

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

199

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 06 , 2025

RE: H.B. No. 640  
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 Legislative Management, to which was referred H.B. No. 640 entitled:

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

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to:

- (1) Require and appropriate funds for specialized training for all employees of the Office of the Ombudsman to develop relevant expertise relating to the child welfare system;
- (2) Require the Office of the Ombudsman to publish a quarterly report on its website that identifies the number and nature of complaints that it receives regarding the Child Welfare Services Branch of the Department of Human Services; and
- (3) Require the Child Welfare Services Branch to notify birth families, children, and resource caregivers that they can file a complaint with the Office of the Ombudsman.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Hawaii Coalition for Child Protective Reform; Mālama

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'Ohana Working Group; and two individuals. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of Human Services and Office of the Ombudsman.

Your Committee finds that the Malama Ohana Working Group, established by Act 86, Session Laws of Hawaii 2023, developed recommendations to create a trauma-informed, community-based child welfare system that better supports children and families. Among these recommendations was the need for an independent method to resolve complaints related to the child welfare system. While the Office of the Ombudsman currently serves this role, greater awareness and specialized expertise are needed to ensure effective oversight. This measure mandates reporting on child welfare-related complaints and directs the Child Welfare Services Branch to inform families and caregivers of their right to file complaints.

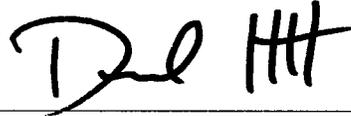
Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Deleting language that would have required and appropriated funds for specialized training for all employees of the Office of the Ombudsman to develop relevant expertise;
- (2) Clarifying the nature of complaints that must be published on the Office of the Ombudsman's website; and
- (3) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Legislative Management that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 640, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 640, H.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Human Services & Homelessness.



Respectfully submitted on  
behalf of the members of the  
Committee on Legislative  
Management,



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DANIEL HOLT, Chair



