

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

1051

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 28, 2025

RE: H.B. No. 239
H.D. 1

Honorable Nadine K. Nakamura
Speaker, House of Representatives
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2025
State of Hawaii

Madame:

Your Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs, to which was referred H.B. No. 239, H.D. 1, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO CHILD ABUSE,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to amend the definition of "child abuse or neglect" by clarifying that the failure to provide certain needs to a child shall not constitute child abuse or neglect if the sole reason the person responsible for the care of the child is unable to adequately provide for the child's care is due to a lack of financial resources.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Office of Wellness and Resilience; Hawaii Coalition for Child Protective Reform; Hawai'i Youth Services Network; Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!; Early Childhood Action Strategy; Hawai'i State Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Catholic Charities Hawai'i; Ho'oikaika Partnership; Domestic Violence Action Center; and four individuals. Your Committee received testimony in opposition to this measure from six individuals. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of Human Services.

Your Committee finds that the recent update to the federal Administration for Children and Families' Child Welfare Policy

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Manual encourages states to exclude factors such as poverty and income-related issues from the definitions of child abuse and neglect. This measure would align Hawaii's definition of "child abuse or neglect" with these federal guidelines and improve outcomes for families in need by preventing unnecessary family separations due to financial hardship.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 239, H.D. 1, and recommends that it pass Third Reading.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Judiciary &
Hawaiian Affairs,



DAVID A. TARNAS, Chair



