



**The House of Representatives  
STATE OF HAWAII  
Representative Kymberly Marcos Pine**

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**PRESS RELEASE**

**REPRESENTATIVE KYMBERLY PINE URGES LAWMAKERS  
TO GET TOUGH ON JUVENILE OFFENDERS**

**HONOLULU, Hawaii** – After their first Christmas without Karen, and still no justice or even a court date set to redeem her death, Karen Ertell's family knew that they had to do something to not only bring some closure to their own personal tragedy, and prevent another family from reliving their experiences.

It has been nine long months since Ertell was allegedly raped and murdered by her 15 year-old neighbor. Since her murder, agencies including the City Prosecutor's Office, HPD's CID Detectives, her family, her good friends and hundreds of good hearted residents from Ewa Beach and elsewhere, have spent the majority of their time trying to work within the system to convince Senior Family Court Judge, Frances Q.F. Wong to rule that the alleged 15 year-old juvenile offender be tried as an adult. "Time spent on a crime as heinous and brutal as this, should be spent solving the crime by proving guilt or innocence rather than which court a juvenile offender should be tried in," said Rep. Pine. "We were in limbo over Christmas – it was a very sad time for us – it was our first Christmas without her," said Ertell's daughter Melanie McLellan "We just want the trial to begin so that we can start the healing process.

McLellan and the rest of Karen's family, discouraged with trying to go through the usual channels to see justice done, called on Representative Kymberly Pine for assistance. She asked for help in bringing public focus back to the pending case. Citing the fact that the case has now been delayed three times, Melanie asked Representative Pine to introduce legislation that would change the current laws that protect juvenile offenders who have committed heinous crimes, including those committed in Karen's case. Rep. Pine stated that current laws are outdated, adding that the legislative body needs to write new laws designed to protect the people of Hawaii, and bring justice for the victims, despite the attacker's young age.

She added that juvenile offenders are getting younger and progressively more violent in the nature of the crimes they commit. In addition, statistics show that juveniles who commit first or second degree murder or first degree sexual assault, know at the outset that they are protected and have a real chance that they will not be prosecuted to the full letter of the law because of their age. Rep. Pine stated that it is clearly time that policy issues be re-examined. "Current archaic laws are definitely ripe for review," she said.

Juvenile offenders accused in cases of first and second degree murder and first and second degree sexual assault as well as other heinous crimes are protected by a system that denies the public from ever knowing the crime they committed. Typically, they are held in a juvenile facility until the age of 19 and then released back into society. Their record is sealed or expunged. In addition, under the current laws, school leaders are not given privileged information concerning violent students.

Karen's Ertell's alleged murderer attended school along with his classmates at Ilima Intermediate School, no one the wiser, including the school's principal, of his previous criminal background. Information has also been given to Representative Pine claiming that the youth allegedly committed crimes in countries that he lived in before moving to Hawaii, raising additional immigration concerns.

On May 25, 2007, Karen Elise Ertell was brutally raped and murdered in her home in Ewa Beach. Karen Ertell was the only real mother that her Foster daughter, Melanie McLellan had ever known. Karen Ertell, described as a giving, loving person who saw the best in people, was a vibrant woman whose life was very full. She owned her own business – Koko Crater Coffee Roasters - and she was expecting her first grandchild – Melanie was nine months pregnant with Karen's grandson. Her senseless murder also left behind her loving partner – Kevin Callahan, her heart-broken mother and family, and hundreds of friends and business associates.

Karen's daughter Melanie has stated that her mother knew her murderer – he was her neighbor. Karen's daughter said that the 15 year-old neighbor broke into the Ertell home on numerous occasions, but that Karen had offered him numerous second chances to change his ways. "She offered him second chances left and right and he didn't take them," says McLellan. Ertell's family and friends hope that the family Court system will not offer the juvenile offender yet another break

The alleged offender would later confess to the crime. Representative Pine's office has received numerous unconfirmed reports that the alleged juvenile offender is accused of Murder in the First Degree, Sexual Assault in the First Degree, Robbery in the Second Degree, Burglary in the First Degree, Unauthorized Control of a Propelled Vehicle (Auto Theft), Unauthorized

Computer Access in the Second Degree, Driving Without a License, Unauthorized Possession of Confidential Personal Information, Fraudulent Use of a Credit Card, and Credit Card Theft.

Sadly, Karen Elise Ertell is gone, but her memory will never be forgotten by her family and it is their hope that she will not have died in vain; it is their hope that lawmakers will reach deep into the policy issues and return a better, more current law that will better fit the way in which we deal with juvenile offenders. It is their hope that "Karen's Law" will be the first important step in sparing others their personal pain.