



*The Judiciary, State of Hawai‘i*

**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Judiciary**

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair  
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

Tuesday, February 5, 2019, 9:00 am  
State Capitol, Conference Room 016

By

Christine E. Kuriyama  
Deputy Chief Judge, Senior Family Judge  
Family Court of the First Circuit

---

**Bill No. and Title:** Senate Bill No. 1018, Relating to the Hawai‘i Zero to Three Court.

**Purpose:** Request funding for the Hawai‘i Zero to Three Court.

**Judiciary’s Position:**

The Judiciary respectfully supports this bill as submitted in that it is requesting additional funding for the Hawai‘i Zero to Three Court, with the understanding that: “(t)he purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds to support the Hawai‘i zero to three court. It is not the legislature’s intent that the appropriated funds supplant the judiciary’s existing funding or budget request” (page 3, lines 14-17).

The Judiciary is deeply appreciative of the Keiki Caucus and the individual members of the Legislature for their continued support of and interest in the Hawai‘i Zero to Three Court, as well as the other programs that the Judiciary has initiated and maintained for the benefit of Hawaii’s children and families. The Keiki Caucus’ tireless advocacy and voice for children oftentimes too small or young to speak for themselves are always necessary and always welcomed. This bill speaks to that continuing advocacy and concern, and the Judiciary thanks the Caucus.

The Judiciary has included as part of its budget package, a no-cost conversion of the current Program Manager/Coordinator position to permanent status. This would give the Hawai‘i Zero to Three Court the necessary added stability to continue to grow and move



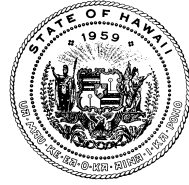
Senate Bill No. 1018, Relating to the Hawai‘i Zero to Three Court  
Senate Committee on Judiciary  
Tuesday, February 5, 2019, 9:00 am  
Page 2

forward, albeit not necessarily at the accelerated rate that is likely envisioned by the Keiki Caucus’ somewhat larger appropriations request for the Hawai‘i Zero to Three Court in this bill.

For the Committee’s consideration, the figures noted for the Program Manager and Case Manager on page 4, lines 3 and 4 are incorrect. The more accurate amounts are:

Program Manager (Social Worker V - SR24C)	\$59,616
Case Manager (Social Worker IV - SR22C)	\$52,956

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
P. O. Box 3378  
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378  
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB1018  
RELATING TO THE HAWAII ZERO TO THREE COURT.**

SENATOR KARL RHOADS, CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Hearing Date: February 5, 2019

Room Number: 016

1 **Fiscal Implications:** \$257,430 general fund appropriation.

2 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health (DOH) supports additional resources for  
3 the Hawaii Zero To Three Court (ZTT) program because it is an effective and proven approach  
4 to minimize Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

5 Prevention of ACEs is a strategic priority for DOH since they are correlated with poor health  
6 outcomes such as substance use disorder, obesity and chronic illness and premature death. ZTT  
7 can improve family bonding and resiliency that can help a young child thrive, and reduce public  
8 expenditures for health care, public safety, and special education among other things.

9 Assuring ZTT as a resource for at-risk families and children is a sound investment of public  
10 moneys.

11

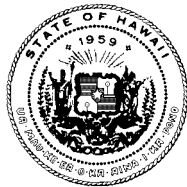
12

13

14

15

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



PANKAJ BHANOT  
DIRECTOR

BRIDGET HOLTHUS  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809

**LATE**

TO: The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair  
Senate Committee on Judiciary

FROM: Pankaj Bhanot, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 1018 - RELATING TO THE ZERO TO THREE COURT**

Hearing: February 5, 2019; 9:00 a.m.  
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services supports this bill.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this measure is to appropriate funds for the Hawaii Zero to Three court.

The Zero to Three (ZTT) court provides a valuable structure and process for families and children ages zero to three involved with the Family Court and Child Welfare Services. The Zero To Three court has added resources that help support parents and caregivers establish a safe, nurturing home. Numerous studies have shown the benefits to children and society when children's length of stay in foster care is shortened with effective case management, and children and their families are successfully reunited.

The voluntary nature of this program makes it a unique model in the child welfare system which emphasizes the motivation of the families to participate and learn what is necessary to become stable families who eventually need no further reliance on the judiciary or welfare system.

Families are provided special attention and given more time and social opportunities to learn from each other and professionals in the field. The success of the program is built upon the limited number of families served at one time, frequent nature of court hearings, specialized services available for the families, and trusting relationships built between the

families, case manager and service providers. Many families report they enjoy working with the case manager and thus want to stay in the program even though monthly court hearings are cumbersome.

In SFY2018, 19 families were served which involved 39 children. ZTT currently serves 25 children. The national ZERO TO THREE's Quality Improvement Center for Research-Based Infant-Toddler Court Teams published its evaluation report that included data from Hawaii's Zero To Three court. Here is the link to the September 30, 2017 report:

<http://qicct.org/sites/default/files/QIC-ITCT%20Final%20Evaluation%20Report%20Executive%20Summary%202017.compressed.pdf>.

Having stable funding for positions will support the healing and development of the most vulnerable children and their families.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



HAWAII FAMILY SUPPORT INSTITUTE  
*Making Hawaii's Families Strong*

February 4, 2019

## LATE TESTIMONY

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee  
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice-Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee

Re: SB 1018, relating to the Zero to Three Court

Dear Senator Rhoads, Wakai and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

I am Gail Breakey, Director of the Hawaii Family Support Institute testifying in strong support of HB 388, relating to the Zero to Court. This Court serves infants, toddlers in foster care by treating family problems and ensuring a safe, permanent home for children within 12-18 months.

Understanding the impact of trauma during the early period of formative brain development clarifies the importance of this Court.

- A baby is born with trillions of neurons waiting to be wired into a brain. Programming occurs through interactions with parents.
- Nurturing and consistent care promotes brain development in sequential patterns, establishing language, ability to related to others and positive self-esteem.
- Trauma and a chaotic environment interrupt these patterns, often resulting in chronic post-traumatic stress and a host of negative behaviors and developmental problems.
- The ZTT Court intervenes during the most important time in a child's social-emotional development.

The Zero to Three Court is highly successful:

- Substance abusing parents are successfully rehabilitated,
- Out of home placements are limited to 2, instead of multiple, debilitating placements and permanent placements occurs within 16 months.
- Children who cannot safely be re-united achieve permanency placements.
- There has been only one re-abuse case among all families served.
- It's cost effective: \$4,000 per family compared with estimated lifetime cost of \$210,010 for one untreated child abuse case per the Center for Disease Control.

The priority funding for this Court is to convert the Case Manager position from a temporary to a permanent position, which is in the Judiciary budget and the Chief Justice has noted this is a priority for the Family Court at this time. A permanent program manager position is crucial to stability and further program development. HB 388 also requests support for a case manager position, which is part of this program model, and support for direct services for families .

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

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

Gail Breakey, RN, MPH, Executive Director  
Hawaii Family Support Institute  
UH School of Social Work at Manoa



## O`ahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY  
Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair  
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

DATE: Tuesday, February 4, 2019

TIME: 9:00 a.m.

PLACE: Conference Room 016, State Capitol

RE: SB 1018 Relating to the Hawai`i Zero to Three Court

Aloha mai kakou Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee on Judiciary:

The O`ahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities (OCCLP) of the Democratic Party of Hawai`i (DPH) hereby submits its testimony in **SUPPORT of SB 1018 relating to the Hawai`i Zero to Three Court.**

SB 1018 appropriates funds for the Hawaii Zero to Three Court.

The University of Hawaii center on disability studies conducted an evaluation of Hawai'i zero to three court activities from August 2013 to July 2016. The study concluded that the Hawai'i zero to three court is successfully meeting the objectives of reducing parental alcohol or drug use, improving reunification outcomes for families, decreasing the number of placements and the length of stay in foster care, increasing visitation frequency, ensuring timeliness of service availability, and increasing access to services.

DPH believes that all families should have an equal opportunity to build their assets and become self-sufficient; and DPH supports a strong safety net of programs that will afford them the opportunity to do so. DPH believes that it is our kuleana to protect our children, our future, from violence and neglect and provide them with a safe and healthy environment in which to grow and thrive.

DPH supports initiatives that enhance access and equity in education, employment, and business opportunities intended to lift families and individuals out of poverty and remove existing barriers to equal opportunity in our communities.



DPH supports legislation and best practice policies that prioritize the safety, security and well-being of our foster children, who are our most vulnerable keiki in our community. This is the paramount consideration when making decisions regarding the time frame, criteria and justification for reunification and family placement. We will always respect family and familial bonds, but reunification with every biological family is not always the safest, most secure or in the best interests of every child. This is especially true in aggravated circumstances cases involving drug use history, physical abuse, sexual abuse and unstable housing. DPH strongly supports the efforts of parents and all people to recover and reorganize their lives for the better, but our ultimate concern must also be for the short and long-term safety and wellbeing of our foster children. *Democratic Party of Hawai`i Platform (2018), p. 15, ln. 1-18.*

For the foregoing reasons, i.e., to protect our children, our future, from violence and neglect and provide them with a safe and healthy environment in which to grow and thrive, OCCLP supports SB 1018 and urges its passage out of the Committee on Judiciary.

Mahalo nui loa  
Me ka `oia`i`o

/s/ Melodie Aduja

Melodie Aduja  
Chair, O`ahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities  
of the Democratic Party of Hawai`i  
Ph. (808) 258-8889  
Email: legislativepriorities@gmail.com

**SB-1018**

Submitted on: 2/1/2019 7:33:42 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/5/2019 9:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Ann Yabusaki	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

RELATING TO SB1018

Dear Honorable Senator Rhoads and Senator Wakai,

I am writing in strong support of SB1018, a bill to fund the 0-3 Court. I am a psychologist and family therapist who works with families and children affected by fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD). Early intervention is critical. Although early signs may not materialize during this stage of development, a place such as the Court could help "flag" providers to observe the child's behaviors over time. Approximately 70% of children in the foster care system are affected by a diagnosis along the spectrum. The most recent research (2018) estimates that one in 20 first grade children are affected by an FASD. This is more than autism, spina bifida, cerebral palsy combined. Early screening, identification, and intervention can often prevent or mitigate homelessness, incarceration, substance use and mental health disorders that often accompany FASD when unaddressed or addressed in adolescence.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request for continued support of the 0-3 Court.

Sincerely,

Ann S. Yabusaki, Ph.D., MFT