

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

**Testimony in SUPPORT of SB2482  
RELATING TO WELLNESS**

SENATOR DONAVAN DELA CRUZ, CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Hearing Date: 2/14/2022

Room Number: VIA

VIDEOCONFERENCE

1 **Department Position:** The Department of Health supports this bill provided that its passage  
2 does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Governor's Executive Budget.

3 **Department Testimony:** Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this bill.  
4 Complex and prolonged trauma can have overwhelming effects on a person's physical, mental  
5 and behavioral health outcomes throughout their lifespan. Research on adverse childhood events  
6 known as ACEs, beginning in the late '90s, first brought the impact of early childhood trauma  
7 into public awareness. This resulted in more attention to support services needed by young  
8 children who have experienced traumatic events.

9 The good news is, more and more, promising practices are emerging that can shield children,  
10 adults and families from the effects of adverse experiences and to prevent the worst of  
11 consequences. And in Hawai'i, we have an incredible foundation of cultural wisdom and  
12 practices to build upon that connect families back to themselves and their culture, which we  
13 already know positively impacts their lives and communities. Culture is health.

14 While there have been siloed efforts on behalf of state agencies and departments to train up the  
15 family-serving workforce in trauma-informed care, the Trauma-Informed Task Force is the first  
16 step we have taken as a state in our mission to make our trauma work more collaborative and  
17 strategic. We have exceptional challenges in the islands when it comes to trauma-informed care  
18 because many of our populations suffer from complex trauma involving intergenerational

1 historical, cultural and/or racial trauma. This also presents an exceptional opportunity. We can  
2 lead the nation, as well as those serving Indigenous populations, in sharing our mana‘o and what  
3 we learn as the proposed Office of Wellness and Resilience implements the task force’s  
4 framework. The ability for our workforce to provide the services children, youth and families  
5 deserve has been severely hindered by the collective trauma of the pandemic and its effects. As  
6 just one example, we experienced a whopping 25% increase in teachers leaving our public  
7 schools during the 2020-2021 over the previous school year<sup>i</sup>, and we were already in a teacher  
8 shortage.

9 As a semi-autonomous unit, the Office of Wellness and Resilience would be able to more  
10 quickly respond to the ever-changing needs of our communities, both now and into the future, as  
11 we anticipate upcoming challenges such as new pandemics, immigration and the effects of  
12 climate change. We urge you to create the Office of Wellness and Resilience to provide this  
13 preventive and trauma-responsive care to Hawai‘i’s children and families, and stand in strong  
14 support of this bill to create it.

15 **Offered Amendments for SB2482:** The Department of Health respectfully requests the  
16 Executive Director possess the necessary qualifications to lead this office, and are willing to  
17 assist the committee in determining those pre-requisites.

18 **Fiscal Implications:** This measure impacts the priorities identified in the Governor’s Executive  
19 Budget Request for the Department of Health’s appropriations and personnel priorities.

20 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.civilbeat.org/2021/10/hawaii-is-losing-more-teachers-than-ever-amid-pandemic-fatigue/>



## HAWAI'I COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

To: SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair  
Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair  
And Members of the Committee

From: Micah Kāne, Chief Executive Officer & President - Hawai'i Community Foundation

Re: Testimony in Support of SB2482 Relating to Wellness  
Monday, February 14, 2022, 1:30 P.M.

The Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF) strongly supports Senate Bill 2482 (SB2482). SB 2482 will help create a dynamic, coordinated effort across public agencies and community organizations to address early adversity, trauma and toxic stress—from keiki to kupuna. We know that the COVID-19 pandemic has added stress to Hawai'i's families. Nonprofit social service, health, and early childhood providers have been shouldering much of the burden to support families. Now is the opportunity to step up support and increase collaboration to ensure that all families have access to the support they need. The proposed Office of Wellness and Resilience is an important part of supporting families with better access to preventative supports and needed services across the state.

At the Hawaii Community Foundation, our CHANGE Framework focuses on six sectors of the community. The "H" sector is Health and Wellness, and HCF's [Promising Minds](#) Initiative focused on keiki ages 0-5 and their families. The outcomes of SB2482 strongly align with this initiative work and brings needed focus and resources for preventative mental health efforts in our community.

In 2019, HCF launched Promising Minds, a three-year initiative dedicated to improving early childhood behavioral health in Hawai'i by investing in the future of our keiki, especially those at-risk of trauma, abuse and neglect, or dealing with their aftereffects. Promising Minds helps to strengthen early relationships and healthy development to set the foundations for long-term benefits to individual children, parents and caregivers. Over the last three years Promising Minds has worked with over 100 early childhood providers and nearly 50 health care professionals/clinicians. The collective work has identified some key learnings:

- Practitioners from a variety of early childhood settings (child care, home visiting, early intervention, early Head Start) recognized the need for more practitioners within the system that are trained or specialize in trauma-informed care.

*Relating to addressing vicarious trauma of staff: "...so many of our staff are just overwhelmed and at their wit's end but just giving their all to the families they serve and not having enough to give to their families in their home. Then the impacts on their children become negative. So we're really trying to help them find that balance so that that doesn't become an issue."  
– Hawai'i early childhood provider*

*“I think it's also important to talk a little bit about historical trauma, because it's important for [service providers and to have a common ground and to understand that a lot of Pacific, Micronesian, Islanders all share this history. Oftentimes, when we show them the commonality they have or even just the joys in their culture that they share, the singing, the dancing, when we start off with something that bridges them together first, it helps and allows them to be open and understanding that we are the same and we are here for the same reason, because our people have faced oppression and historical trauma. We are here to learn to heal together.”*

- Practitioners shared that an increase in trained, trauma-informed care professionals would ensure that children and families do not get lost when navigating systems.

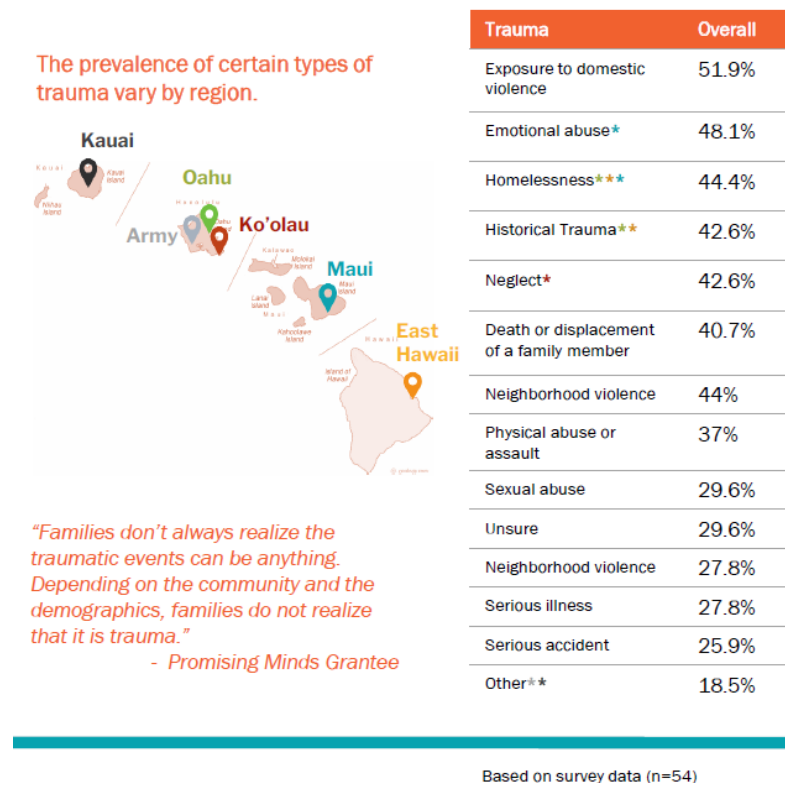
*“We need more trauma-informed care resources like people who are specialized in that so when you have a really severe case you have somewhere to go.” – Hawai’i early childhood provider*

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, early childhood mental health was already a silent crisis—one in six U.S. children ages 2 to 8 years-old (17.4%) had a diagnosed mental, behavioral, or developmental disorder.<sup>1</sup> Research has concluded the direct relationship between Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and negative life outcomes for children ranging from chronic disease, drug abuse, depression, involvement with the juvenile justice system, family violence, and early death. Children with higher ACE scores are more likely to be disengaged from school.

We believe this bill is a way to address the urgent needs caused by trauma and toxic stress that increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. The bill creates a way to strengthen the supports available to families and make smart system improvements. It is accelerant for the change we are trying to make around health and wellbeing in Hawai’i.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB2482.

**Most early childhood providers that were Promising Minds participants work with families and children that have experienced exposure to domestic violence and emotional abuse.**



<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control, Children’s Mental Health. <https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/data.html>



david.miyashiro@hawaiikidscan.org  
hawaiikidscan.org

David Miyashiro  
Executive Director

February 14, 2022

Committee on Health  
Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair  
Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair

Aloha Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Baker, and Members of the Committee,

**HawaiiKidsCAN strongly supports SB2482**, which establishes a temporary Office of Wellness and Resilience within the Office of the Governor; authorizes the Office to address issues and implement solutions to improve wellness and resilience, including issues and solutions identified by the Trauma-Informed Care Task Force; and appropriates moneys.

Founded in 2017, HawaiiKidsCAN is a local nonprofit organization committed to ensuring that Hawaii has an excellent and equitable education system that reflects the true voices of our communities and, in turn, has a transformational impact on our children and our state. We strongly believe that all students should have access to excellent educational opportunities, regardless of family income levels and circumstances.

This important bill would bring much-needed coherence and leadership to a critical cross-sector issue that impacts Hawaii at many levels: trauma. An Office of Wellness and Resilience is more needed than ever, as the COVID-19 pandemic has been directly or indirectly devastating to many of our community members. Kids have lost parents and grandparents, have faced stressors due to financial hardship at home, and have become deeply disengaged from their schools, peers, and teachers. Of course, children faced abuse and trauma even before the pandemic, and these cycles can be incredibly difficult to break.

Trauma is an immense, complex challenge, requiring holistic strategies that draw upon trauma-informed and strengths-based approaches. An Office of Wellness and Resilience would help to break down silos and increase cross-sector collaboration and alignment, including between government, non-profit organizations, philanthropic funders, faith groups, and the broader business sector. While there is tremendous work happening at

the community level, this Office of Wellness and Resilience would connect the dots between these place-based innovations, policy barriers and opportunities, and help braid funding streams.

This work can't wait, and nothing less than the health and sustainability of our Hawaii community depends on it.

Mahalo for your consideration,

David Miyashiro  
Founding Executive Director  
HawaiiKidsCAN

# HAWAII YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

677 Ala Moana Boulevard, Suite 904 Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Phone: (808) 489-9549

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

Carole Gruskin, President

Judith F. Clark, Executive Director

Bay Clinic

Big Brothers Big Sisters Hawaii

Big Island Substance Abuse Council

Bobby Benson Center

Child and Family Service

Coalition for a Drug Free Hawaii

Collins Consulting, LLC

Domestic Violence Action Center

EPIC, Inc.

Family Programs Hawaii

Family Support Hawaii

Friends of the Children's Justice Center of Maui

Get Ready Hawai'i

Hale Kipa, Inc.

Hale 'Opio Kauai, Inc.

Hawaii Children's Action Network

Hawaii Health & Harm

Reduction Center

Ho'ola Na Pua

Kahi Mohala

Kokua Kalihi Valley

Kokua Ohana Aloha (KOA)

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 (PACT)

PHOCUSED

PFLAG – Kona Big Island

Planned Parenthood of the

Great Northwest and

Hawaiian Islands

Residential Youth Services

& Empowerment (RYSE)

Salvation Army Family

Intervention Services

Sex Abuse Treatment Center

Susannah Wesley Community Center

The Catalyst Group

February 12, 2022

To: Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair,  
And members of the Committee on Health

## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2482 RELATING TO WELLNESS

Hawaii Youth Services Network, a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, strongly supports SB 2482 Relating to Wellness.

I serve as the non-profit representative on the Hawaii Trauma-Informed Care Task Force.

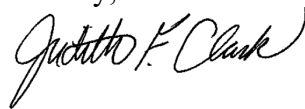
Formed in response to legislation passed by this body in 2021, the Task Force is currently collecting data on models of cross-agency collaboration to provide trauma-informed services. We recognize the need address trauma-related needs in ways that respect and honor cultural diversity. We are identifying assessment tools and government, non-profit, and faith-based providers can use to identify ways they can make their programs and services more trauma-informed. And we are working on plans to help organizations use those tools.

We know that the effort to help children and families avoid adverse childhood experiences (ACES) and provide comprehensive, coordinated, culturally sensitive services to survivors of trauma will require a long-term commitment as well as human and fiscal resources.

The proposed office of wellness and resilience is needed to help our children grow up safe, healthy, and ready to succeed.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Judith F. Clark, MPH  
Executive Director

**SB-2482**

Submitted on: 2/13/2022 11:24:32 AM

Testimony for HTH on 2/14/2022 1:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Justina Acevedo-Cross	Testifying for Joining Hawaii Community Foundation in support.	Support	Yes

Comments:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on SB 2482. I will be joining Hawaii Community Foundation in providing testimony. I strongly support this bill.



**SB-2482**

Submitted on: 2/11/2022 6:57:07 AM

Testimony for HTH on 2/14/2022 1:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Ashley Cipponeri	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

**Chair, Vice Chair and members of the committee, my name is Ashley Cipponeri and I am testifying in favor of Senate Bill 2482: Relating to Wellness. I am a University of Manoa Master of Social Work student and I am specializing in mental and behavioral health, specifically working with women with eating disorders. I also co-host a coaching support service for individuals with chronic illness with the organization Organic Intelligence, which prioritizes training health professionals in trauma-safe care. If it is not already apparent that the concepts of wellness and resilience are within my sphere of practice, I am also a licensed massage therapist on the island of Maui and overall have been in the health and wellness industry for over ten years.**

**This bill summarizes the substantial impact trauma and adverse childhood experiences can have on our community and I support the continued investment in implementing solutions brought by the trauma-informed task force. I believe the office of wellness and resilience function to create a social determinants of health electronic dashboard that identifies a baseline of needs and concerns that impede high quality-of-life outcomes will be vital in reducing stigma and raising awareness for the community.**

**I support this bill while also cautioning the legislature of implementing the term wellness without further defining the scope and priorities. The wellness industry is a for-profit and largely unregulated industry that has confused the public and prioritized marketing for individuals with racial, weight, and socioeconomic privilege.**

**Wellness and resilience will emerge within our communities if, and only if, we are prioritizing initiatives that reduce discrimination, stigma, job insecurity, poverty, and the support of caregivers. Too often wellness initiatives focus primarily on individual lifestyle choices, disregarding the research that demonstrates lifestyle changes only account for less than a quarter of health outcomes. Thank for taking my testimony in consideration. I am in support of Senate Bill 2482.**

Senate Committee on Health  
Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair  
Senator Rosalyn Baker, Vice Chair  
Feb. 14, 2022 1:15 p.m.

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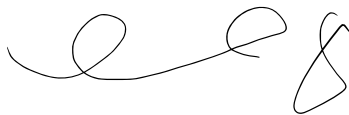
SB2482, Relating to Wellness is an important bill relating to trauma-informed care. It will create an office that will carry on the suggested work of the ACT 209 TIC Task Force that will improve the lives of many who have suffered from trauma and stress before and during the COVID-19 pandemic in the State of Hawai'i.

Aloha, my name is Danny Goya, I work in the field of trauma-informed care throughout the state along the state. I am submitting this testimony to express my very strong support for SB2482 as I have seen first hand how adverse childhood experiences have negatively impacted the children and families I work with throughout the State of Hawai'i. I have seen first-hand how COVID-19 has lead to so much trauma in our community. I've worked with rural and remote schools and have seen the toll it has taken on students, teachers, staff and parents.

Research has indicated that an adult who has experienced 4 or more ACEs has an increased risk in preventable health diseases, greater chances at falling behind or dropping out of school, higher chance of using drugs and early death. The key to solving toxic stress and adverse experiences is a COMPREHENSIVE approach and trauma-informed strategies that build wellness and resilience. Our current strategy is often a "silo" approach to solutions. Each state department has different and specific charges, funding and strategies, that may or may not work in cooperation with other agencies, non-profits and community providers. SB2482, will allow various departments to work along side each other and in partnership with the private and non-profit sectors.

Mahalo for your time and consideration and please support SB2482.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Daniel Goya', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Daniel Goya

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



CRAIG K. HIRAI  
DIRECTOR

GLORIA CHANG  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM  
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND  
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE**  
P.O. BOX 150  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE  
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND  
MANAGEMENT DIVISION  
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION  
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT (OFAM)

**WRITTEN ONLY**  
TESTIMONY BY CRAIG K. HIRAI  
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE  
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
ON  
SENATE BILL NO. 2482

**February 14, 2022**  
**1:15 p.m.**  
**Via Videoconference**

RELATING TO WELLNESS

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

Senate Bill No. 2482 amends Chapter 27, HRS, and does the following:

- 1) establish a temporary Office of Wellness and Resilience (Office) as a semi-autonomous authority within the Office of the Governor (GOV); 2) authorize the Office to address issues and implement solutions to improve wellness and resilience, including issues and solutions identified by the Trauma-Informed Care Task Force established pursuant to Act 209, SLH 2021; 3) require the Office to submit an annual report to the Legislature that contains a summary of activities during the preceding year; 4) appropriate an unspecified amount of general revenues to GOV for FY 23 for the establishment and operations of the Office; and 5) provide an unspecified sunset date for the bill.

B&F notes that, with respect to the general fund appropriation in this bill, the federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act requires that states receiving Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) II funds and Governor's Emergency Education Relief II funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

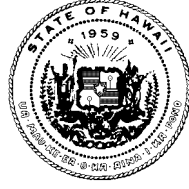
Further, the federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act requires that states receiving ARP ESSER funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

The U.S. Department of Education has issued rules governing how these maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements are to be administered. B&F will be working with the money committees of the Legislature to ensure that the State of Hawai'i complies with these ESSER MOE requirements.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



CATHY BETTS  
DIRECTOR

JOSEPH CAMPOS II  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII  
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

February 12, 2022

TO: The Honorable Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair  
Senate Committee on Health

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 2482 – RELATING TO WELLNESS.**

Hearing: Monday, February 14, 2022, 1:15 p.m.  
Via Videoconference, State Capitol

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this measure.

**PURPOSE OF THE BILL:** The purpose of this bill is to establish a temporary Office of Wellness and Resiliency within the Office of the Governor, authorizes the office to address issues and implement solutions to improve wellness and resilience including issues and solutions identified by the Trauma-Informed Care Task Force.

Act 209, Session Laws of Hawaii 2021, established a Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) Task Force within the Department of Health to create recommendations on how the State could become trauma-informed. Embedding trauma-informed care (TIC) response throughout government is necessary to bolster resilience and well-being, particularly now as we continue to see the pandemic's lasting mental, physical, and social-emotional impacts.

The TIC task force is tasked with: creating and adopting a statewide framework for trauma-informed and responsive practice; identifying best practices, including those from native Hawaiian cultural practices with respect to children and youth who have experienced or are at risk of experiencing trauma and their families; providing a trauma-informed care

inventory and assessment of public and private agencies and departments; and identifying various cultural practices that build wellness and resilience in communities.

This work must be collaborative, cross-sector, and multigenerational. Most notably, it requires vested interest and commitment from all branches of government, private sector stakeholders, and community members to create and sustain needed change. Creating an Office on Wellness and Resiliency will assist with creating and embedding TIC across State government and could have a positive lifetime impact on Hawaii's residents and future generations.

The shift to become a TIC State is necessary. National reports document the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on low-income families, children, and youth.<sup>1</sup> When schools and child care facilities closed, women with less than college degrees, especially mothers with children under five, left the workforce to provide child care, reducing family resources and increasing household stress. The impacts are startling for youth and young adults: global and national reports of increased anxiety and depression amongst youth, in the U.S., increased emergency department visits for pediatric mental health patients,<sup>2</sup> and continuing decreases in college enrollment, especially in public colleges and universities, since the fall of 2019.<sup>3</sup> In addition, due to school closures, shift to distance learning, youth social and emotional development are not being met during the critical child and adolescent development phases in addition to unmet academic needs.

COVID-19 amplified the need for coordinated service delivery so residents could access benefits and services quickly and efficiently, and government processes did not create further stress and anxiety. While many new relationships and processes developed during the pandemic, departments need additional resources to lead and continue to make needed changes so that our systems and processes provide services mindful of "what happened" to a

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<sup>1</sup> See, <https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/2021-09/low-income-covid-19-impacts.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> See, <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2779380>

<sup>3</sup> See, <https://nscresearchcenter.org/current-term-enrollment-estimates/>

person. Negative and traumatizing experiences trying to access government services leads to a loss of faith in government and less citizen engagement.<sup>4</sup>

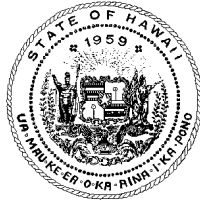
As part of the Wellness and Resiliency Office, DHS emphasizes the need to include employee mental health as part of the trauma-informed strategies. In a department like the DHS, the human services workforce has experienced significant and long-lasting stressors during the pandemic. The number of residents that need assistance for their basic needs dramatically increased and remains at all-time highs. COVID-19 highlighted a need to create an open and safe space for employees to address their anxieties, stresses, and grief while balancing the numerous programmatic changes, new technology, and changed working conditions while managing their family needs.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

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<sup>4</sup> Watch, Jamila Michener, Ph.D., Fragmented Democracy: Medicaid Federalism and Unequal Politics, September 19, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gye6y1U3GUJ>.

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII  
**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY**  
1177 Alakea Street, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

**MAX N. OTANI**  
DIRECTOR

**Maria C. Cook**  
Deputy Director  
Administration

**Tommy Johnson**  
Deputy Director  
Corrections

**Jordan Lowe**  
Deputy Director  
Law Enforcement

No. \_\_\_\_\_

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY**

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 2482  
RELATING TO WELLNESS.

by

Max N. Otani, Director  
Department of Public Safety

Senate Committee on Health  
Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair  
Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair

Friday, February 14, 2022; 1:15 p.m.  
Via Videoconference

Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Baker, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Public Safety (PSD) supports Senate Bill (SB) 2482, which seeks to establish a temporary Office of Wellness and Resilience within the Office of the Governor, authorizes the Office to address issues and implement solutions to improve wellness and resilience, including issues and solutions identified by the Trauma-Informed Care Task Force, and appropriates an unspecified amount of funding to accomplish the purposes of the bill.

PSD has been a participating member of the Trauma-Informed Care Task Force since it was established in 2021 by Act 209, Session Laws of Hawaii 2021. The Task Force has focused on various efforts, including creating and adopting a statewide framework for trauma-informed and responsive practices, identifying best practices, and identifying cultural practices to help build wellness and resilience.



Over the years, the Department has experienced increasing rates of incarceration among people with substance use disorders and mental illnesses. This experience has helped to inform the measure's impetus to address the underlying trauma that can have lifelong consequences, particularly resulting in the preventable occupation of our jails and prisons. In addition, SB 2482 meaningfully provides an opportunity to coordinate our efforts to improve wellness and resilience in a systemic fashion between state departments and the community.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 2482.

Date: February 11, 2022

To: Senate Committee on Health  
The Honorable Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair  
The Honorable Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair  
And members of the Committee

From: Early Childhood Action Strategy

Re: **Support for SB2482**, Relating to Wellness

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Early Childhood Action Strategy (ECAS) is a statewide cross-sector partnership designed to improve the system of care for Hawai'i's youngest children and their families. ECAS partners are working to align priorities for children prenatal to age eight, streamline services, maximize resources, and improve programs to support our youngest keiki.

**ECAS supports passage of SB2482** which would establish an Office of Wellness and Resilience, which would help to coordinate our response to the mental health crisis brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, and buffer against trauma and toxic stress experienced by our families.

There is a direct relationship between Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and negative outcomes later in life, including chronic disease, drug abuse, depression, involvement with the justice system, and family violence. We do not fully know the extent that pandemic-related isolation and persistent stress will affect the brain architecture of young children. We do know that many children in families facing financial hardship also are exhibiting signs of emotional distress.

**There is urgent need to take action.** The prevalence of childhood and family trauma and stress in Hawaii has reached crisis levels:

- Since the start of the pandemic, Hawai'i Department of Health Early Intervention Services report a dramatic decline in infant and toddler social and emotional development
- 75% of adults with serious mental illness are parents
- Hawaii has the largest percentage (41%) of self-reported suicidal thoughts among people who took an online depression screening during the pandemic.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of this important measure.

**To:** Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair  
Senator, Rosalyn H. Baker. Vice Chair  
Members of the Senate Committee On Health

**From:** Robert G. Peters, Chair  
Early Learning Board

**Subject:** **Measure:** SB 2482, Relating to Wellness  
**Hearing Date:** Monday, February 14, 2022  
**Time:** 1:15 PM  
**Location:** Via Videoconference

**Description:** Establishes a temporary Office of Wellness and Resilience within the Office of the Governor. Authorizes the Office to address issues and implement solutions to improve wellness and resilience, including issues and solutions identified by the Trauma-Informed Care Task Force. Appropriates moneys. Sunsets on an unspecified date.

**Early Learning Board Position: Support the Intent**

Aloha. I am Robert G. Peters, Chair of the Early Learning Board (ELB). Thank you for this opportunity to offer testimony about SB 2482 on behalf of the ELB.

Through Act 202, Session Laws of Hawaii 2017, ELB transitioned from an advisory to a governing board for the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) and is charged with formulating statewide policy relating to early learning. The ELB is composed of 17 representatives from across the early childhood field, in both the public and private sectors.

Research has concluded that there is a direct relationship between Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and negative life outcomes for children ranging from chronic disease, drug abuse, depression, involvement with the juvenile justice system, family violence, and early death. Additionally, children with higher ACE scores are more likely to be disengaged from school. Poor mental health affects entire families; if it is addressed, it will reduce overall family stress and increase wellbeing. An Office of Wellness and Resilience would help coordinate social services and allow for more resources to flow into Hawaii for needed resources and especially support our children who have experienced adversity.

In 2018, the ELB and the EOEL (Executive Office on Early Learning) completed a multi-stakeholder planning process resulting in the production of the Hawaii Early Childhood State Plan, 2019 – 2024, which was signed by the Governor and affected State Department Heads. The Plan posits that children's health and their families' wellbeing are foundational for optimal child development and learning. The creation of an Office of Wellness and Resilience would enhance the opportunity to build that foundation for Hawaii's children.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify about SB 2482.



1164 Bishop Street, Suite 1506  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813  
<https://familyhuihawaii.org>

February 12, 2022

Dear Honorable Members of the Hawai'i State Legislature,

On behalf of Family Hui Hawai'i, I would like to provide our support for Senate Bill 2482 and House Bill 1970 establishing an Office of Wellness and Resilience. As a parenting support organization serving over 1000 parents, caregivers, and children, prenatal to age 5, each year, we see the struggles that families face every day and the difficulty they have in accessing supports and services. An Office of Wellness and Resilience would help to reduce families' struggle to navigate our fragmented system of supports between the State Departments of Health, Human Services, and Education and strengthen families, especially in early childhood years when health, wellness, and education are tightly woven and dependent on each other.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the mental health crisis across all age groups in America. Trauma-informed services for our youngest keiki are especially important during the most critical years of brain development and growth. Research on Adverse Childhood Experiences during the early years show a direct correlation to poor life outcomes including depression, drug abuse, family violence, and early death. The prevalence of childhood and family trauma and stress in Hawai'i has reached crisis levels since the start of the pandemic. The State of Hawai'i Early Intervention Services has seen a dramatic decline in infant and toddler social and emotional development. In June 2020, 1000 parents with children <18yo were surveyed nationally. Female, single parents and families with younger children had higher declines in mental health.

Research shows that 52% of children in families with financial hardship are facing emotional distress. The investment in the families of our youngest children is a needed and economically strategic use of funds. During these early years, learning and wellness is about the whole child, physically, cognitively, and social-emotionally. Early learning is not just in the classroom and does not begin at age 4 years at PreKindergarten. Learning is everywhere the child is – at home, at their auntie's house, family child care provider's home, early learning centers, and at home with their family. Families play a critical role in preparing their children to be successful in school and life. They are the constant in the many learning environments that their children will experience as they grow. It is important to have an easy access point for families to receive information about their child's whole growth and development.

Prevention strategies building family resilience, social and concrete supports, parenting and early childhood development knowledge are proven to alter the outcomes of early adversity, reducing overall family stress and increasing wellbeing. An Office of Wellness and Resilience would provide a critical step in building a strong system for supporting our children and families.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony for SB2482 and HB1970. I urge you to move these bills forward.

Respectfully,

Cherilyn Shiinoki  
Executive Director



**Senate Committee on Health**

Senator Jarrett Keohokaloe, Chair

Senator Rosalyn Baker, Vice Chair

DATE: Monday, February 14, 2022

TIME: 1:15PM

PLACE: Via Videoconference

Re: SB2482 Establishing the Office of Wellness and Resilience

Dear Chairperson Keohokaloe and Committee Members,

I strongly support SB2482, relating to wellness. One of the most important things we can do to remedy the mental health crisis brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic is help to buffer against trauma and toxic stress for our families--everyone from babies through kupuna. A great starting point would be better coordinated trauma-informed social services. An Office of Wellness and Resilience would help with that coordination and allow for more resources to flow into Hawai'i for needed services. When supportive environments serve Hawai'i's people, especially our children, who have experienced early adversity, they are better set up to turn those stumbling blocks into stepping stones.

As someone who has worked in the field of human services here in Hawaii for thirty five years we have too often found ourselves in the position of not being able to qualify for federally funded grants because we have not had a coordinated data base across departments. There are many collaborative efforts across both government and non government agencies that are hampered in their ability to track outcomes of their work across departments and divisions of departments. As well as make the case for needed services. The Office of Wellness and Resilience will address this gap.

Research has concluded the direct relationship between Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and negative life outcomes for children ranging from chronic disease, drug abuse, depression, involvement with the juvenile justice system, family violence, and early death. Additionally, children with higher ACE scores are more likely to be disengaged from school. Poor mental health affects entire families; if it is addressed, it will reduce overall family stress and increase wellbeing.

I believe Hawai'i can ensure all services for children and families offer a place where those who have experienced early adversity are set-up to become resilient adults. We do not fully know the extent that isolation and persistent stress will have on the brain architecture of young

children. Research shows that 52% of children in families with financial hardship are facing emotional distress. **The prevalence of childhood and family trauma and stress in Hawaii has reached crisis levels:**

- Since the pandemic started, State of Hawai'i Early Intervention Services has seen a dramatic decline in infant and toddler social and emotional development
- Children under age six have a similar rate of mental illness as older children and youth
- 75% of adults with serious mental illness are parents
- Hawaii has the largest percentage (41%) of self-reported suicide thoughts among people who took an online depression screening during the pandemic.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide testimony. If SB2482 passes, it will be a great step towards supporting our families and creating more resources for positive mental health. I urge you to move this bill onward.

Sincerely,

JoAnn Farnsworth, M.S.,IMH-E®

Association for Infant Mental Health in Hawaii, President

email:joann@AIMHHI.org

website: AIMHHI.org

*Early relational health is the foundation of all systems work with young children and their families*



Hawaii  
**Children's Action Network Speaks!**  
Building a unified voice for Hawaii's children

*Hawaii 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: Senator Keohokalole, Chair  
Senator Baker, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Health

Re: **SB 2482-relating to wellness**  
1:15 PM, February 14, 2022

Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Baker, and committee members,

**On behalf of Hawaii Children's Action Network Speaks!, we are writing to support in support SB 2482, relating to wellness.**

The importance and value of trauma-informed care is recognized at both the national and state level. Over 26 states have passed legislation to address childhood trauma, child adversity, toxic stress or adverse childhood experiences<sup>1</sup>. Understanding adverse childhood experiences and trauma effect a person and how they in turn effect the community and state can help inform changes needed to create a more responsive, cost-effective system.

Social determinants of health (SDOH) are the non-medical factors that influence health outcomes. SDOH are the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life. These forces and systems include economic policies and systems, development agendas, social norms, social policies and political systems. The COVID-19 pandemic has showcased the resilience of the State's communities, but it also shows gaps in how social services and health care needs are addressed for different communities.

Cultural practices that provide asset-based approaches involving the stabilizing influence of an unrelated adult can provide a child with the resilience needed to mitigate a high number of adverse childhood experiences.

An established Office of Wellness will be ready to implement the recommendations of the statewide Trauma Informed Care Taskforce. For these reasons, **HCAN Speaks! respectfully requests the Committee to support this measure.**

Thank you,

Kathleen Algire  
Director Early Learning and Healthy Policy

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<sup>1</sup> National Conference of State Legislatures, <https://www.ncsl.org/research/health/reducing-the-effects-of-adverse-childhood-experiences.aspx>  
850 Richards Street, Suite 201 • Honolulu, HI 96813 • 808-531-5502 [www.hawaii-can.org](http://www.hawaii-can.org) • [info@hawaii-can.org](mailto:info@hawaii-can.org)



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**HAWAII CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM OVERSIGHT COMMISSION**

February 14, 2022

TO: Honorable Senator Jarrett Keohokaloha, Chair  
Senate Committee on Health

Honorable Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Health

FROM: Mark Patterson, Chair Hawaii Correctional System Oversight  
Commission.

SUBJECT: **SB2482 RELATING TO WELLNESS**

POSITION: **STRONG SUPPORT**

Chair Keohokaloha, Vice Chair Baker and Members of the Committee

The Hawaii Corrections System Oversight Commission was created by Act 179, SLH 2019, to provide independent oversight over our correctional system. The Commission's statutory responsibilities include Oversee the State's correctional system and have jurisdiction over investigating complaints at correctional facilities and facilitating a corrections system transition to a rehabilitative and therapeutic model. [See Hawaii Revised Statutes 353L-3(b).]

We strongly support the efforts for establishing a temporary office of wellness and resilience within the office of the governor. An executive branch management of developing a trauma informed care approach within the states system based on recommendations by the Trauma-Informed Care Task Force can assure reform efforts can be implemented for systemic change.

Rates of posttraumatic stress disorder and exposure to violence among incarcerated males and females in the US are exponentially higher than rates among the general population; yet abrupt detoxification from substances, the pervasive authoritative presence and sensory and environmental trauma triggers can pose a threat to individual and institutional stability during incarceration.

Trauma-informed care demonstrates promise in increasing offender responsivity to evidence-based cognitive behavioral programming that reduces criminal risk factors and in supporting integrated programming for offenders with substance abuse and co-occurring disorders.







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

**Executive Director**

Gail F. Breakey

February 12, 2022

**Advisory Board**

Greg Auberry, Co-Chair

Victoria Schneider,

Co-Chair

Nicole Brodie

Jessi L. Hall, Judge

Patti Lyons

Elizabeth MacFarlane

Robert Pantell, MD

Victoria Schneider, MD

Matthew Shim

Karen Tan

Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair Senate Health Committee  
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 205

Senator Roz Baker, Vice-Chair Senate Health Committee  
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 230

Re: SB 2482, Relating to an Office of Wellness and Resilience

Dear Senators Keohokalole, Baker and Health Committee Members,

**Consultants**

Linda Coble

I am Gail Breakey, testifying on behalf of the Hawaii Family Support Institute in strong support for SB 2482. The Office of Wellness and Resilience will bring attention to and initiate solutions for very important issues affecting our keiki.

Adverse childhood experiences, evidenced by abuse, neglect and growing up in homes plagued by substance abuse, mental health, and domestic issues, can have a severe negative impact upon the developing brains of young children, with long term consequences for their emotional, behavioral, and physical health. In addition to these traumas, there are way too many children in Hawaii growing up in poverty and worse, being homeless. The Aloha United Way ALICE report shows that over 50% of Hawaii households at under or just above the poverty level.

Recent research on early brain development and the evolving field of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health reveal why early trauma has such a devastating, long term impact and how we can promote emotional health and resilience.

Trauma-informed care for young children who have experienced adverse childhood experience is important, to ensure that care recipients are not further traumatized, which can happen when service providers are not aware of pre-existing trauma.

Intervening with trauma as early as possible is critical. Providing supportive relationships and environments for traumatized children and their families can build resilience, and early education and care programs can be enriched to buffer the impact of early trauma.

Also, children age birth to five comprise the largest group of children entering child welfare services. Early intervention immediately following trauma, to reduce the impact of trauma can be incorporated into the child welfare system response,

utilizing evidence-based interventions such as the Attachment Behavioral Catch-up, Parent-Child Psychotherapy and the Zero to three Court of the Judiciary.

Perhaps most importantly, it is possible to prevent trauma from occurring, by reaching out to high-risk prospective and new parents to provide in-home parent support, promote positive parent-infant relationships and reduce the parental stresses which can lead to trauma.

In considering this bill, legislators should be aware of the enormous costs incurred by doing nothing. The CDC estimates the annual cost of child abuse to be around \$126 Billion with the average cost per case at \$210,020. These include the costs of child protective services, family court, special education, substance and alcohol abuse treatment, mental health services for children and adults, and corrections. A large percent of those incarcerated have been traumatized in early childhood; 100% of inmates at San Quentin were abused as children. There is a correlation between early trauma and being under-employed as well as with homelessness. The Adverse Childhood Experiences study show the strong connections between early trauma and later serious health problems. These health issues result in a major portion of the overall cost of our health care system.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter. I hope that the legislature will agree that this initiative should be implemented.

Sincerely,



Gail Breakey, RN, MPH Director  
Hawaii Family Support Institute



## Kamehameha Schools®

### Senate Committee on Health

Date: February 14, 2022

Time: 1:15 p.m.

Where: Via Videoconference

#### TESTIMONY

By Kau‘i Burgess

Director of Community & Government Relations

#### RE: **SB 2482 - Relating to Wellness**

E ka Luna Ho‘omalua Keohokalole, ka Hope Luna Ho‘omalua Baker, a me nā Lālā o kēia Kōmike, aloha!

Kamehameha Schools **SUPPORTS SB 2482**, which establishes a temporary Office of Wellness and Resilience within the Office of the Governor to address related issues and implement solutions, including those identified by the Trauma-Informed Care Task Force.

**Hānai i ke keiki, ola ka lāhui** – When the child is nurtured, the people thrive. Kamehameha Schools believes that when we all focus on the well-being of our keiki, everyone will thrive.

The environment that surrounds our keiki impacts their ability to realize their potential in education and life. Unfortunately, the environment of many Native Hawaiian keiki places them disproportionately at risk to suffer from social, cultural, ‘āina and historical trauma, often carried from one generation to the next. Trauma-informed care aims to improve children’s environments and transform sources of distress to anchors of resilience as a key strategy to better life outcomes.

As a member of the Trauma-Informed Care Task Force, we believe that Native Hawaiian culture-based approaches will serve as prudent and sensible solutions, along with other recommendations of the Task Force, and will positively influence the support and development of all vulnerable youth, resulting in greater educational, social, health and overall life outcomes.

We further believe that the establishment of a temporary Office of Wellness and Resilience, as soon as possible, is critical in ensuring that recommendations from the Trauma Informed Care Task Force, including Native Hawaiian-culture based solutions, are top of mind and implemented to ensure our keiki are given the best chance of moving from trauma to resilience with the urgency it deserves.

For these reasons, we urge the Committee to **pass SB 2482**.

Founded in 1887, Kamehameha Schools is an organization striving to advance a thriving Lāhui where all Native Hawaiians are successful, grounded in traditional values, and leading in the local and global communities. We believe that community success is individual success, Hawaiian culture-based education leads to academic success and local leadership drives global leadership.

## Helping Hawai'i Live Well

**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Health  
Monday, February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022, 1:15 p.m.  
Via videoconference**

**SB2482, Office of Wellness & Resilience**

Dear Senator Keohokalole, Chair, and Senator Baker, Vice Chair, and members of the Senate Committee on Health:

Mental Health America of Hawaii is in **strong support of SB2482**, which establishes a temporary Office of Wellness and Resilience within the Office of the Governor.

Mental Health America of Hawai'i (MHAH), an affiliate of the renowned national organization, is a highly regarded 501(c)(3) non-profit organization serving the State of Hawai'i. For nearly 80 years, MHAH has been fulfilling its mission "to promote mental health & wellness through education, advocacy, service, and access to care" through its vision of 'mental wellness for all.' We endeavor to reduce the shame and stigma of mental illness and improve the overall care, treatment, and empowerment of those with or at risk for mental health challenges across all stages of life in Hawai'i.

An Office of Wellness and Resilience would be an investment in reducing the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) across each stage of life. Research clearly demonstrates that ACEs can set the foundation for poor outcomes for children affected. These include, among others, a negative association with adult education, employment, and income potential;<sup>1</sup> a "broad range of mental health-related outcomes;"<sup>2</sup> and high correlation with addiction and substance use disorders.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, persons with a history of ACEs are 'disproportionately likely to have suicidal ideation and engage in suicidal or non-suicidal self-injurious behavior.'<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Metzler, Marilyn, et al. "Adverse Childhood Experiences and Life Opportunities: Shifting the Narrative." *Children and Youth Services Review*, vol. 72, 2017, pp. 141-149., <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2016.10.021>.

<sup>2</sup> Gondek, Dawid, et al. "Adverse Childhood Experiences and Multiple Mental Health Outcomes through Adulthood: A Prospective Birth Cohort Study." *SSM - Mental Health*, vol. 1, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1101/2021.02.23.21252273>.

<sup>3</sup> Bryant, Daniel J., et al. "Association of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Substance Use Disorders (SUDS) in a Multi-Site Safety Net Healthcare Setting." *Addictive Behaviors Reports*, vol. 12, 2020, p. 100293., <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.abrep.2020.100293>.

<sup>4</sup> Stinson, Jill D, et al. "Adverse Childhood Experiences and Suicidality and Self-Harm in Persons in Secure Forensic Care." *Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law*, vol. 49, no. 4, 1 Dec. 2021, <https://doi.org/10.29158/JAAPL.210007-21>.

## Helping Hawai'i Live Well

Furthermore, and of particular concern, there is evidence that ACEs can stem from, or lead to generational trauma. In fact, according to Dr. R. Andrew Chambers of Indiana University Health, "The comparison between ACEs and genetics is very interesting because ACEs tend to be passed down as if they were genetic, but it's a culture that's passed down from generation to generation within families,"

While research presented above are from a national perspective, there is no doubt that trends in Hawai'i are consistent with nationwide findings, particularly given some local statistics. In Suicide and COVID-19, a report by Mental Health America (MHA), Hawai'i had the highest percentage of individuals reporting suicidal ideation of those who took a depression screening. The report further notes that Hawai'i had the fifth highest percentage of individuals reporting frequent thoughts of suicide or self-harm in comparison to the overall state population.<sup>5</sup> This report, which analyzed more than 700,000 online depression screenings, found that 41% (622 of 1,529) of Hawai'i residents who participated had indications of suicidal ideation more than half or nearly every day. Also, according to the Hawaii Department of Health's EMS & Injury Prevention System Branch, death by suicide is the leading cause of fatal injury for ages 15-29 and 30-44; and the second leading cause for age groups 45-59 and 60-74 statewide. Of the 4,251 causes of fatal injuries between 2016 and 2020, 957 (23%) were the result of suicide, the second leading cause of fatal injury in that period.

Considering the above, MHAH is in strong support of SB2482, and we encourage your positive review of this measure. We appreciate the opportunity to provide you this testimony and are grateful for your commitment to the overall mental wellbeing of the people of Hawai'i.

Mahalo,



Bryan L. Talisayan  
Executive Director

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<sup>5</sup> Reinert, M & Nguyen, T (May 2021). Suicide and COVID-19: Communities in Need Across the U.S. Mental Health America, Alexandria VA.



**TO:** Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Baker, and Members of the Senate Committee on Health

**FROM:** Ryan Kusumoto, President & CEO of Parents And Children Together (PACT)

**DATE/LOCATION:** February 14, 2022; 1:15 p.m., Video Conference

**RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2482 RELATING TO WELLNESS**

**We support SB 2482 which establishes a temporary Office of Wellness and Resilience within the Office of the Governor, authorizes the Office to address issues and implement solutions to improve wellness and resilience, including issues and solutions identified by the Trauma-Informed Care Task Force, and appropriates moneys.**

Trauma and toxic stress, especially in children, derails healthy development. It can weaken the architecture of the developing brain and has long-term consequences on learning, behavior and physical and cognitive development. The landscape of our communities has also changed, exacerbated by the stressors of the global pandemic, to negatively impact the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our society who often experience greater levels of trauma and toxic stress. The increased financial instability, housing instability, food instability, health instability, increased crime and substance abuse, and strained social, emotional and mental well-being directly impacts the levels of stress being experienced by children and families. These impacts have long-lasting and multi-generational consequences and impacts our ability to create healthy and thriving communities. Supporting children and families strengthens the fabric of our entire community. The Office of Wellness and Resilience will help create a dynamic, coordinated effort across public agencies and community organizations to address early adversity, trauma and toxic stress—from keiki to kupuna.

Founded in 1968, Parents And Children Together (PACT) is one of Hawaii's not-for-profit organizations providing a wide array of innovative and educational social services to under-resourced families. Assisting more than 17,000 people across the state annually, PACT helps families identify, address and successfully resolve challenges through its 20 programs. Among its 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 strengthening programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support of SB 2482**, please contact me at (808) 847-3285 or [rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org](mailto:rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org) if you have any questions.

**SB-2482**

Submitted on: 2/11/2022 12:45:49 PM

Testimony for HTH on 2/14/2022 1:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Carol Wear	Testifying for People Attentive to Children	Support	No

Comments:

I strongly support SB2482, relating to wellness. One of the most important things we can do to remedy the mental health crisis brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic is help to buffer against trauma and toxic stress for our families--everyone from babies through kupuna. A great starting point would be better coordinated trauma-informed social services. An Office of Wellness and Resilience would help with that coordination and allow for more resources to flow into Hawai'i for needed services. When supportive environments serve Hawaii's people, especially our children, who have experienced early adversity, they are better set up to turn those stumbling blocks into stepping stones.

Research has concluded the direct relationship between Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and negative life outcomes for children ranging from chronic disease, drug abuse, depression, involvement with the juvenile justice system, family violence, and early death. Additionally, children with higher ACE scores are more likely to be disengaged from school. Poor mental health affects entire families; if it is addressed, it will reduce overall family stress and increase wellbeing.

I believe Hawai'i can ensure all services for children and families offer a place where those who have experienced early adversity are set-up to become resilient adults. We do not fully know the extent that isolation and persistent stress will have on the brain architecture of young children. Research shows that 52% of children in families with financial hardship are facing emotional distress. **The prevalence of childhood and family trauma and stress in Hawaii has reached crisis levels:**

- Since the pandemic started, State of Hawai'i Early Intervention Services has seen a dramatic decline in infant and toddler social and emotional development
- Children under age six have a similar rate of mental illness as older children and youth
- 75% of adults with serious mental illness are parents
- Hawaii has the largest percentage (41%) of self-reported suicide thoughts among people who took an online depression screening during the pandemic.



Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide testimony. If SB2482/HB1970 passes, it will be a great step towards supporting our families and creating more resources for positive mental health. I urge you to move this bill onward.

**SB-2482**

Submitted on: 2/10/2022 9:37:30 PM

Testimony for HTH on 2/14/2022 1:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Gerard Silva	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

This is another Pay for Play job. To pay somebody for there support!!!

**SB-2482**

Submitted on: 2/11/2022 1:17:07 PM

Testimony for HTH on 2/14/2022 1:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Trina Orimoto	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Committee on Health  
Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair  
Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair

Aloha Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Baker, and Members of the Committee,

I am a local psychologist and I'm proud to STRONGLY SUPPORT SB2482.

This important bill would bring much-needed coherence and leadership to a critical cross-sector issue that impacts Hawaii at many levels: trauma. An Office of Wellness and Resilience is more needed than ever, as the COVID-19 pandemic has been directly or indirectly devastating to many of our community members.

Trauma is an immense, complex challenge, requiring holistic strategies that draw upon trauma-informed and strengths-based approaches. An Office of Wellness and Resilience would help to break down silos and increase cross-sector collaboration and alignment, including between government, non-profit organizations, philanthropic funders, faith groups, and the broader business sector.

Thank you for your consideration of this vital bill.

Mahalo,

Trina Orimoto, Ph.D.

**SB-2482**

Submitted on: 2/11/2022 1:45:02 PM

Testimony for HTH on 2/14/2022 1:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Kelsie Okamura	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

An Office of Wellness and Resilience is more needed than ever, as the COVID-19 pandemic has been directly or indirectly devastating to many of our community members. Kids have lost parents and grandparents, have faced stressors due to financial hardship at home, and have become deeply disengaged from their schools, peers, and teachers. Of course, children faced abuse and trauma even before the pandemic, and these cycles can be incredibly difficult to break.

Trauma is an immense, complex challenge, requiring holistic strategies that draw upon trauma-informed and strengths-based approaches. An Office of Wellness and Resilience would help to break down silos and increase cross-sector collaboration.

## **Jean Adair-Leland, Ph.D.**

Clinical Psychologist

4211 Waiialae Avenue  
Suite 206B  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96816  
(808) 739-6224 [Office]  
(808) 384-5172 [Mobile]  
(888) 977-1546 [Fax]

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February 12, 2022

Committee on Health  
Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair  
Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair

Aloha Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Baker, and Members of the Committee,

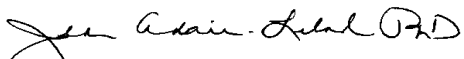
I am a Clinical Psychologist from Honolulu, Oahu and I am pleased to support SB2482.

This important bill would bring much-needed coherence and leadership to a critical cross-sector issue that impacts Hawaii at many levels: trauma. An Office of Wellness and Resilience is more needed than ever, as the COVID-19 pandemic has been directly or indirectly devastating to many of our community members.

Trauma is an immense, complex challenge, requiring holistic strategies that draw upon trauma-informed and strengths-based approaches. An Office of Wellness and Resilience would help to break down silos and increase cross-sector collaboration and alignment, including between government, non-profit organizations, philanthropic funders, faith groups, and the broader business sector.

As a mental health practitioner for over 40 years, I strongly encourage your committee to move this bill forward. This work can't wait, and nothing less than the health and sustainability of our Hawaii community depends on it.

Mahalo,



Jean Adair-Leland, Ph.D

**SB-2482**

Submitted on: 2/13/2022 12:53:51 PM

Testimony for HTH on 2/14/2022 1:15:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Brian O'Hare	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

February 13, 2022

Committee on Health

Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair

Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair

Aloha Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Baker, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to give my support to SB 2482 – Relating to Wellness. A hearing is scheduled for this bill on Monday, the 14th of February, 2022 at 1:15pm via Videoconference.

As a U.S. citizen and resident of the State of Hawai‘i, I have become aware of the importance of this topic while studying at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. Here, I have participated in training and discussion related to the impact of trauma as a graduate student in the Thompson School of Social Work & Public Health and as a graduate assistant in the Department of Psychology, College of Social Sciences.

Because trauma impacts many facets of life – and has been shown to have lasting and profound effects on individuals, their families, and the wider community in which they live – I am testifying in support of this important bill. Creation of an Office of Wellness and Resilience could address gaps in the understanding of the socio-economic determinants of health that would aid many governmental and nongovernmental sectors in their daily operations. In addition, this office could further deliver efficient promotion of trauma-informed interventions within these same agencies and institutions by bringing much-needed coherence and leadership to this critical cross-sector issue.

Considering how the COVID-19 pandemic has been directly or indirectly devastating to many of our community members, an Office of Wellness and Resilience is needed now more than ever. During the first year of the pandemic alone, levels of anxiety and depression increased significantly, as did calls to domestic violence hotlines. As we are now entering the third year of the pandemic, is vital that we focus on how agencies and institutions can make changes to better serve both clients and staff across our state.

Trauma is an immense, complex challenge, requiring holistic strategies that draw upon trauma-informed and strengths-based approaches. An Office of Wellness and Resilience would help to

create collaboration and alignment of services offered, including between government, non-profit organizations, philanthropic funders, faith groups, and the broader business sector.

Thank you in advance for considering the creation of an Office of Wellness and Resilience. I am confident that SB 2482 will have direct positive impacts on the diverse communities found within the State of Hawai'i.

Mahalo nui loa,

Brian O'Hare, PhD (MSW candidate)

Honolulu, HI 96817



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**Executive Office on Early Learning**  
2759 South King Street  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96826

February 14, 2022

**LATE**

**TO:** Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair  
Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Health

**FROM:** Coleen Momohara, Interim Director  
Executive Office on Early Learning

**SUBJECT: Measure:** S.B. No. 2482 – RELATING TO WELLNESS  
**Hearing Date:** Monday, February 14, 2022  
**Time:** 1:15 p.m.  
**Location:** Videoconference

**Bill Description:** Establishes a temporary Office of Wellness and Resilience within the Office of the Governor. Authorizes the Office to address issues and implement solutions to improve wellness and resilience, including issues and solutions identified by the Trauma-Informed Care Task Force. Appropriates moneys. Sunsets on an unspecified date.

**EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON EARLY LEARNING'S POSITION: Support the Intent**

Aloha. I am Coleen Momohara, Interim Director of the Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL). EOEL supports S.B. No. 2482 and defers to the Department of Health (DOH).

EOEL is statutorily responsible for the development of the State's early childhood system that shall ensure a spectrum of high-quality development and learning opportunities for children throughout the state, from prenatal care until the time they enter kindergarten, with priority given to underserved or at-risk children.

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are traumatic experiences that occur during childhood and include physical, emotional, or sexual abuse; chronic neglect; caregiver and household substance abuse; incarceration of a household member; domestic violence; and burdens of economic hardship. ACEs impact lifelong health and learning opportunities and can contribute to toxic stress for young children, severely impacting brain development, learning, and overall well-being. Research has identified critical factors that predispose young children to positive outcomes in the face of such adversities and the capabilities that promote the development of resilience. Integrating strategies that enhance the capacities of children and adults are further supported when embedded within efforts that collectively work towards lowering the burden of stress on families.

EOEL is a member of the trauma informed care taskforce, established through Act 209, SLH 2021. As such, we support the intent of this bill and look forward to working with other workforce members to promote wellness and resiliency for Hawaii's youngest children and their families. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.



**To:** COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair  
Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Vice Chair

**From:** Mari Uehara, M.D.

Developmental-behavioral pediatrics  
Kapiolani Medical Center Women and Children  
Clinical assistant professor, Department of Pediatrics, JABSOM

**Subject measure:** SB 2482 RELATING TO WELLNESS

**Hearing date:** Monday, February 14, 2022

**Time:** 1:15p.m.

**Place:** video conference

**Position:** support

Thank you for this opportunity to offer testimony as a developmental-behavioral pediatrician. I strongly support SB2482, relating to wellness.

I am a pediatrician by discipline who is specialized in children's development and learning. I work with children who have developmental disabilities such as autism spectrum disorder, intellectual disabilities, and learning disabilities, as well as with their families.

Some children who are referred to me were born healthy without medical problems. Medical problems, of course, can show up later in their lives. However, there are other children who sustained significant trauma in their short lives physically and/or psychologically. After their lives are saved in critical care units, we as adults need to gain their trust back.

These children may be placed in foster homes that is often not permanent. Caregivers and teachers in childcare and preschools may be the constant in their lives. Or children may find hope in interacting with other children in a nurturing environment to gain strength to carry on their lives. Current COVID-19 pandemic also adds another layer of challenge in caring for these children who experienced trauma.

Research has concluded the direct relationship between adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and negative life outcomes. The more people who interact with children have knowledge and skills to address needs of children who experienced trauma, the more children have chances to grow resilient who then be able to support others as they grow up.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide my testimony. I urge you to move this bill onward.

Mari Uehara, M.D.

Developmental-behavioral pediatrics

**LATE**