

**TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA
THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE, 2023**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:
H.B. NO. 579, HUMAN TRAFFICKING.

BEFORE THE:
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

DATE: Friday, February 10, 2023 **TIME:** 2:00 p.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 325

TESTIFIER(S): Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or
David Van Acker, Deputy Attorney General

Chair Tarnas and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General (Department) supports the intent of the bill and offers the following comments.

The Department is eager to continue its efforts to combat human trafficking. In 2022, the Department created the Special Investigation and Prosecution Division (SIPD), which contains the Human Trafficking Abatement Section. Currently, the Human Trafficking Abatement Section is participating in several investigative and prosecutorial efforts in partnership with law enforcement agencies across the State.

This bill provides a robust and comprehensive framework for the Department to make efforts to prevent human trafficking, provide increased support and assistance to victims, educate the public, prosecute offenders, and collect data. The bill also requires other state and county departments to cooperate with the Department's efforts. We believe that this type of bill will catapult Hawaii's efforts to fight human trafficking forward.

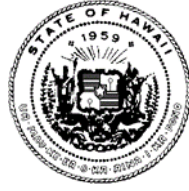
The Department is ready to proactively assist the Legislature in achieving the intent of the bill, especially in the areas where our expertise lies. For example, we will be able to review the criminal statutes related to prostitution and sex trafficking in chapter 712, Hawaii Revised Statutes, assess barriers that inhibit law enforcement agencies, service providers, and government agencies from supporting victims and

holding offenders accountable, and make recommendations for enhancing and collecting some of the data regarding trafficking.

As a newly established division, SIPD's main priority has been to establish consistent relationships with law enforcement agencies, governmental departments, and community service providers. Those relationships will enable SIPD to protect and support victims and prosecute offenders. Once SIPD's law enforcement and community-based support collaborations are well established, the reporting requirements detailed within the bill will be much more productive and helpful to the Legislature. The Department is eager to work with the Legislature to figure out the most effective and efficient use of the state resources to combat human trafficking, especially the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

The Department respectfully submits these comments for consideration. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

February 9, 2023

TO: The Honorable Representative David A. Tarnas, Chair
House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: [HB 579 HD1](#) - RELATING TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING.

Hearing: February 10, 2023, 2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 325 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this measure and defers to the Department of the Attorney General (ATG).

PURPOSE: The bill establishes the statewide human trafficking prevention program overseen by the Department of the Attorney General to provide services and assistance to commercially sexually exploited children and victims of human trafficking. Requires reports to the legislature. Effective 6/30/3000. (HD1)

A statewide human trafficking prevention program is needed to coordinate the system's response and to continue to add resources to prevent and respond to the needs of human trafficking survivors.

Act 16, Session Laws of Hawaii 2017 (Act 16), amended the definition of "child abuse or neglect" to ensure that mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect report to the Department of Human Services known or suspected child victims of sex trafficking or severe forms of trafficking in person. Act 16 brought Hawaii's child abuse statute into compliance with the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 (P.L. 114-22).

Since then, DHS Child Welfare Services has continued to collaborate and work with the Judiciary, ATG, state and federal law enforcement, stakeholders, and providers to strengthen Hawaii's response to the trafficking of minors. Some of the lessons learned are:

- Collaboration with other entities is necessary to help locate a victim, as there is often not enough information provided at intake to locate a victim;
- Developing a coordinated response and an information-sharing process is necessary to prevent duplication of efforts by members of the Multi-disciplinary Team;
- Service delivery is difficult for victims that frequently run from a placement, making it challenging to locate victims;
- The coordinated response and information sharing improved the timeliness of reporting to CWS and Susannah Wesley Community Center, especially after-hours;
- Coordination and relationship-building supported successful sting operations; and
- Youth need more placement options, substance abuse, mental health services, ways to keep youth safely connected to their families or Hānai families, and more training for community and family members.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.



HB579 HD1
RELATING TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING
House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

February 10, 2023

2:00 PM

Room 325

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** HB579 HD1, which would require the State of Hawai‘i Department of the Attorney General to develop and implement a program that would work toward the prevention of human trafficking, while providing increased support and assistance to the victims of human trafficking and victims of the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

Violence against Native Hawaiian women and girls¹ is a crisis here in the homeland of the Native Hawaiian people – a crisis, that due to a sheer lack of data, has been obfuscated and left to be underwhelmingly misinterpreted.² Yet, here are some of the known facts of this crisis:³

“More than a quarter (1/4) of missing girls in Hawai‘i are Native Hawaiian;

“Hawai ‘i has the highest rate of missing persons per capita in the nation and the average profile of a missing child is: 15 years old, female, Native Hawaiian, missing from O‘ahu;

“The majority (43%) of sex trafficking cases are [Native Hawaiian] girls trafficked in Waikīkī, O‘ahu;

“38% of those arrested for soliciting sex from a thirteen-year-old online through Operation Keiki Shield are active-duty military personnel;

“In 2021, the Missing Child Center Hawai‘i assisted law enforcement with 376 recoveries of missing children. These cases are only 19% of the estimated 2,000 cases of missing children in Hawai‘i each year;

¹ Native Hawaiians, generally, experience violence at rates disproportionate to their population size. While Native Hawaiian men and boys also face violence at a higher rate than other main ethnic group in Hawai‘i, Native Hawaiian women and girls face violence at an even greater rate.

² HCR11 HD1 SD1 (SLH 2021).

³ OHA and CSW, Holoī Ā Nalo Wāhine ‘Ōiwi: Missing and Murdered Native Hawaiian Women and Girls Task Force Report, 2022. (hereinafter cited to as “MMNHWG Report”).



HB579 HD1
RELATING TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING
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“On Hawai‘i Island, [Native Hawaiian] children ages 15-17 represent the highest number of missing children’s cases, with the most children reported missing in area code 96720, Hilo;

“From 2018-2021, there were 182 cases of missing [Native Hawaiian] girls on Hawai‘i Island, higher than any other racial group;

“57% of participants served through the Mana‘olana Program at Child & Family Services are Native Hawaiian females who have experienced human trafficking.”⁴

In 2021, pursuant to House Concurrent Resolution No.11 HD1 SD1 (SLH 2021), the Hawai‘i State Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) convened a task force, in partnership with OHA, to study the crisis of missing and murdered Native Hawaiian women and girls. These findings, through the collaboration of OHA, CSW, and Papa Ola Lōkahi, were compiled into the first part of a two-part report titled, Holoī Ā Nalo Wāhine ‘Ōiwi: Missing and Murdered Native Hawaiian Women and Girls Task Force Report and published in December 2022.⁵ The findings of this task force, as expressed within this report, emphasizes the **“critical need for more structured, systematic, and streamlined data collection between governmental agencies.”⁶**

In addition, this report has also found that **“data that does exist regarding the systemic inequities that lead to missing and murdered Native Hawaiian women and girls”** is not adequately and effectively disaggregated, nor stored, **“in a way that allows for multivariate analyses or analyses that can look at multiple variables (i.e. RACE AND sex AND age) at once.”** Accordingly, the lack of appropriately disaggregated data is a significant hurdle in effectively understanding the problem and advancing necessary solutions.

This crisis must be addressed by ALL OF HAWAI‘I working in concert to end this crisis, forever. OHA was established as the principal public agency in the State responsible for the performance, development, and coordination of programs and activities relating to Native Hawaiians with the mandate to forever pursue and advance the betterment of conditions of Native Hawaiians.⁷ While Native Hawaiian women and girls are disproportionately

⁴ Id. at 5.

⁵ Digital copy available here: https://www.oha.org/wp-content/uploads/MMNHWG-Report_Web.pdf.

⁶ MMNHWG Report, p.18, 2022.

⁷ Haw. Stat. Con. Art. XII, Sec. 5 and 6 (1978); HRS §10-3 (1990).

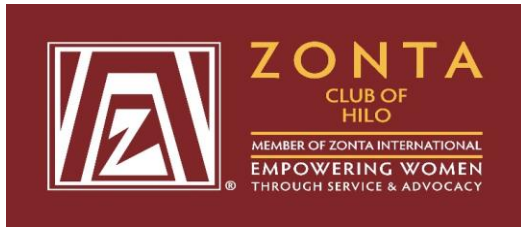


HB579 HD1
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represented among the missing and murdered women and girls of Hawai'i, this crisis is not solely a Native Hawaiian issue that must be addressed by Native Hawaiians alone. The inequities and disparities endured by the Native Hawaiian people are the result of historical injustices and the legacy systems of oppression and institutionalized racism that persist from the surviving vestiges of a time that attempted to overtly annihilate Native Hawaiian identity - ethnocide.⁸ These ongoing negative impacts of settler-colonialism must be addressed holistically and as a concerted effort by every actor that contributes, whether intended or not, to the system of abuse, if these negative impacts are ever to be abolished; **and they should be.** **OHA affirms that it is the responsibility of this State to protect Native Hawaiian women and girls – this measure proposes the establishment of a critical component of a greater mechanism for positive change that is intended to put an end to this crisis, for which all of Hawai'i is responsible.**

OHA appreciates the opportunity to provide its support for this measure and **urges the Legislature to PASS HB579 HD1.** Mahalo nui loa.

⁸ “If we are ever to have peace and annexation the first thing to do is to obliterate the past,” stated, Samuel Mills Damon, Vice President of the Provisional Government) and Executive Council member of the Republic of Hawai'i, Council of State (Provisional Government of the Hawaiian Islands, 1895). 26 November 1895. Hawaii State Archives Series 424 Vol. 4.



Rep. Tarnas, Chair, Rep. Takayama, Vice-Chair, and Committee Members

From: Zonta Club of Hilo, Charlene Iboshi, Advocacy Committee

Testimony In Support of HB 579, HD 1, HSCR64, Relating To Human Trafficking

The Zonta Clubs across Hawai`i, nationally and Internationally, support prevention and prosecution of Human Trafficking. In Hawai`i, minor sex trafficking has been identified as a crime that is preventable. Prevention and awareness campaigns are key to addressing minor sex trafficking, along with training of those that work with youth, and specialized investigation and prosecution units. January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month, so it is appropriate for the Legislature to recognize the importance of prevention and prosecution, as proposed by HB 579.

I was on the Hawai`i Human Anti-Trafficking Task Force prior to the enactment of Human Trafficking Laws. The State of Hawai`i has moved forward by adopting human trafficking laws, funded prevention efforts, and funded a special prosecution unit in the Attorney General's Office. Hawai`i has responded appropriately, but more needs to be done.

Prevention and awareness are critical to reducing the costs and trauma of the youth who are exploited, many times by their own families, friends and boyfriends. Research done by the Arizona State University from 2018 through 2022, and provided to the Legislature, supports the funding for prevention of Human Trafficking, Investigation and Prosecution. Reporting of these crimes are critical for guidance on refinement of the efforts to prevent and prosecute Human Trafficking offenders. Notably, as in sexual assault, child abuse and domestic violence cases, many times the offender is known to the victim. Disclosure is difficult and recantation expected. Rigid guidelines, may prevent capture of the needed data, including "suspected" trafficking.

Any experienced investigator will know that disclosure may arise during a "simple" runaway or truancy report. Hospital personnel may "suspect" trafficking, but may not have adequate resources to follow-up. Funding for prevention, statewide strategies, including multi-disciplinary training, are key to appropriate follow-up for investigation and successful prosecution. More importantly, prevention, even if it is "secondary prevention," may halt the harm done to the youth and the community, including the offenders who exploit the youth and their connections that experience the "generational trauma" of violence.

Importantly, reducing the demand side of the minor human trafficking is critical to eliminating minor human trafficking. "If there were no buyers, there would be no business for the pimps and traffickers and no victims of human Trafficking." Sex Trafficking in Hawai`i. Part 1, Sept., 2018, Sex Trafficking in Hawai`i.

Additionally, the most common reasons identified by sex trafficking victims for their victimization were drugs (26.8%), money (24.7%), and a place to stay (24.7%). Most sex trafficked victims were female (75%). Relationship to the trafficker were noted as family (25.8%), friend (24.7%), and boyfriend (24.7%), and explains why this is a crime that hides in the shadows.

In conclusion, the Zonta Club of Hilo and the Zonta International network, supports prevention and prosecution of human trafficking, and reporting of appropriate data. We know deployment of resources and reporting take time, but ask for passage of HB 579.

Mahalo for considering HB 579 and the support testimony of the Zonta Club of Hilo, as part of the Zonta International Network.



February 10, 2023

Representative Richard Tarnas, Chair
House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

Representative Greg Takayama, Vice Chair and
Members of the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

Re: H.B. No. 579, H.D. 1 Relating to Human Trafficking

Hearing: Friday, February 10, 2023, in Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice-Chair Takayama and Members of the Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs:

Hawaii Women Lawyers supports **H.B. 579, HD1**, which proposes to establish the statewide Human Trafficking Prevention Program (HTP) overseen by the Department of the Attorney General to provide services and assistance to commercially sexually exploited children and victims of human trafficking and requires reports to the legislature.

The mission of Hawaii Women Lawyers is to improve the lives and careers of women in all aspects of the legal profession, influence the future of the legal profession, and enhance the status of women and promote equal opportunities for all.

The proposed bill recognizes the significant importance of providing a robust and comprehensive framework for the Department of the Attorney General to make efforts to prevent human trafficking, provide increased support and assistance to victims, especially children, educate the public, prosecute offenders, and collect data. The bill also requires every public official and state and county department to render all necessary assistance and cooperation within the official's or department's jurisdictional power to share information and to assist the program in carrying out its duties.

Many children in the State are vulnerable to sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation. Recent data indicates that Native Hawaiian women and girls are disproportionately represented among victims of sex trafficking and sexual exploitation. Also, it is clear that foster children and runaways having histories of abuse and neglect are at particularly high risk. Other highly vulnerable groups include LGBTQ+ youth, immigrants, undocumented workers, and youth suffering from mental illnesses and substance abuse issues. Victims are often lured into sex trafficking through traffickers' use of emotional manipulation and control, force, fraud, or threats.

We also urge the legislature to budget the necessary funding for implementation of the program and to make the bill effective at least by June 30, 2025.

We believe that this type of bill will catapult Hawai'i's efforts to fight human trafficking forward.

For the above reasons, Hawaii Women Lawyers supports **H.B. No. 579, H.D.1** and respectfully request that the Committee pass this measure. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 579 HD1: RELATING TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING

TO: House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs
FROM: Rob Van Tassell, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawai'i
Hearing: **Friday, 2/10/23; 2:00 PM; via videoconference**

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Takayama, and Members, Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony **in support of HB 579 HD1**, which establishes a state-wide human trafficking prevention program overseen by the Department of the Attorney General to address commercially sexually exploited children and victims of human trafficking. I am Rob Van Tassell, with Catholic Charities Hawai'i.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i (CCH) is a tax exempt, non-profit agency that has been providing social services in Hawai'i for 75 years. CCH has programs serving elders, children, families, people experiencing homelessness, and immigrants. Our mission is to provide services and advocacy for the most vulnerable in Hawai'i. CCH has experience providing therapeutic services to individuals with complex trauma including victims of sex trafficking. In our experience working with youth, many are unaware of their own vulnerability to being exploited and becoming a victim of sex trafficking.

This is a priority bill for Catholic Charities Hawai'i. We must take action to prevent Hawaii's children from being exploited and becoming victims of human trafficking. This strikes at the very heart of our Ohana—our children. Studies have reported that the average age of children when they were first sex trafficked was just 11 years old. 3 out of 4 victims knew their trafficker, who was a family member, friend or significant other. Shockingly, 48,000 + ads were posted for commercial sex in Hawai'i in 2019. This commercial sex with children under 18 years of age is induced by force, fraud, or coercion. These children may not know who to turn to and lack the ability to escape.

Hawai'i needs a strategy to prevent this inhumane crime of human trafficking. Hawai'i needs a plan to provide more support to these victims. Public education is critical for adults and children to become more aware of sexual exploitation of children, as well as available help (services, hotlines, websites with information, etc.) This is a crime which is often hidden. It targets highly vulnerable groups like runaways, foster children, youth with mental illnesses and substance abuse issues, etc. who are highly vulnerable to the emotional manipulation and lures of the trafficker. A comprehensive response is needed to confront this issue and develop training on the best practices to prevent, identify and address this issue of grave danger to kids.

This bill provides the comprehensive approach that is essential to address this hidden issue and help the children sucked into sex trafficking. We urge your support. Please contact our Legislative Liaison, Betty Lou Larson at (808) 373-0356 or bettylou.larson@catholiccharitieshawaii.org if you have any questions.





HB 579, HD1, RELATING TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING

FEBRUARY 10, 2023 · HOUSE JUDICIARY AND
HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE · CHAIR REP.
DAVID A. TARNAS

POSITION: Support.

RATIONALE: Imua Alliance **supports** HB 579, HD1, relating to human trafficking, which establishes the statewide human trafficking prevention program overseen by the Department of the Attorney General to provide services and assistance to commercially sexually exploited children and victims of human trafficking.

Imua Alliance is a victim service provider for survivors of sex trafficking. Over the past 10 years, we have provided comprehensive direct intervention (victim rescue) services to 160 victims, successfully emancipating them from slavery and assisting in their restoration, while providing a range of targeted services to over 1,000 victims and individuals at risk of sexual exploitation. **During the pandemic, demand for victim services to our organization has skyrocketed by 330 percent, driven in part by a fivefold increase in direct crisis calls from potential trafficking victims.**

Each of the victims we have assisted has suffered from complex and overlapping trauma, including post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and anxiety, dissociation, parasuicidal behavior, and substance abuse. Trafficking-related trauma can lead to a complete loss of identity. A victim we cared for in 2016, for example, had become so heavily trauma bonded to her pimp that while under his grasp, she couldn't remember her own name. Yet, sadly, many of the victims

with whom we work are misidentified as so-called “voluntary prostitutes” and are subsequently arrested and incarcerated, with no financial resources from which to pay for their release.

Sex trafficking is a profoundly violent crime. At least 23 percent of trafficking victims in Hawai'i report being first exploited before turning 18, according to a recent report, with the average age of trafficked keiki's initial exposure to exploitation being 11. Based on regular outreach and monitoring, we estimate that approximately 150 high-risk sex trafficking establishments operate in Hawai'i. In a recent report conducted by the State Commission on the Status of Women, researchers from Arizona State University found that 1 in every 11 adult males living in our state buys sex online. When visitors are also counted, that number worsens to 1 in every 7 men walking the streets of our island home and a daily online sex buyer market of 18,614 for O'ahu and a total sex buyer population for the island of 74,362, including both tourists and residents.

ASU's findings are grim, but not surprising to local organizations that provide services to survivors of sex trafficking. Imua Alliance, for example, has trained volunteers to perform outreach to victims in high-risk locations, like strip clubs, massage parlors, and hostess bars. More than 80 percent of runaway youth report being approached for sexual exploitation while on the run, over 30 percent of whom are targeted within the first 48 hours of leaving home. With regard to mental health, sex trafficking victims are twice as likely to suffer from PTSD as a soldier in a war zone.

Greater than 80 percent of victims report being repeatedly raped and 95 percent report being physically assaulted, numbers that are underreported, according to the United States Department of State and numerous trauma specialists, because of the inability of many victims to recognize sexual violence. As one underage survivor told Imua Alliance prior to being rescued, “I can't be raped. Only good girls can be raped. I'm a bad girl. If I *want* to be raped, I have to *earn* it.”

Accordingly, we support measures to advance our state's fight against sexual servitude, including this bill's codification of a statewide anti-trafficking prevention program in the Attorney General's Office. Slavery has no place in paradise. Together, we can end exploitation on our shores.

Kris Coffield · Executive Director, Imua Alliance · (808) 679-7454 · kris@imuaalliance.org

HB-579-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 2:32:29 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrew Crossland	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this Bill.

HB-579-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 8:44:52 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Will Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawai‘i’s keiki are vulnerable to sex-trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation. Foster children and runaways having histories of abuse and neglect are at particularly high risk. Other highly vulnerable groups include LGBTQ+ youth, immigrants, undocumented workers, and youth suffering from mental illnesses and substance abuse issues. Victims are often lured into sex-trafficking through traffickers’ use of emotional manipulation and control, force, fraud, or threats.

In the last decade, the commercial sexual exploitation of children has garnered greater attention in Hawai‘i and throughout the United States. The department of human services has received an increasing number of hotline calls involving witnesses or victims of child sex-trafficking. However, because child sex-trafficking is covert, it is difficult to accurately measure the scope of the problem, and exploited youth do not always identify themselves as victims.

According to Community Against Exploitation Hawai‘i, the only local organization led by and for sex-trafficking survivors in Hawai‘i, children receive the majority of resources and services related to programming, placement, and exit and recovery from sex trafficking. Additionally, once recovered, minors are often afforded opportunities and supported financially by the state. And that’s all great. However, national and Hawai‘i specific research shows that it is extremely hard for adult sex-trafficking survivors to start over financially and mentally due, in part, to the severe lack of resources for them in the islands.

To adequately assist all persons who have been sexually exploited, a statewide human-trafficking program is needed to develop and utilize comprehensive interagency case management strategies and protocols, combined with a multi-disciplinary response. Please support HB579 HD1.

HB-579-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 12:33:23 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dana Keawe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly support

HB-579-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/9/2023 10:40:51 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/10/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dara Carlin, M.A.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Stand in STRONG SUPPORT!



‘O kēia ‘ōlelo hō’ike no ke
Komikina Kūlana Olakino o Nā Wāhine

Testimony on behalf of the
Hawai‘i State Commission on the Status of Women

Support for HB579 HD1

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Takayama, and Honorable Members:

The Hawai‘i State Commission on the Status of Women **supports the intent of H.B. 579**, which would establish a statewide human trafficking prevention program to provide services and assistance to commercially sexually exploited children and to victims of human trafficking, collect data, and report to the Legislature.

The Commission on the Status of Women is a member of the O‘ahu Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Steering Committee and serves as co-chair of the Missing and Murdered Native Hawaiian Women and Girls Taskforce in partnership with the Office of Hawaiian Affairs. While technically it is true that “anyone can be trafficked,” the Taskforce’s year-long investigation found that the majority (43%) of sex trafficking cases in Hawai‘i are Native Hawaiian girls trafficked in Waikīkī, O‘ahu.¹ This bill is squarely a Native Hawaiian issue and gender equality issue.

The Commission cannot fight the sex trafficking or MMIWG crises with a blindfold on our eyes. We need data collection and data sharing to enable stakeholders beyond law enforcement to do our jobs to protect vulnerable women and children.

Mahalo,
Khara Jabola-Carolus

¹ Cristobal, N. (2022). Holoī ā nalo Wāhine ‘Ōiwi: Missing and Murdered Native Hawaiian Women and Girls Task Force Report (Part 1). Office of Hawaiian Affairs; Hawai‘i State Commission on the Status of Women: Honolulu, HI.