A BILL FOR AN ACT

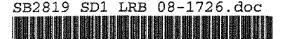
MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR CIVIL LEGAL SERVICES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

I	SECTION	1.	The	legislature	finds	that	the	legal	needs	of
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- 2 Hawaii's indigent and low-income communities are compelling and
- 3 extensive. Every day, members of these communities can grapple
- 4 with enormous legal issues relating to homelessness, eligibility
- 5 for affordable housing, incidents of violence, child custody and
- 6 guardianship, elder issues, eligibility for public benefits,
- 7 consumer fraud, and immigration issues. Last year alone,
- 8 Hawaii's civil legal service organizations provided direct legal
- 9 services in fifteen thousand matters statewide involving family
- 10 law, public entitlements, housing, immigration, domestic
- 11 violence, civil rights, health, consumer issues, estate
- 12 planning, employment, and education. As great as these needs
- 13 are, the resources to meet these needs can fall short. The
- 14 Access to Justice Hui's November 2007 report, Achieving Access
- 15 to Justice for Hawaii's People, revealed that despite the
- 16 dedicated efforts of Hawaii's civil legal service organizations,

- 1 over seventy-seven per cent of Hawaii's low-income community was
- 2 without access to critical legal services.
- 3 The legislature has evidenced a long-standing commitment to
- 4 funding legal services for the poor and the indigent, and
- 5 believes that free and low-cost civil legal services for certain
- 6 segments of the population are essential to ensuring that a free
- 7 and democratic way of life is not reserved solely for those who
- 8 can afford it. The legislature recognizes the dedication of
- 9 Hawaii legal service providers and their continued efforts to
- 10 raise operating funds from a variety of private and federal
- 11 resources to meet the legal needs of Hawaii's indigent and lower
- 12 income communities in new and innovative ways. The purpose of
- 13 this Act is to provide funds for the purchase of civil legal
- 14 services that will allow civil legal service organizations to
- 15 continue to provide essential legal services for indigent and
- 16 low-income Hawaii residents at current levels of operation, and
- 17 to increase their capacities wherever possible to meet the needs
- 18 of Hawaii's residents.
- 19 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
- 20 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
- 21 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2008-2009 to be
- 22 expended by the department of human services for the purchase of



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S.B. NO. 2819 S.D. 1

1	service	contracts with civil legal service organizations to
2	provide	free or low-cost civil legal services to indigent and
3	low-inco	me residents of the State; provided that:
4	(1)	The funds shall not be expended for any other purpose;
5	(2)	The funds shall be expended in a manner consistent
6		with chapter 103F, Hawaii Revised Statutes;
7	(3)	Any unexpended funds shall lapse to the general fund;
8	(4)	The department shall prepare a report that shall
9		include but not be limited to a detailed breakout of
10		organizations that were contracted, services provided,
11		and costs incurred; and
12	(5)	The department shall submit the report to the
13		legislature no later than twenty days prior to the
14		convening of the 2009 regular sessions.
15	The	sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
16	human ser	rvices for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2008.

Report Title:

Civil Legal Services; Appropriation

Description:

Makes an appropriation for the purchase of civil legal services from organizations that provide free or low-cost direct legal services to indigent and low-income residents. (SB2819 SD1)