

LINDA LINGLE
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STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809

February 9, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable John M. Mizuno, Chair
House Committee on Human Services

FROM: Lillian B. Koller, Director

SUBJECT: H.B. 1498 - MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR EMERGENCY
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTERS

Hearing: Monday, February 9, 2009, 8:15 a.m.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

PURPOSE: The purpose of this bill is to make an appropriation of \$762,500 from general revenues for emergency domestic violence shelters.

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services acknowledges that this measure has merit; however, given the current fiscal difficulties, it would not be prudent to pursue enactment at this time. The Department will try to maintain level funding for its domestic violence services including shelters.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

HAWAII STATE COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Hearing date and time: February 9, 2009, 8:15am.

RE: H.B. 1498 Making an Appropriation for Emergency Domestic Violence Shelter

TO: Chair Representative Mizuno, Vice Chair Representative Brower and members of the Committee on Human Services

FR: Carol Lee (clee@hscadv.org), Hawaii State Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Aloha, my name is Carol Lee. HSCADV is a private non-profit agency which serves as a touchstone agency for the majority of domestic violence programs throughout the state. For many years HSCADV has worked with the Hawaii Legislature by serving as an educational resource and representing the many voices of domestic violence programs and survivors of domestic violence.

HSCADV strongly supports HB1498.

As you know, Hawaii has eight domestic violence shelters located throughout the islands; three on Oahu, and one each on Kauai, Maui, Molokai and in Hilo and Kona. Domestic violence emergency shelters provide valuable services and can be the difference between life and death for a battered woman and her children.

Leaving home to seek safe shelter is a terrifying prospect. However, as our communities become more aware of the problem of domestic violence and the protections available to victims, the number of women and children seeking shelter increases. Unfortunately, the costs of running a shelter and providing necessary services have increased as well.

An emergency shelter, like any residence, must contend with basic facility costs from paying the light bill to getting a plumber to fix a clogged toilet. All of these, and other expenses, have increased significantly during recent years. The cost of health insurance for employees of the shelters is another example of how the cost of doing business has escalated.

Many of the shelters statewide are experiencing a financial crisis, operating at a deficit and are in desperate need of increased funding. Without additional funding shelters will have limit services, including the number of people they can serve.

Shelters are the first line of defense for a victim attempting to leave a home where there is domestic violence and they are a key component in a coordinated community response to domestic violence.

Mahalo for allowing us to testify on this matter.

DATE: FEBRUARY 9, 2009

TO: HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

CHAIR: Representative John Mizuno
VICE CHAIR: Representative Tom Brower
Members:
Representative Della Au Belatti
Representative Maile S.L. Shimabukuro
Representative Joe Bertram
Representative Ryan I. Yamane.
Representative Mele Carroll
Representative Gene Ward
Representative Scott Y. Nishimoto

FROM: Stacey Moniz, Executive Director
Women Helping Women Emergency Shelter and Support
Programs for Victims of Domestic Violence on Maui and Lanai

RE: HB 1498: MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR EMERGENCY
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTERS

Aloha Chair Mizuno and Members of the House Committee on Human Services:

Thank you very much for your years of support for victims and survivors of domestic violence. I know that many of you have supported past legislation for the important role that emergency shelters hold in the continuum of services needed to keep victims and their children safe when they flee domestic violence. On behalf of the Board of Directors, Staff, women and children at Women Helping Women, I thank you for your time and efforts to support the life-saving work we do each day.

I strongly support the Bill appropriating funds for the eight emergency shelters statewide. Funding for the shelters was contracted six years ago at flat funding for the entire six year contract. Escalating costs, inflation, and increased utilization at shelters created a need for all shelters to increase the funding. Each shelter submitted the specific needs for their program in each of the geographical locations contained within your bill. These are actual expenses and needs of the programs. Shelters were also receiving TANF monies which have been cut out of our budgets for next year, making this legislative funding even more critical.

Women Helping Women provided safe shelter to over 325 women and children in our emergency shelter on Maui last year for over 5000 bed nights. We served over 12,000 meals, answered 11,000 calls to our hotline, including 2200 from people who were in actual crisis. We provide support services in West Maui and also on Lanai which includes referrals to our emergency shelter when needed.

Funding cuts initiated the layoff of four shelter employees last year, fully one third of the shelter staff. The impact on my staff has been that they are working harder and needing more time to recuperate. Staff illness has risen, requiring us to pay relief staff to cover regular staffs' shifts. The long term impact of the funding cuts may continue to affect the staff and their morale and could ultimately affect the level of services being provided to the women and children we wish to help.

During this "economic downturn," with families losing one or both incomes, fighting within the family increases, people's desperation intensifies and limits are stretched beyond a family's comfort zone. The demand for our services continues to increase and the levels of abuse we are seeing in our shelter and other programs has gotten visibly and tangibly worse. The support we provide to these families is priceless and is happening at shelters throughout the state.

I humbly ask for your support of this bill, request that it be fully funded, and encourage you to contact me should you have any questions or need more information about the kinds of services we are providing. I can be reached at 242-6600 x20 or on my cell phone at 281-4408 or via email at director@whwmaui.net.

Thank you again for your dedication to the people of Hawaii and for your service on behalf of your constituents. I appreciate your time and consideration of my testimony.

Peace be the journey,
Stacey Moniz
Executive Director, Women Helping Women

brower2-Jenna

From: Dara Carlin, M.A. [breaking-the-silence@hotmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, February 08, 2009 7:25 AM
To: HUS testimony
Subject: HB1498 to be heard Monday, February 9th at 8:15am by the House Committee on Human Services

TO: Representative John Mizuno, Chair
Representative Tom Brower, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Human Services

FROM: Dara Carlin, M.A.
Oahu VOICES
716 Umi Street, Suite 210
Honolulu, HI 96819
(808) 832-9316 X106

DATE: February 9, 2009

RE: Strong Support for HB1498

For many domestic violence victim-survivors, a stay in a domestic violence shelter was one of the first steps on the flight to freedom from violence and abuse in their homes and lives. While fleeing to a friend or family member's home may prove too risky to the hosts, and thereby not an option for the victim and her children, a shelter is not only a safe haven but an environment for healing, education and support. Domestic violence shelters provide more than respite for their temporary residents and are crucial to women whose partners do not understand the words no, don't and stop. Please support victims and their children by supporting our domestic violence shelters.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Dara Carlin, M.A.
Oahu VOICES Representative

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