



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 03/21/2022

Time: 03:15 PM

Location: CR 229 & Videoconference

Committee: Senate Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Interim Superintendent of Education

Title of Resolution: SCR 0216 REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO ASSESS AND REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE WHETHER AND TO WHAT EXTENT EXISTING CURRICULUM AND TRAINING ALIGN WITH ERIN'S LAW.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports SCR 216 and recognizes the important role of public education in addressing sexual violence prevention. The Department has several efforts moving forward to address this issue.

Currently, the Department implements the Hawaii State Board of Education (Board) Policy 103-5, Sexual Health Education, which includes developmentally appropriate instruction on healthy relationships that are based on mutual respect and affection and are free from violence, coercion, and intimidation. Information about sexual health education, including a list of vetted instructional materials for sexual health education and sexual violence prevention education, is available on the Department's public webpage:

<https://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/TeachingAndLearning/HealthAndNutrition/sexed>.

Additionally, from October 2018 to June 2020, the Department established a collaborative multi-agency working group, which convened to explore, develop, and communicate an array of strategies, activities, and resources around sexual violence prevention in Hawaii's public schools. The working group developed an online resource repository, "Sexual Violence Prevention Resource for Schools," that is easily accessible and houses sexual violence prevention resources and supports for schools and school communities: <https://sites.google.com/k12.hi.us/hidoe-svp>.

Along with these efforts, the Department provides annual mandatory reporting training (child abuse reporting) to all faculty and staff, including contracted providers, paraprofessionals, substitutes, and temporary hires.

The Department will initiate the development of the report as outlined in the resolution and will collaborate with other organizations during the process. It is worth noting that the Department's ongoing work and commitment to supporting students' health, well-being, and safety currently address the issue highlighted by this measure.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

HAWAII YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

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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

March 18, 2022

To: Senator Michelle Kidani Chair,
And members of the Committee on Education

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SCR 216/SR 209 REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO ASSESS AND REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE WHETHER AND TO WHAT EXTENT EXISTING CURRICULUM AND TRAINING ALIGN WITH ERIN'S LAW

Hawaii Youth Services Network, a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, supports SCR 216/SR 209.

One in five girls and one in twenty boys have been victims of child sexual abuse. Three out of four adolescents who have been sexually assaulted were victimized by someone they knew well. (National Center for Victims of Crime data).

The only education I received about sexual abuse as a child was to beware of strangers. But it was not a stranger who sexually abused me and five other girls in my fourth-grade class – It was my school bus driver. Every child on the bus witnessed the abuse daily for a month or more until someone finally reported it to the school. When we were questioned about it, we believed that we were the ones who had done something wrong.

If we had received education about sexual abuse, we would have recognized it immediately, known how to seek help, and understood that we were not to blame for what occurred. It could have been stopped after the first episode.

In the Northern Mariana Islands, HYSN is working with the Public School System on a sexual health education and positive youth development program. Several sixth-grade students who had completed a sexual health curriculum reported to school staff that they were being sexually abused. Because of the education they received, they recognized that what was happening to them was abuse; understood that they did not have to allow it to

happen; felt empowered to report it; and had trusted adults at the school with whom they could discuss it. While it is very sad that the children were abused, it is wonderful that they are receiving the help they need to end the abuse.

No child deserves sexual abuse, and prevention education in the schools is a powerful tool to prevent it.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

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

Judith F. Clark, MPH
Executive Director



TO: Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and Members of the Senate Committee on Education

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

DATE/LOCATION: March 21, 2022; 3:15 p.m., Conference Room 229/Video Conference

RE: TESTIMONY FOR SCR 216/SR 209

We support SCR 216/SR 209 requesting the Department of Education to Assess and Report to the Legislature whether and to what extent existing curriculum and training align with Erin's Law. We stand ready to support and work with the Department and community partners to ensure that children are supported and educated and that parents and school teachers and staff have the tools for sexual abuse prevention education and resources.

The statistics are daunting:

- 1 in 4 girls will be the victim of child sexual abuse by their 18th birthday.
- 1 in 6 boys will be the victim of child sexual abuse by their 18th birthday.
- 1 in 5 youth receive a sexual approach or solicitation over the internet.
- The average age for first abuse is 9.6 years of age.
- Only 12% of child sexual abuse is reported to police.
- 29% of forcible rapes occur when the victim was under 11 years of age.
- 44% of sexual abuse victims are under the age of 18.
- 93% of juvenile sexual assault victims know their attacker.
- Our Children's Justice Centers support over a 1,000 children each year. That's about 3 new children every day (which is still a fraction of all those who are impacted by sexual abuse).

This is a matter that is often kept silent and as a result if left unaddressed (most people do not even realize that this is a significant issue or that they are a victim). In almost every case, the only witnesses to this crime are the perpetrator and the victim. Perpetrators often tell the child this is a secret and no one will believe them. Children rarely report abuse and are meant to feel that the abuse was their fault. Most victims never tell anyone until several years after the abuse, if they ever tell at all.

We feel that implementing age-appropriate child sexual abuse training immediately is critically important and will work to ensure that Hawaii can implement Erin's Law. Each second we delay, a child is forever hurt and traumatized. The negative effects are long-lasting and not easily combatted. We cannot do this to our keiki. If we do not take strong measures to educate, prevent and provide supports for child sexual abuse, this issue will continue to impact our community and will only negatively impact Hawai'i's future, people, keiki, communities, culture, economy, reputation, commerce, and industries. This is cutting into the fabric of the Aloha State and is not acceptable here in Hawai'i.

With the **full implementation of Erin's Law in place**, we can focus on prevention-oriented education that will empower victims and those who care for them. It is critical to educate students, educators and parents about how to recognize and identify child sexual abuse so that victims can be identified early and so that support can be put in place to significantly reduce the likelihood of the long-term adverse issues and costs of the above listed items.

We stand ready to work with community experts and the Department to ensure that we can work towards the full implementation of Erin's Law because it will provide:

- Child sexual abuse prevention education for children in grades as early as pre-kindergarten through high school.
- Tools to help children speak up and seek help.
- Intentional and age-appropriate programming in schools regarding child sexual abuse.
- Training for school staff and faculty regarding child sexual abuse prevention and the handling of sexual abuse disclosures.
- Education for parents on how to recognize the signs, communicate with their children and seek help.

We thank the Department for their continued efforts to provide this necessary education for our keiki and school community's. Erin's Law leverages the relationship between schools and the child and our schools are essential partners. Schools are primary connections to our communities that also share strong relationships with our parents and keiki. We feel that it is important to arm teachers, who spend time with the students on a daily basis, with the tools to recognize signs of unhealthy influence and link resources to their families. Students may also feel more comfortable talking with a trusted teacher than their own caring parents due to the complicated circumstances that could exist. School personnel should no longer wonder out of suspicion or feel hopeless in attempts to help students in need. In other states, most recently in New York, the implementation of Erin's Law has played a key role in ensuring that long-standing perpetrators can no longer harm students.

37 States have passed Erin's Law, and Hawaii is one of the remaining states yet to pass this law. We would like to see Erin's Law passed and thank you for supporting this working group to ensure that we can work towards implementation.

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 regarding **SCR 216/SR 209**, please contact me at (808) 847-3285 or rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org if you have any questions.



LATE

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Date: March 21, 2022

To: Senator Michelle Kidani, Chair
Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair

From: Lynn Costales Matsuoka, Associate Director
The Sex Abuse Treatment Center
A Program of Kapi'olani Medical Center for Women & Children

RE: Testimony in Support of SCR 216, Erin's Law

Hearing: March 21, 2022, 3:15 PM

Good Morning Chair Kidani, Vice-Chair Kim, and members of the Committee:

The Sex Abuse Treatment Center of Hawaii is in support of SCR 216.

Sexual abuse remains a serious and ongoing threat to the safety, health, and wellbeing of children and young people in the State of Hawaii.

Given the high incidence of sexual abuse perpetrated against minors, it is important that children and young people in Hawaii be taught the knowledge and skills they need to protect themselves against sexual assault and obtain help to end abuse as quickly as possible. Moreover, it is critical that those who interact the most with children and young people, including parents, other guardians, educators and school staff, receive sufficient training to understand key sexual violence issues and how to respond appropriately.

As such, we are in support of this Resolution that would require the Department of Education to assess and report to the Legislature whether and to what extent existing curriculum and training align with Erin's Law.

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