation Army Family*  
*Intervention Services*  
*Sex Abuse Treatment Center*  
*Susannah Wesley Community*  
*Center*  
*The Catalyst Group*

February 4, 2025

To: Representative David A. Tarnas, Chair,  
And members of the Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian  
Affairs

### TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 560 RELATING TO THE JUDICIARY

Hawaii Youth Services Network (HYSN), a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, supports HB 560, which provides much-needed funding to the Judiciary to enhance access to justice for Hawaii's most vulnerable populations.

Hawaii's most vulnerable populations including children, youth, and young adults, need the services provided by CBOs in delivering legal aid, case management, and mediation services that support these individuals and streamline judicial processes. We all want our children to grow up safe, healthy, and ready to succeed. It takes a network of trauma-informed, culturally relevant, and accessible services to enable our young people to make successful transitions to adulthood.

The most recent ALICE report by Aloha United Way stated that 37% of households said that someone in their family is considering moving out of state. 85% of families said it was simply the high cost of living in Hawai'i, and 73% said it was because of the high cost of housing,

CBOs struggle to attract and retain qualified staff. When contracts and grants do not pay the full cost of providing services, CBOs are not able to pay competitive wages. Workers choose higher paying jobs or places with a lower cost of living. It is shameful when wages are so low that a portion of Hawaii's CBO staff receive SNAP and other public assistance benefits. Staff working with homeless persons are often concerned about becoming homeless themselves. One outreach worker shared with me, "If my landlord raises my rent, I won't be able to afford my housing." In 2024, The Salvation Army

Family Intervention Services stopped admitting clients to its emergency shelter for boys on Maui due to critical staffing shortages.

As a member of the True Cost Coalition, HYSN believes this bill is crucial to ensuring justice for all residents, regardless of their economic status or personal circumstances.

Thank you for your time and dedication to this critical issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judith F. Clark". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "J".

Judith F. Clark, MPH  
Executive Director



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Diana Blizzard

**PROGRAMS & COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR**  
Shelby Morrison

*a partner agency of the*



Ku'ikahi Mediation Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, donations to which are tax-deductible. We welcome your support!

Testimony to the House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs  
Friday, February 7, 2025, 2:05 p.m.  
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

**RE: Support of HB 560, Relating to the Judiciary**

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee:

**Ku'ikahi Mediation is submitting testimony to strongly support HB 560, which appropriates funds for the Judiciary for the fiscal biennium beginning 7/1/2025 and ending 6/30/2027.** This bill appropriates funds to the judiciary for services contracted with community-based nonprofit organizations like ours that deliver essential services, streamline judicial processes, and support the judiciary's capacity to effectively meet the needs of vulnerable households.

Hawai'i's families depend on a network of community-based nonprofit organizations that serve as a critical safety net. Unfortunately, this safety net is fraying due to insufficient government funding.

The Judiciary relies on its non-profit partners to provide legal aid, case management, and mediation services. Local court self-help centers receive more inquiries than they can process. Mediation is integral to Hawai'i's "Access to Justice" framework, which strives to ensure that all people have access to civil processes.

Between 50-60% of Ku'ikahi Mediation Center's clients have annual household incomes under \$20,000. Census data shows that the Ka'u and Puna districts, which are among those we serve, house some of the poorest populations in the state. Sample opportunities include: 1) domestic mediations to help parents put kids first after separations and divorces, 2) debt meditations for credit cards or medical bills to negotiate debt reduction, payment plans, or forgiveness due to hardship, and 3) landlord/tenant mediations to prevent eviction and homelessness.

Our agency provides a vital service to the community, especially in domestic (divorce, paternity, family), consumer/merchant, landlord/tenant, and restraining order cases. Our mediation services are provided either free of charge or on an affordable sliding scale, and no one is turned away for lack of funds.

According to The Mediation Centers of Hawaii "Economic Impact and Social Return on Investment Analysis for the Fiscal Year 2017," for every \$1 invested in our mediation programs, they deliver \$8.03 in immediate and long-term consequential financial benefits to the citizens of Hawaii. (This analysis was conducted by the accredited Community Services Analysis LLC in Arizona.)



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**PROGRAMS & COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR**  
Shelby Morrison

Government contract rates remain below actual service costs and haven't kept up with inflation. For example, The Mediation Centers of Hawaii—of which Ku'ikahi is a member—had its Judiciary contract restored in December 2023 to funding rates from FY 2009-2010. While the nominal increase was appreciated, these rates are now a decade-and-a-half old and do not reflect the cost of doing business in a post-COVID island economy.

Community-based nonprofit organizations like ours fill funding gaps through private fundraising, staff reductions, loans and lines of credit, and non-government grants. However, these methods are no longer viable, and organizations may soon face hard decisions to decline contracts, reduce services, or even shut down entirely.

Without adequate funding, Hawai'i's safety net for vulnerable families will unravel. Urgent legislative action is needed to ensure the sustainability of community-based nonprofit organizations and the services we provide.

We strongly urge you to pass this legislation. Thank you for reading this testimony.

Mahalo,

**Julie Mitchell**  
Executive Director

*a partner agency of the*



Ku'ikahi Mediation Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, donations to which are tax-deductible. We welcome your support!

## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 560

**TO:** Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, & JHA Committee Members

**FROM:** Nikos Leverenz  
Policy & Advancement Manager

**DATE:** February 7, 2025 (2:05 PM)

---

Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHRC) **strongly supports** HB 560, which appropriates funds to the judiciary for services contracted with community-based organizations that deliver essential services, streamline judicial processes, and support the judiciary's capacity to effectively meet the needs of vulnerable households.

In collaboration with other non-profit members of the [True Cost Coalition](#), we met with legislators and supported legislative efforts last year to increase baseline funding for work that is outlined in multi-year service contracts.

Recruitment and retention of frontline staff have become increasingly difficult with flatlined salary structures and acute increases in the cost of living in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many employees, including those with valuable lived experience with homelessness, behavioral health issues, and criminal legal system involvement, have taken part-time jobs in the service sector or have departed our agency for full-time service sector employment.

HHRC's mission is to reduce harm, promote health, create wellness, and fight stigma in Hawai'i and the Pacific. We work with many individuals impacted by poverty, housing instability, and other social determinants of health. Many have behavioral health problems, including those related to substance use and mental health conditions, and have also been deeply impacted by trauma related to histories of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.



*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: House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs  
Re: HB 560 Relating to the judiciary

Hawai'i State Capitol, Conference Room 325 & Via Videoconference  
Friday, February 7, 2025, 2:05PM

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Committee Members,

**On behalf of HCANSpeaks!, I am writing in strong support of HB 560, relating to the judiciary.** This bill appropriates funds to the judiciary for services contracted with community-based organizations that deliver essential services, streamline judicial processes, and support the judiciary's capacity to effectively meet the needs of vulnerable households. This bill provides much-needed funding to the Judiciary to enhance access to justice for Hawai'i's most vulnerable populations.

Many residents face significant barriers in navigating the legal system, particularly low-income families, individuals in crisis, and those requiring behavioral interventions. Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) are essential partners in delivering legal aid, case management, and mediation services that support these individuals and streamline judicial processes.

The unpredictability of federal funding for legal services and justice programs creates additional challenges for Hawai'i's judiciary and the CBOs that support it. Federal resources are often subject to shifting priorities, and any reductions would severely limit the ability of CBOs to provide essential legal aid, case management, and mediation services. By committing state funding through this bill, Hawaii can proactively address these uncertainties and ensure consistent support for vulnerable residents navigating the legal system.

However, without adequate funding, these CBOs cannot sustain operations or meet increasing demands. The True Cost Coalition believes this bill is crucial to ensuring justice for all residents, regardless of their economic status or personal circumstances.

We respectfully urge you to pass HB 560 and demonstrate your commitment to fairness, equity, and access to justice in Hawaii. Thank you for your time and dedication to this critical issue, and for the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of this bill, HB 560.**

Sincerely,  
Noreen Kohl, Ph.D.  
Policy Researcher and Advocate  
Hawai'i Children's Action Network, a member of the Hawai'i [True Cost Coalition](#)





## **Hb560 Reentry to Community Services for Judiciary**

### COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Rep. David A. Tarnas, Chair

Rep. Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

Friday Feb 7, 2025 2:05 Room 325

### **Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition Strongly Supports HB560:**

*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.*

**A comprehensive program that includes diversion to treatment and reentry to community services produces better outcomes and is more cost-effective.**

HSAC understands this very well since we treat all these issues for those who have chronic to severe levels as well as new programs for mild to moderate conditions.

- **A chronic condition of substance abuse often has multiple conditions** such as co-occurring mental health issues and physical health conditions.
- There are **various levels of mild to chronic** forms of substance use disorders, mental health disorders and even criminality.

Comprehensive services can address the various levels of mild to moderate to chronic for **multiple reentry issues that can include specialized treatment for substance abuse and/or mental health disorders, harm reduction for lower use of substances, housing, case management, vocational training and employment, education, family integration, harm reduction, restorative practices and more.**

1. **For offenders with heavy use substance use** and either low or high functionality, **abstinent-based treatment is essential for what works according to research** from the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM), the definitive body of science for levels of care. The more chronic substance abuse, especially for addiction, would be best to start at residential or if less severe, start at outpatient treatment. Treatments would also address criminality and include medications if needed.
  - a. If **residential**, start first and then move to housing.





## CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAI'I

TO: House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs  
FROM: Tina Andrade, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawai'i  
Hearing: Friday, February 7, 2025, 2:05pm, CR 325 and via videoconference

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **strong support of HB 560**, which allocates funding to the Judiciary for contracts with community-based organizations that provide essential services, enhance judicial efficiency, and strengthen the Judiciary's ability to effectively serve vulnerable households.

My name is Tina Andrade, and I represent Catholic Charities Hawai'i (CCH), a community-based organization that has served Hawai'i for over 77 years. CCH provides essential social services to children, families, kupuna, individuals experiencing homelessness, veterans, and immigrants. Guided by our mission to serve and advocate for those in need, we recognize the profound impact that legal aid and judicial support have on the well-being of our communities.

As a member of the Hawai'i True Cost Coalition—an alliance of community-based organizations across the state—we see firsthand the challenges many residents face in navigating the legal system. Low-income families, individuals in crisis, and those requiring behavioral interventions often struggle to access the legal resources necessary to protect their rights. Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) play a crucial role in bridging this gap by providing legal aid, case management, and mediation services, ultimately improving judicial efficiency and ensuring fair outcomes.

However, the uncertainty of federal funding for legal services poses a significant challenge. With shifting priorities at the federal level, reductions in resources could severely impact the Judiciary and the CBOs that support it. State funding through this bill would help stabilize these essential services, ensuring continued access to justice for Hawai'i's most vulnerable residents.

Without adequate funding, CBOs cannot sustain their operations or meet the increasing demand for assistance. The Hawai'i True Cost Coalition strongly believes that this bill is critical to upholding justice, fairness, and equity for all residents, regardless of their financial situation or personal circumstances.

We respectfully urge your **support for HB 560** to affirm your commitment to ensuring equal access to justice for everyone in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.





Statement Before The  
Friday, February 7, 2025

2:05 PM

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

in consideration of

**HB560**

**RELATING TO JUDICIARY.**

Chair TARNAS, Vice Chair POEPOE, and Members of the House Judiciary Committees

The Legal Clinic (TLC) supports HB560, which appropriates funds to the Judiciary for services contracted with community-based organizations that deliver essential services, streamline judicial processes, and support the Judiciary's capacity to effectively meet the needs of vulnerable households.

TLC is a Hawai'i nonprofit, nonpartisan organization. TLC is a direct legal services provider, representing those in Hawai'i who meet income eligibility guidelines without regard to immigration status, national origin, ethnic background, race, religion, ideology, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, or disability. TLC works alongside immigrants so they can attain authorization to work and live with dignity, reunite with their families after years of separation and escape horrific violence to find refuge in the United States. TLC recognizes that every person needs and deserves to feel a sense of trust, welcome, and belonging.

TLC supports increased funding for the Judiciary for services contracted with community-based organizations that deliver essential services to vulnerable populations, including low-income individuals impacted by a lack of resources. TLC anticipates an exponential increase in those needing support in immigration proceedings with the current federal administration's immigration enforcement actions and rhetoric. TLC is already experiencing increased calls for Know Your Rights support and training throughout the community from partner organizations and individuals.

TLC notes that there is a line item in the current Judiciary's budget for \$1.2 million for civil legal services. TLC also supports increasing this amount given the growing need placed on safety net providers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB560 and TLC respectfully urges the Committee members to pass HB560 out of your Committee. If you have questions of me, please contact me at [sma@tlchawaii.org](mailto:sma@tlchawaii.org).

Very respectfully yours,

*Sandy Ma*

Sandy Ma  
Community & Policy Advocate  
The Legal Clinic

Nickolas Kacprowski  
Board President

Rachel Figueroa  
Executive Director



545 Queen Street, Suite 100  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813  
Phone: (808) 528-7050  
Fax: (808) 524-2147  
[www.vlsh.org](http://www.vlsh.org)

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF H.B. 560  
RELATING TO THE JUDICIARY  
Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs –February 7, 2025 2:05 p.m.**

CHAIR TARNAS, VICE CHAIR POEPOE AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS:

Volunteer Legal Services Hawai'i supports the intent of H.B. 560.

Volunteer Legal is also supportive of an increase to the existing line item in the budget for civil legal services.

We are more worried than ever about the impact that the limiting of services has on the safety net of legal services. Volunteer Legal is concerned about all the federal actions limiting services to those residents who need it the most. There are many unmet needs<sup>1</sup>, and Volunteer Legal is often the last line of defense for someone facing critical issues, like landlord/tenant or child custody issues.

In the last forty-four years, Volunteer Legal has partnered with volunteer attorneys in the provision of civil legal assistance to individuals and families of Hawai'i. While Volunteer Legal Services Hawai'i's only office is on Oahu, we service residents of Hawai'i statewide. In 2024, with only a staff of 9, Volunteer Legal qualified around 1000 individuals. Volunteer Legal provides legal checkups, educational presentations, clinics, brief services and/or full representations. Twenty-one (21%) of those helped are homeless or at the risk of being homeless, 28% of those helped suffer from domestic violence, 6% of those helped were veterans, 26% of those helped are disabled, and 20% of those helped were aged 60 and over. If not for Volunteer Legal Services Hawai'i, these individuals would have otherwise gone without legal help.

Volunteer Legal Services Hawai'i thanks the committee for the past support of legal services in the judiciary budget. Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,  
Rachel Figueroa, Executive Director

---

<sup>1</sup>According to the ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) report in 2022, in Hawaii alone, 11% of residents were below the Federal Poverty Line (FPL), with 33% that earned above the Federal Poverty Line but not enough to afford the basics in the community where they live. <https://unitedforalice.org/national-overview>

“Low-income Americans do not get any or enough legal help for 92% of their substantial civil legal problems.” <https://justicegap.lsc.gov/resource/executive-summary/>



## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 560 RELATING TO THE JUDICIARY

**TO:** Chair Tarnas, Vice-Chair Poepoe, & Members,  
House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

**FROM:** Trisha Kajimura, Vice-President of Strategy and External Affairs  
Ryan Kusumoto, President & CEO

**DATE:** February 7, 2025 at 2:05 PM

**Parents and Children Together (PACT) strongly supports HB 560**, which appropriates funds for the Judiciary to increase allocation for contracts with community-based organizations providing critical services in Hawaii. PACT is contracted by the Judiciary to provide services related to domestic violence in three counties – Honolulu, Maui and Kaua‘i. Through these contracts we help survivors and child witnesses cope through their trauma, heal from abuse, and rebuild safe and self-sufficient households. We also work with individuals who have committed crimes of domestic violence through classes and counseling. These services and the staff dedicated to providing them are specialized and essential to the safety and well-being of our community.

We submit this testimony as a member of the Hawai‘i True Cost Coalition – over 50 community-based non-profit organizations fighting to sustain essential services for our communities. The people of our community are strong, resilient and capable yet challenged by systems of scarcity that are difficult to overcome without targeted support. They must be supported by high-quality organizations that are sustainable, and Judiciary funding is an important part of that. When state contract amounts do not increase over time as operating costs do, this important service for the community becomes unsustainable.

Founded by residents of Kuhio Park Terrace in 1968, PACT is a statewide community-based organization providing a wide array of innovative and educational social services to families in need. Assisting more than 15,000 people across the state annually, we help identify, address, and successfully resolve challenges through our 20 programs. Among our services are early education programs, domestic violence prevention and intervention programs, child abuse prevention and intervention programs, childhood sexual abuse supportive group services, child and adolescent behavioral health programs, sex trafficking intervention, poverty prevention and community building programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Please contact me at (808) 847-3285 or [tkajimura@pacthawaii.org](mailto:tkajimura@pacthawaii.org) if you have any questions.

# Hawai'i True Cost Coalition

Date: February 7, 2025

Re: Strong Support of HB 560, Relating to the Judiciary

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

Our coalition of organizations for Hawai'i True Cost Coalition are writing in strong support of HB 560 Relating to the Judiciary, which appropriates funds to the judiciary for services contracted with community-based organizations that deliver essential services, streamline judicial processes, and support the judiciary's capacity to effectively meet the needs of vulnerable households.

The Hawai'i True Cost Coalition is an alliance of over 70 community-based nonprofit organizations serving more than 500,000 residents statewide. Since its establishment in 2020, the coalition has focused on strengthening collaboration between nonprofits and the state to ensure taxpayer funds are allocated equitably and efficiently. By advocating for sustainable funding solutions, the coalition helps safeguard critical services for Hawai'i's most vulnerable populations, including children, kupuna, individuals experiencing homelessness, and survivors of domestic violence. These efforts are essential to ensuring that nonprofit organizations can continue providing the vital care and support on which so many residents rely.

Hawai'i's safety net often goes unnoticed—until it begins to fray. This safety net consists of community-based nonprofit organizations (CBOs) that provide essential services to tens of thousands of residents every day. These organizations offer shelter for at-risk youth, meals for kupuna, aid for survivors of domestic violence, and countless other supports that touch every corner of the state. Without immediate action, many of these programs could disappear entirely, leaving some of Hawai'i's most vulnerable residents without the critical support they need to thrive.

HB 560 addresses funding gaps for the Judiciary, enabling stronger partnerships with CBOs and sustaining essential services. Increased Judiciary funding ensures Hawai'i families receive housing assistance, food security, youth support, and care for low-income households. This measure promotes community well-being while strengthening Hawai'i's social safety net for the future. Investing now secures vital support for years to come.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.

Adult Friends for Youth | Aloha Harvest | Aloha United Way (AUW) | AlohaCare | Arc of Kona | Big Brothers Big Sisters Hawaii | Blueprint for Change | Catholic Charities Hawaii | Child and Family Service | Community Alliance on Prisons | Domestic Violence Action Center | Easter Seals | Epic `Ohana | Family Promise of Hawai'i | Full Life | Girl Scouts of Hawaii | Going Home Hawaii | Goodwill Hawaii | Hale Kipa | Hale `Opio Kua`i | Hawai'i International Film Festival | Hawai'i Alliance of Nonprofit Organizations (HANO) | Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) | Hawai'i Food Bank | Hawai'i Health and Harm Reduction Center (HHHRC) | Hawai'i Meals On Wheels | Hawai'i Public Health Institute | Hawai'i Youth Services Network | Hawai'i State Coalition Against Domestic Violence | Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies | Hope Services Hawai'i | Imua Family Services | Institute for Human Services (IHS) | Kalamapi'i Play School | Kinai `Eha | Kumukahi Health and Wellness | Lanakila Pacific | Maui AIDS Foundation | Maui Economic Opportunity (MEO) | Maui Family Support Services | Mental Health Kokua | Mediation Center of the Pacific | Mindful Living Group | Nurturing Wahine Fund | Parents and Children Together (PACT) | Partners In Care (PIC) | Partners In Development Foundation (PIDF) | PATCH | Residential Youth Services and Empowerment (RYSE) | Responsive Caregivers of Hawai'i | Samaritan Counseling Center Hawaii | Share Your Mana | The Spirit Horse Ranch | U.S. Vets | Women Helping Women | YMCA of Honolulu  
1000 MARKA STREET, SUITE 2000, HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813 | (808) 477-1070

**HB-560**

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 11:30:07 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/7/2025 2:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Debbie A Cabebe	Maui Economic Opportunity, Inc.	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

On behalf of Maui Economic Opportunity, Inc. (MEO) we are in full support of HB560. Community nonprofits provide vital services to support government while assisting our most vulnerable populations. MEO provides reintegration services on Maui Island and we are aware of the costs associated with administering such a program. We must be able to pay our staff a living wage and cover the cost of supportive services and administrative costs associated with responsibly executing and managing service delivery.

We respectfully request your support of this bill.

Sincerely,

Debbie Cabebe, CEO





## CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

TO: House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs  
FROM: Tina Andrade, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawai'i  
Date: February 7, 2025

Subject: Support for HB 560 Relating to the Judiciary

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in **strong support of HB 560** which allocates critical funding to the Judiciary to improve access to justice for Hawaii's most vulnerable communities. I am Tina Andrade, with Catholic Charities Hawai'i.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i (CCH) is a tax exempt, Community-Based Organization that has been providing social services in Hawai'i for over 77 years. CCH has programs serving children, families, elders, homeless, and immigrants. Our mission is to provide services and advocacy for the most vulnerable in Hawai'i.

We are a member of the Hawai'i True Cost Coalition, comprised of Community-Based Organizations across the state. Many residents in Hawaii face substantial obstacles when navigating the legal system, especially low-income families, individuals in crisis, and those needing behavioral interventions. Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) play a critical role in providing legal aid, case management, and mediation services that support these individuals

while enhancing the efficiency of judicial processes.

The uncertainty of federal funding for legal services and justice programs poses additional challenges for Hawaii's judiciary and the CBOs that assist it. Federal resources are often subject to shifting priorities, and reductions could significantly impair the ability of CBOs to deliver essential services. By securing state funding through this bill, Hawaii can address these uncertainties and guarantee consistent support for vulnerable residents seeking justice.

Without sufficient funding, CBOs cannot sustain their operations or meet the growing demand for services. The True Cost Coalition strongly believes this bill is vital to ensuring justice for all residents, regardless of their financial circumstances or personal situations.

We respectfully urge you to pass HB 560 and affirm your commitment to fairness, equity, and access to justice for everyone in Hawaii.

Sincerely,



CLARENCE T. C. CHING CAMPUS ■ 1822 Ke'eaumoku Street, Honolulu, HI 96822  
Phone (808) 527-4813



Tina Andrade, President and CEO of Catholic Charities Hawai'i



**Subject: Support for HB 560 Relating to the Judiciary**

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing on behalf of EPIC 'Ohana in **strong support** of HB 560, which provides much-needed funding to the Judiciary to enhance access to justice for Hawaii's most vulnerable populations.

Many residents face significant barriers in navigating the legal system, particularly low-income families, individuals in crisis, and those requiring behavioral interventions. Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) are essential partners in delivering legal aid, case management, and mediation services that support these individuals and streamline judicial processes.

EPIC 'Ohana has served communities, families, young adults, and children impacted by the foster care system statewide, for almost thirty years. The need for critical supports has never been more urgent as Child Welfare Services faces an almost 40% vacancy rate and a newly released legislative working group report that highlights the need for sweeping reform. The Judiciary serves a vital role in ensuring that families, youth and children are served with efficacy, integrity and compassion as they navigate legal pathways in the foster care system.

The unpredictability of federal funding for legal services and justice programs creates additional challenges for Hawaii's judiciary and the CBOs that support it. Federal resources are often subject to shifting priorities, and any reductions would severely limit the ability of CBOs to provide essential legal aid, case management, and mediation services. By committing state funding through this bill, Hawaii can proactively address these uncertainties and ensure consistent support for vulnerable residents navigating the legal system.

However, without adequate funding, these CBOs cannot sustain operations or meet increasing demands. The True Cost Coalition believes this bill is crucial to ensuring justice for all residents, regardless of their economic status or personal circumstances.

We respectfully urge you to pass HB 560 and demonstrate your commitment to fairness, equity, and access to justice in Hawaii.

Mahalo nui loa for your time and dedication to this critical issue.

Me Ka Ha'aha'a (With Humility),  
Delia Parker Ulima  
Executive Director, EPIC 'Ohana



February 7, 2025

Subject: Support for HB 560 Relating to the Judiciary

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Aloha United Way and our many non-profit partner agencies who provide services via State contracts, and as a member of the True Cost Coalition, I write in support of HB 560, to provide critical funding for the Judiciary to enhance access to justice for Hawaii's vulnerable populations.

Many of Hawaii's residents face significant barriers in navigating the legal system, particularly low-income families, individuals in crisis, and those requiring behavioral interventions. Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) are essential partners in delivering legal aid, case management, and mediation services that support these individuals and streamline judicial processes.

The unpredictability of federal funding for legal services and justice programs creates additional challenges for Hawaii's judiciary and the CBOs that support it. Federal resources are often subject to shifting priorities. By committing state funding through this bill, Hawaii can proactively address these uncertainties and ensure consistent support for vulnerable residents navigating the legal system.

Without adequate funding, the CBOs the State depends on for services cannot sustain operations or meet a growing demand. The True Cost Coalition believes this bill is crucial to ensuring justice for all residents, regardless of their economic status or personal circumstances.

We respectfully urge you to pass HB 560.

Thank you for your time and dedication to this critical issue.

Michelle Bartell  
President & CEO  
Aloha United Way

91-1841 Fort Weaver Road  
Ewa Beach, Hawaii 96706  
Phone 808.681.3500  
Fax 808.681.5280  
www.childandfamilyservice.org

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Kauai United Way  
Maui United Way  
Hawaii Island United Way

Amanda Pump  
President & CEO  
Child & Family Service  
February 7, 2025

**Subject: Support for HB 560 Relating to the Judiciary**

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing on behalf of Child and Family Service in strong support of HB 560, which provides much-needed funding to the Judiciary to enhance access to justice for Hawaii's most vulnerable populations.

Communities, particularly low-income families, individuals in crisis, and those requiring behavioral interventions, often face significant barriers when trying to navigate the legal system. Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) are essential partners in delivering legal aid, case management, and mediation services that support these individuals and streamline judicial processes.

However, without adequate funding, these CBOs cannot sustain operations or meet increasing demands. The unpredictability of federal funding for legal services and justice programs creates additional challenges for Hawaii's judiciary and the CBOs that support it. Federal resources are often subject to shifting priorities, and any reductions would severely limit the ability of CBOs to provide essential legal aid, case management, and mediation services.

The True Cost Coalition believes HB 560 is crucial to ensuring justice for all residents, regardless of their economic status or personal circumstances. By committing state funding through this bill, Hawaii can proactively address these uncertainties and ensure consistent support for vulnerable residents navigating the legal system.

We respectfully urge you to pass HB 560 and demonstrate your commitment to fairness, equity, and access to justice in Hawaii.

Thank you for your time and dedication to this critical issue.

Sincerely,



Amanda Pump  
President & CEO  
Child & Family Service



REDUCING HARM,  
PROMOTING HEALTH,  
CREATING WELLNESS,  
AND FIGHTING STIGMA  
IN HAWAII AND  
THE PACIFIC

## Letter of Support

February 7, 2025

### Subject: Support for HB 560 Relating to the Judiciary

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing on behalf of Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHHRC) in **strong support** of HB 560, which provides much-needed funding to the Judiciary to enhance access to justice for Hawai'i's most vulnerable populations.

HHHRC'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.

Many residents face significant barriers in navigating the legal system, particularly low-income families, individuals in crisis, and those requiring behavioral interventions. Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) are essential partners in delivering legal aid, case management, and mediation services that support these individuals and streamline judicial processes.

The unpredictability of federal funding for legal services and justice programs creates additional challenges for Hawai'i's judiciary and the CBOs that support it. Federal resources are often subject to shifting priorities, and any reductions would severely limit the ability of CBOs to provide essential legal aid, case management, and mediation services. By committing state funding through this bill, Hawaii can proactively address these uncertainties and ensure consistent support for vulnerable residents navigating the legal system.

However, without adequate funding, these CBOs cannot sustain operations or meet increasing demands. The True Cost Coalition believes this bill is crucial to ensuring justice for all residents, regardless of their economic status or personal circumstances.

We respectfully urge you to pass HB 560 and demonstrate your commitment to fairness, equity, and access to justice in Hawaii.

Thank you for your time and dedication to this critical issue.

Heather Lusk, LCSW, MSW  
Executive Director  
Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center

HAWAII HEALTH  
& HARM REDUCTION  
CENTER

677 Ala Moana Blvd.  
Suite 226  
Honolulu, HI 96813

(808) 521-2437

[www.hhhrc.org](http://www.hhhrc.org)



## HAWAII YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

677 Ala Moana Blvd., Suite 904

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Phone: (808) 489-9549

Web site: <http://www.hysn.org> E-mail: [info@hysn.org](mailto:info@hysn.org)

Vonnell Ramos, President  
Cyd Hoffeld, Vice President  
Sione Ford Naeata, Treasurer  
Greg Tjapkes, Secretary

Judith F. Clark, Executive  
Director

### Network Membership

*Access to Independence*  
*Big Brothers Big Sisters Hawaii*  
*Bobby Benson Center*  
*Child and Family Service*  
*Coalition for a Drug-Free Hawaii*  
*Domestic Violence Action Center*  
*EPIC 'Ohana, Inc.*  
*Friends of the Children's Justice*  
*Center of Maui*  
*Get Ready Hawaii*  
*Hale Kipa, Inc*  
*Hale 'Opio Kaua'i, Inc.*  
*Hawaii Children's Action*  
*Network*  
*Hawaii Health & Harm*  
*Reduction Center*  
*Hawaii Island Community'*  
*Health Center*  
*Ho'ola Na Pua*  
*Ho'okele Coalition of Kaua'i*  
*Ka Hale Pomaika'i*  
*Kokua Kalihi Valley*  
*Kaua'i Planning and Action*  
*Alliance*  
*Lines for Life Youth Line*  
*Maui Youth and Family Services*  
*Na Pu'uwai Molokai Native*  
*Hawaiian Health Care*  
*Systems*  
*P.A.R.E.N.T.S., Inc.*  
*Parents and Children Together*  
*PHOCUSED*  
*Piha Wellness and Healing*  
*Planned Parent*  
*Great Northwest, Hawaii*  
*Alaska, Kentucky, Indiana*  
*Residential Youth Services*  
*& Empowerment (RYSE)*  
*Salvation Army Family*  
*Intervention Services*  
*Sex Abuse Treatment Center*  
*Susannah Wesley Community*  
*Center*  
*The Catalyst Group*

February 7, 2025

From: Judith F. Clark, MPH  
Executive Director  
Hawaii Youth Services Network

### **Subject: Support for HB 560 Relating to the Judiciary**

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

Hawaii Youth Services Network (HYSN), a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, supports HB 560, which aims to increase funding for the Judiciary which provides much-needed funding to the Judiciary to enhance access to justice for Hawaii's most vulnerable populations.

Hawaii's most vulnerable populations including children, youth, and young adults, need the services provided by CBOs in delivering legal aid, case management, and mediation services that support these individuals and streamline judicial processes. We all want our children to grow up safe, healthy, and ready to succeed. It takes a network of trauma-informed, culturally relevant, and accessible services to enable our young people to make successful transitions to adulthood.

The most recent ALICE report by Aloha United Way stated that 37% of households said that someone in their family is considering moving out of state. 85% of families said it was simply the high cost of living in Hawaii, and 73% said it was because of the high cost of housing,

CBOs struggle to attract and retain qualified staff. When contracts and grants do not pay the full cost of providing services, CBOs are not able to pay competitive wages. Workers choose higher paying jobs or places with a lower cost of living. It is shameful when wages are so low that a portion of Hawaii's CBO staff receive SNAP and other public assistance benefits. Staff working with homeless persons are often concerned about becoming homeless themselves. One outreach worker shared with me, "If my landlord raises my rent, I won't be able to afford my housing." In 2024, The Salvation Army

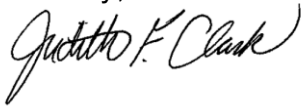
Family Intervention Services stopped admitting clients to its emergency shelter for boys on Maui due to critical staffing shortages.

As a member of the True Cost Coalition, HYSN believes this bill is crucial to ensuring justice for all residents, regardless of their economic status or personal circumstances.

We respectfully urge you to pass HB 560 and demonstrate your commitment to fairness, equity, and access to justice in Hawaii.

Thank you for your time and dedication to this critical issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Judith F. Clark". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Judith F. Clark, MPH  
Executive Director





The Institute for Human Services, Inc.  
Ending the Cycle of Homelessness

**TO:** Chair Tarnas  
Vice Chair Poepoe

**FROM:** Connie Mitchell, Executive Director  
IHS, The Institute for Human Services, Inc.

**DATE:** February 7, 2025

**POSITION:** IHS supports HB 560 Relating to the Judiciary

IHS, The Institute for Human Services is in **strong support** of HB 560, which provides much-needed funding to the Judiciary to enhance access to justice for Hawaii's most vulnerable populations.

Many individuals residing in Hawaii face significant barriers in navigating the legal system, particularly low-income families, individuals in crisis, and those requiring behavioral interventions. As the homeless service provider that has had the most experience filing petitions for assisted community treatment in the State of Hawaii, we know all too well the obstacles that individuals, family members, and households face when trying to navigate the legal system to create stability and access resources they're eligible for. Often, it is Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) that provide essential support to help them access legal aid, case management, treatment, and supportive services.

The unpredictability of federal funding for legal services and justice programs creates additional challenges for Hawaii's judiciary and the CBOs that support it. Federal resources are often subject to shifting priorities, and any reductions would severely limit the ability of CBOs to provide essential legal aid, case management, and mediation services. By committing state funding through this bill, Hawaii can proactively address these uncertainties and ensure consistent support for vulnerable residents navigating the legal system.

However, without adequate funding, these CBOs cannot sustain operations or meet increasing demands. This bill is crucial to ensuring justice for all residents, regardless of their economic status or personal circumstances. We respectfully urge you to pass HB 560 and demonstrate your commitment to fairness, equity, and access to justice in Hawaii.

Mahalo for your leadership in addressing this critical issue and for this opportunity to testify.



**THE MEDIATION CENTER OF THE PACIFIC, INC.**  
*Bringing People Together to Talk, Negotiate and Resolve Conflict Creatively*

1301 Young Street, Honolulu, HI 96814 Tel: 521-6767 Fax: 538-1454 Email: [mcp@mediatehawaii.org](mailto:mcp@mediatehawaii.org)

February 7, 2025

From: Tracey Wiltgen, Executive Director  
The Mediation Center of the Pacific, Inc.

**Subject: Support for HB 560 Relating to the Judiciary**

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing on behalf of The Mediation Center of the Pacific in **strong support** of HB 560, which provides much-needed funding to the Judiciary to enhance access to justice for Hawaii's most vulnerable populations.

Many residents face significant barriers in navigating the legal system, particularly low-income families, individuals in crisis, and those requiring behavioral interventions. Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) are essential partners in delivering legal aid, case management, and mediation services that support these individuals and streamline judicial processes.

The unpredictability of federal funding for legal services and justice programs creates additional challenges for Hawaii's judiciary and the CBOs that support it. Federal resources are often subject to shifting priorities, and any reductions would severely limit the ability of CBOs to provide essential legal aid, case management, and mediation services. By committing state funding through this bill, Hawaii can proactively address these uncertainties and ensure consistent support for vulnerable residents navigating the legal system.

However, without adequate funding, these CBOs cannot sustain operations or meet increasing demands. The Mediation Center of the Pacific believes this bill is crucial to ensuring justice for all residents, regardless of their economic status or personal circumstances.

We respectfully urge you to pass HB 560 and demonstrate your commitment to fairness, equity, and access to justice in Hawaii.

Thank you for your time and dedication to this critical issue

Tracey Wiltgen, Executive Director  
The Mediation Center of the Pacific

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February 7, 2025

Karl Rhoads  
Chairman  
Mike Gabbard  
Vice Chairman  
House Judiciary Committee  
Email: JDCcommittee@capitol.hawaii.gov

**Subject: Support for HB 560 Relating to the Judiciary**

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing on behalf of Maui Economic Opportunity, (MEO) Inc. in strong support of HB 560 which provides much-needed funding to the Judiciary to enhance access to justice for Hawaii's most vulnerable populations.

Many residents face significant barriers in navigating the legal system, particularly low-income families, individuals in crisis, and those requiring behavioral interventions. Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) are essential partners in delivering legal aid, case management, and mediation services that support these individuals and streamline judicial processes. MEO has administered a Reentry Program for over 20 years and know first-hand the impact of social service assistance to support public safety and reduce recidivism.

The unpredictability of federal funding for legal services and justice programs creates additional challenges for Hawaii's judiciary and the CBOs that support it. Federal resources are often subject to shifting priorities, and any reductions would severely limit the ability of CBOs to provide essential legal aid, case management, and reentry services. By committing state funding through this bill, Hawaii can proactively address these uncertainties and ensure consistent support for vulnerable residents navigating the legal system.

However, without adequate funding, these CBOs cannot sustain operations or meet increasing demands. MEO believes this bill is crucial to ensuring justice for all residents, regardless of their economic status or personal circumstances.

We respectfully urge you to pass HB 560 and demonstrate your commitment to fairness, equity, and access to justice in Hawaii.

Thank you for your time and dedication to this critical issue.

*Debbie Cabebe*

Debbie Cabebe, SHRM-SCP  
Chief Executive Officer

---

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**PARTNERS IN DEVELOPMENT**  
FOUNDATION

February 7, 2025

From: Shawn Kana'iaupuni, President & CEO  
Partners in Development Foundation

**Subject: Support for HB 560 Relating to the Judiciary**

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I write to you today not just as President and CEO of Partners In Development Foundation, but as a voice for the youth, families, and communities of our beloved Hawai'i. We stand in strong support of [HB No.], a bill that promises new life into our justice system and extends its reach to those who need it most.

In the tapestry of our island community, we've seen too many threads frayed by the challenges of navigating a complex legal system. Our keiki, our kūpuna, and our 'ohana in crisis often find themselves lost in a maze of procedures and paperwork, their voices unheard and their needs unmet. This bill is a beacon of hope, illuminating a path to justice for all.

Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) are the unsung heroes in this story. They are the hands that guide, the voices that advocate, and the hearts that care. These organizations are the bridge between our most vulnerable and the justice they deserve. These bridges are straining under the weight of increasing demand and dwindling resources. The unpredictability of federal funding casts a long shadow over their future. This bill is not just about money; but care for our community by ensuring that these vital services remain strong and accessible.

By supporting [HB No.], you're not just approving a budget; you're investing in the future of Hawai'i. You're saying that justice isn't a privilege for the few, but a right for all. You're affirming that every keiki deserves a fair start, every family in crisis deserves support, and every individual struggling with behavioral health needs deserves compassion and care.

This bill represents the aloha spirit in action. It's about extending a helping hand to our neighbors, about weaving a stronger social fabric that can withstand the storms of life. It's about building a Hawai'i where no one is left behind in the pursuit of justice.

We humbly ask you to pass [HB No.] and demonstrate your commitment to fairness, equity, and access to justice in Hawai'i

Mahalo nui for your time and dedication to this critical issue.

*Shawn Kana'iaupuni*

Shawn Kana'iaupuni, President & CEO  
Partners in Development Foundation

*Serving Hawai'i's Families, Living Hawaiian Values*



Responsive Caregivers of Hawaii  
PO Box 75380  
Kapolei, Hawaii 96707

*A private, non-profit organization*

February 7, 2025

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing on behalf of Responsive Caregivers of Hawaii in strong support of HB 560, which provides much-needed funding to the Judiciary to enhance access to justice for Hawaii's most vulnerable populations. The mission of Responsive Caregivers of Hawaii is to increase independence, productivity and integration of persons with developmental disabilities. We serve over 100 adults with intellectual disabilities through day care, transportation and residential services.

Many residents face significant barriers in navigating the legal system, particularly low-income families, individuals in crisis, and those requiring behavioral interventions. Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) are essential partners in delivering legal aid, case management, and mediation services that support these individuals and streamline judicial processes.

The unpredictability of federal funding for legal services and justice programs creates additional challenges for Hawaii's judiciary and the CBOs that support it. Federal resources are often subject to shifting priorities, and any reductions would severely limit the ability of CBOs to provide essential legal aid, case management, and mediation services. By committing state funding through this bill, Hawaii can proactively address these uncertainties and ensure consistent support for vulnerable residents navigating the legal system.

However, without adequate funding, these CBOs cannot sustain operations or meet increasing demands. The True Cost Coalition believes this bill is crucial to ensuring justice for all residents, regardless of their economic status or personal circumstances.

We respectfully urge you to pass HB 560 and demonstrate your commitment to fairness, equity, and access to justice in Hawaii. Thank you for your time and dedication to this critical issue.

Sincerely,

Michael P. Marsh, MA, CFRE



Responsive Caregivers of Hawaii  
PO Box 75380  
Kapolei, Hawaii 96707

*A private, non-profit organization*

President & CEO



# Samaritan Counseling Center Hawaii

February 7, 2025

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*Wesley Taira, LCSW*

*Harvey Leighnor, LCSW, Case Reviewer*

From: Rachelle Chang  
Executive Director  
Samaritan Counseling Center Hawai'i

Subject: Support for HB 560 Relating to the Judiciary

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing on behalf of Samaritan Counseling Center Hawai'i in **strong support** of HB 560, which provides much-needed funding to the Judiciary to enhance access to justice for Hawaii's most vulnerable populations.

Samaritan Counseling Center Hawai'i is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides professional, accessible mental health counseling to people with limited resources. We are a safety net for individuals and families who are uninsured or underinsured; who are unable to afford high co-pays and deductibles; or who have health insurance coverage which pays at below market-rates, making it difficult for them to find a counselor.

Through our Client Assistance Fund, we ensure that the people of Hawai'i can receive the mental health care they need to be healthy and whole – and support access to mental health care, especially in rural and underserved communities.

Hawai'i's prison system is facing a mental health care crisis. Too many people with mental health conditions are being incarcerated and receive inadequate care, and are released without adequate mental health support. From 2001 to 2019, the number of suicides increased 85% in state prisons, and 13% in local jails (US Bureau of Justice 2021).

<https://bjs.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh236/files/media/document/sljf0019st.pdf>

Many Hawai'i residents face significant barriers in navigating the legal system, particularly low-income families, individuals in crisis, and those requiring behavioral health interventions. Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) are essential partners in delivering legal aid, case management, mental health counseling, and mediation services that support these individuals and streamline judicial processes.

## **Celebrating 35 Years of Service**

1020 South Beretania Street, Honolulu, HI 96814 • Phone: (808) 545-2740 • Fax: (808) 545-2852  
[www.samaritancounselingcenterhawaii.org](http://www.samaritancounselingcenterhawaii.org) • Email: [info@samaritanhawaii.org](mailto:info@samaritanhawaii.org)

The unpredictability of federal funding for legal services and justice programs creates additional challenges for Hawai'i's judiciary and the CBOs that support it. Federal resources are often subject to shifting priorities, and any reductions would severely limit the ability of CBOs to provide essential legal aid, case management, and mediation services. By committing state funding through this bill, Hawai'i can proactively address these uncertainties and ensure consistent support for vulnerable residents navigating the legal system.

However, without adequate funding, these CBOs cannot sustain operations or meet increasing demands. The True Cost Coalition believes this bill is crucial to ensuring justice for all residents, regardless of their economic status or personal circumstances.

We respectfully urge you to pass HB 560 and demonstrate your commitment to fairness, equity, and access to justice in Hawai'i.

Thank you for your time and dedication to this critical issue.

With aloha,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rachelle Chang". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rachelle Chang  
Executive Director





FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

February 7, 2025

**Subject: Support for HB 560 Relating to the Judiciary**

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Greg Waibel, CEO of the YMCA of Honolulu. We are one of the largest nonprofits in Hawaii. I am in **strong support** of HB 560, which provides much-needed funding to the Judiciary to enhance access to justice for Hawaii's most vulnerable populations.

Many residents face significant barriers in navigating the legal system, particularly low-income families, individuals in crisis, and those requiring behavioral interventions. Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) are essential partners in delivering legal aid, case management, and mediation services that support these individuals and streamline judicial processes.

The unpredictability of federal funding for legal services and justice programs creates additional challenges for Hawaii's judiciary and the CBOs that support it. Federal resources are often subject to shifting priorities, and any reductions would severely limit the ability of CBOs to provide essential legal aid, case management, and mediation services. By committing state funding through this bill, Hawaii can proactively address these uncertainties and ensure consistent support for vulnerable residents navigating the legal system.

However, without adequate funding, these CBOs cannot sustain operations or meet increasing demands. The True Cost Coalition believes this bill is crucial to ensuring justice for all residents, regardless of their economic status or personal circumstances.

We respectfully urge you to pass HB 560 and demonstrate your commitment to fairness, equity, and access to justice in Hawaii.

Thank you for your time and dedication to this critical issue.

Sincerely,

Greg Waibel  
President & CEO



**LEGAL AID**  
**SOCIETY OF HAWAII**

Telephone: (808) 536-4302 • Fax: (808) 527-8088  
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 37375 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96837-0375  
924 Bethel Street • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Regan Iwao  
President, Board of Directors  
David Kauila Kopper  
Executive Director

## **TESTIMONY ON HB560**

Committee on Judiciary

Representative David A. Tarnas, Chair  
Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair  
Wednesday, February 7, 2025 at 2:05 pm

The Legal Aid Society of Hawaii submits testimony in support of HB560—Relating to the Judiciary.

HB560 proposes increased funding for essential services, to be administered by the Judiciary. Legal Aid, Hawai'i's oldest and largest non-profit legal service provider, receives general legal services funding administered by the Judiciary. To the extent that this bill is intended to provide funding for general civil legal services, Legal Aid supports the intent of this bill.

Currently, Legal Aid is also supporting an increase to the existing line item in the budget for civil legal services. An additional 1 million in support for civil legal services has been requested and was recently inserted as a line-item increase in the current version of the Senate Bill relating to the Judiciary's budget, SB260.

### **IMPACT OF CIVIL LEGAL SERVICES FUNDING**

With the support of general civil legal services funding, Legal Aid has been able to provide civil legal services to low-income and vulnerable populations across our state. As the state's largest and oldest legal service provider, we deliver legal services in the areas most needed by Hawai'i's residents, including family law, housing, domestic abuse, consumer protection, immigration law, public benefits, child welfare, and elder law. Legal Aid provides these services statewide through its 12 offices located in every county and on every island, as well as through our Maui Disaster Legal Services office and our Hawai'i Immigrant Justice Center. Our over 100 dedicated staff are all committed to our mission of obtaining a fair and just Hawai'i for all.

Each year, Legal Aid impacts the lives of approximately 20,000 Hawai'i residents. In the last fiscal year, we received over 15,000 requests for assistance and were able to provide legal help in a little over 7000 cases in legal areas ranging from family, housing, consumer, foreclosure, public benefits, elder law, homelessness, immigration, language access, and child welfare. Of those served last year, over 2,000 of our clients were homeless or at risk for homelessness, over 1,600 were Native Hawaiian, over 1,200 experienced domestic violence, and about 700 spoke a primary language other than English.

## **NEED FOR INCREASED FUNDING**

We are grateful to the legislature for their past and continuing support of general civil legal services in the Judiciary budget and to the Judiciary for providing a home for this program and administering these important funds. However, more funding is urgently needed.

In Legal Services Corporation's Justice Gap Report (2022), researchers found that "low-income [individuals] did not receive any or enough legal help for 92% of their civil legal problems[.]" and that Hawai'i is unfortunately consistent with this national average. More than one-half of people nationwide have no confidence that they would be able to find a lawyer they could afford if they needed one. In Hawai'i, at least 72% of households had one or more civil legal problems in the past year. Current resources are not meeting our community's needs: the National Justice Index determined that nine times as many legal services attorneys and advocates are needed to meet Hawai'i low-income residents' legal needs.

Changes to the federal funding and policy landscape also require additional support for Hawai'i's legal services providers. Recently, there have been dramatic reductions in available federal funds for victims of crime and domestic violence survivors. Last week's temporary funding freeze by the Office of Management and Budget threatened to impact federal funds for work related to housing, assisting Hawai'i's houseless communities, kūpuna legal services, health insurance navigators, and more, and is a clear preview of what's to come. Disaster legal services, which includes over one million in funding for Hawai'i, was also recently left out of the most recent funding resolution. And, it is likely that we will see attempts to "zero out" funding for legal services, which happened four years in a row when this current administration was previously in office.

There are now four legal service providers receiving general civil legal services funding, and all of our low-income and vulnerable populations statewide and across demographics are positively impacted by this support.

The Judiciary has been a leader in supporting "access to justice" initiatives here in Hawai'i and has generously provided a home for this line item. **Our ask is intended to supplement the Judiciary's legislative priorities, and should not come at the expense of any priority or portion of the Judiciary's proposed budget.**

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,  
David Kaulia Kopper  
Executive Director  
Angela Lovitt  
Deputy Director  
For The Legal Aid Society of Hawai'i



February 7, 2025

Members of the House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs:

Chair David A. Tarnas

Rep. Amy A. Perruso

Vice Chair Mahina Poepoe

Rep. Gregg Takayama

Rep. Della Au Belatti

Rep. Chris Todd

Rep. Elle Cochran

Rep. Diamond Garcia

Rep. Mark J. Hashem

Rep. Garner M. Shimizu

Rep. Kirstin Kahaloa

Re: HB560 Relating to Judiciary; Community-based Organizations; Appropriation

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs:

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 25 member programs statewide, I respectfully submit testimony in strong support of HB560, which provides much-needed funding to the Judiciary to enhance access to justice for Hawai'i's most vulnerable populations.

Many residents face significant barriers in navigating the legal system, especially survivors of domestic violence. Their engagement with the legal system is often complex, ranging from protection orders, divorce, and custody in Family Court to the adjudication of criminal court cases. Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) are essential partners in delivering legal aid, case management, and mediation services that support these individuals and streamline judicial processes.

For years, our programs have barely been making do with their current funding. Contracted amounts have not changed in a decade, and organizations are expected to do more with less. Now, with potential changes in federal funding, lives are at stake. Those changes impact life-saving services and endanger survivors' lives and those of their children.

Unfortunately, as a state, we continue to rely on Special Funds and non-general funds to support these critical services. According to the Judiciary's Report on FY 2024 Non-General Funds<sup>1</sup>, **\$1,879,203** was used for the following:

- A Multi-Pronged Approach to Addressing DV (VAWA)
  - This grant program aims to build on the work completed during previous project periods for Judicial Education to provide domestic violence training to the Family Court judges who oversee a range of cases that include domestic violence such as cases pertaining to temporary restraining orders, divorce, child welfare, and juvenile justice, DV 101, the Correctional Program Checklist, Revision of the DVI Standards, and Strengthening the Coordinated Community Response.
    - \$46,344
- Access and Visitation Programs (DHHS)
  - This grant provides safe Supervised Child Visitation/Exchange for families experiencing domestic violence on Oahu with a secure visitation center.
    - \$100,000
- Strengthening Hawaii's Coordinated Community (VAWA)
  - This grant program aims to address the dynamics of domestic violence to stakeholders through multiple efforts such as the annual DV 101 training, the revision of the Hawai'i Batterer Intervention Program Standards, training for Family Court judges in domestic violence, and training to strengthen the coordinated community response in Hawai'i.
    - \$37,755
- Justice for Families (VAWA, secured by HSCADV, not renewed)
  - This grant aims to assist self-represented victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking to understand their legal options and assert their rights, as well as to provide training and technical assistance for victim advocates and child welfare workers about critical civil legal issues.
    - \$107,489
- Indigent Legal Assistance Fund established under HRS 607-5.7
  - This fund provides civil legal services to indigent parties.
    - \$1,207,719
- Spouse and Child Abuse Special Account established under HRS 607-5.6

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.courts.state.hi.us/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/RPT-FY2024-Non-General-Funds-601-3.2-FINAL.pdf>

- This account is used for staff programs and grants or purchases of services that support or provide spouse or child abuse intervention or prevention activities.
  - \$379,896

By committing state funding through this bill, Hawaii can proactively address these uncertainties and ensure consistent support for vulnerable residents navigating the legal system.

However, these CBOs cannot sustain operations or meet increasing demands without adequate funding. The True Cost Coalition believes this bill is crucial to ensuring justice for all residents, regardless of their economic status or personal circumstances.

We respectfully urge you to pass HB560 and demonstrate your commitment to safety, fairness, equity, and access to justice in Hawai'i.

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

Sincerely,  
Angelina Mercado, Executive Director

TO: Chair Tarnas, Vice-Chair Poepoe & Members of House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs  
FROM: Renae Hamilton-Cambeilh, YWCA Kaua'i Executive Director  
DATE: February 6, 2025

RE: In Support of HB 560

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe and Members of the Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs, Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony for HB 560, On behalf of the YWCA staff and the individuals and families we serve, **I am testifying in strong support of HB 560**, which appropriates funds for the Judiciary to increase allocation for contracts with community-based organizations providing critical services in Hawaii. YWCA Kaua'i has a long history of being contracted by the Judiciary to provide services related to domestic and sexual violence for our community. These contracted services assist survivors and child witnesses cope through their trauma, heal from abuse, and rebuild safe and self-sufficient households. We also work with individuals who have committed crimes of domestic violence and sexual assault through intense clinical counseling via group or individual settings. It is vital for these types of services that staff who provide direct client services be well experienced and knowledgeable in these specialized areas. Our services save lives, holds batterers and offenders accountable and provides long term support for the survivors trying to healing from these traumatic experiences and crimes.

The Judiciary has been the sole funder for these vital services for over 25 years, during this period the funding has not risen to meet the yearly rising costs of providing services. The YWCA has taken steps in an attempt to fill the funding gap including raising fees, this is simply not sustainable and the gap grows each year. It is to the point that the agency, after this fiscal year the agency will not be able to provide all services that have been required if funding is not increased. We simply are not able to retain the staffing required with inadequate funding. This will result in a serious threat to public safety as fewer survivors, child witnesses, batterers and sexual offenders will get the help they need.

I support this bill as it is necessary to address the stagnant funding to ensure our state has services in place for the most vulnerable individuals and families. Mahalo for your consideration to support HB 560.

Respectfully,  
Renae Hamilton-Cambeilh, Executive Director



## COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

P.O. Box 37158, Honolulu, HI 96837-0158

Phone/E-Mail: (808) 927-1214 / [kat.caphi@gmail.com](mailto:kat.caphi@gmail.com)

*Today's Inmate; Tomorrow's Neighbor*



### COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Representative David Tarnas, Chair

Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

Friday, February 7, 2025

Room 325 & VIDEOCONFERENCE

2:05 PM

### **STRONG SUPPORT FOR HB 560 - FUNDING THE JUDICIARY for CONTRACTS with COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES**

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe and Members of the Committee!

My name is Kat Brady and I am the Coordinator of Community Alliance on Prisons, a community initiative promoting smart justice policies in Hawai`i for more than two decades. This testimony is respectfully offered on behalf of the 3,697 Hawai`i individuals living behind bars<sup>1</sup> and under the "care and custody" of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation on any given day. We are always mindful that 937 - 49% - of Hawai`i's imprisoned male population are serving their sentences abroad -- thousands of miles away from their loved ones, their homes and, for the disproportionate number of incarcerated Kanaka Maoli, far, far from their ancestral lands.

As a member of the True Cost Coalition, Community Alliance on Prisons appreciates this opportunity to **strongly support HB 560** that appropriates funds to the judiciary for services contracted with community-based organizations that deliver essential services, streamline judicial processes, and support the judiciary's capacity to effectively meet the needs of vulnerable households.

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<sup>1</sup> DCR Weekly Population Report, January 20, 2025

<https://dcr.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Pop-Reports-Weekly-2025-01-20.pdf>



We know how families struggle when the main breadwinner is incarcerated because CAP speaks with families trying to survive. CAP appreciates the Judiciary funding services to help some of our most vulnerable neighbors. As a community, we are lucky to have the Legal Aid Society help folks. Their Executive Director spoke at this committee about how their budget is stretched to the max and it is difficult to meet the needs of so many.

The looming threat of the Federal government cutting off funding for these desperately needed services for our neighbors is frightening and could result in more families living on beaches, parks, the streets, etc. These organizations are doing the work that the government just cannot do itself. We need to appreciate that! It would be a very different Hawai`i without their dedicated service to our neighbors.

Community Alliance on Prisons sends a warm mahalo the committee for hearing this important measure and we hope the committee members support our neighbors by strongly recommending that the Judiciary receives appropriate funding so that these terrific organizations can continue serving our communities, especially in these challenging times.

Mahalo nui!

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Representative David Tarnas, Chair  
Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair  
Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

Friday, February 7, 2025; 2:05 p.m.  
Conference room 325 & Videoconference

**Subject: Support for HB 560 - Relating to the Judiciary**

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe and Members of the Committee,

I am writing on behalf of Child and Family Service in strong support of HB 560, which provides much-needed funding to the Judiciary to enhance access to justice for Hawaii's most vulnerable populations.

Communities, particularly low-income families, individuals in crisis, and those requiring behavioral interventions, often face significant barriers when trying to navigate the legal system. Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) are essential partners in delivering legal aid, case management, and mediation services that support these individuals and streamline judicial processes.

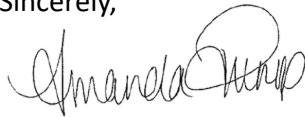
However, without adequate funding, these CBOs cannot sustain operations or meet increasing demands. The unpredictability of federal funding for legal services and justice programs creates additional challenges for Hawaii's judiciary and the CBOs that support it. Federal resources are often subject to shifting priorities, and any reductions would severely limit the ability of CBOs to provide essential legal aid, case management, and mediation services while easing the strain on judicial resources.

The True Cost Coalition believes HB 560 is crucial to ensuring justice for all residents, regardless of their economic status or personal circumstances; safeguarding the continuity of services. By committing state funding through this bill, Hawaii can proactively address these uncertainties and ensure consistent support for vulnerable residents navigating the legal system.

We respectfully urge you to pass HB 560 and demonstrate your commitment to fairness, equity, and access to justice in Hawaii.

Thank you for your time and dedication to this critical issue.

Sincerely,



Amanda Pump  
President & CEO  
Child & Family Service

**HB-560**

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 1:31:03 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/7/2025 2:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Karen M Radius	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a retired Family Court Judge and the founding Judge of Juvenile Drug Court and Girls Court.

I am testifying as an individual who has seen first hand that Family Court work extends far outside the Court room and Family Court offices. A weekend in detention home or a trip to the Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility alone does not bring about the change that our challenged kids need to succeed. The work of non profits, helping agencies and individuals and therapists and other community volunteers is essential to our childrens' and our families well being. Many [parties appearing before the Family Court judges need to be able to see the possibility of a different life than that they are facing.

Please pass HB 560

Respectfully submitted Karen M. Radius

February 6, 2025

**Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs**  
Hawaii State Legislator-House of Representatives  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Honorable Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of House Bill 560, which seeks appropriate funding to the judiciary for services contracted with community-based organizations. This important legislation will directly benefit our communities by delivering essential services, streamlining judicial processes, and supporting the judiciary's capacity to effectively meet the needs of vulnerable households.

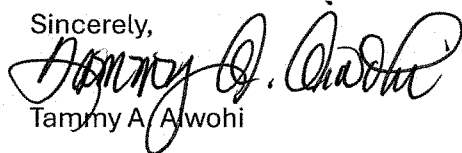
As we all know, the judicial system plays a critical role in upholding the rule of law and ensuring fairness and equity. However, it is often burdened with an increasing caseload and complexity that can overwhelm the capacity of the courts. Vulnerable households, particularly those dealing with issues such as domestic violence, housing insecurity, child custody disputes, and mental health challenges, are in dire need of additional support to navigate the judicial system. By strengthening partnerships with community-based organizations, HB560 will help bridge the gap between the courts and those in need, ensuring that individuals receive the comprehensive services they require to achieve just outcomes.

Community-based organizations are uniquely positioned to provide vital services such as counseling, advocacy, housing assistance, and legal support, which complement judicial processes and enhance the efficacy of the courts. These organizations are often trusted within their communities and understand the nuanced needs of those they serve, making them invaluable partners in delivering holistic support. The funding proposed in HB560 will enable these organizations to continue their work, expanding their reach and services to those most at risk.

Appropriating sufficient funds will also help foster a collaborative approach between the judiciary, legal professionals, social service providers, and the communities they serve. This teamwork is essential in creating a more responsive and equitable system for addressing the needs of vulnerable populations, ultimately improving the well-being of individuals and families across our state.

In conclusion, I wholeheartedly support HB560 and urge you to approve this crucial bill. The proposed funding will make a significant impact in strengthening our judicial system while ensuring that vulnerable households receive the care and attention they deserve. I thank you for your time and consideration and for your continued dedication to improving access to justice for all.

Sincerely,



Tammy A. Aiwohi

Hale Kipa Transitional Living Program-Case Manager

Ph. (808)304-7848 or taiwohi@halekipa.org

**HB-560**

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 8:13:31 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/7/2025 2:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Laurie Arial Tochiki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The community-based organizations that provide services to the judiciary are essential to its day-to-day function, and to the people of Hawai'i. I serve as Chair of the Board of Directors of the Mediation Centers of Hawai'i. The organization has had a contract with the state judiciary to provide mediation services directly in courthouses, and to litigants in court cases. Across the state, thousands of disputes are resolved every year under our contract. The result is both a better outcome for litigants who can resolve disputes amicably, and huge cost savings to the state. Our contract does not cover the true cost of the services we provide. And the contract has not been increased for more than a decade. I ask you to support this bill. Mahalo