

**TESTIMONY**

**SB 905**



**STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS**

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February 13, 2009

To: The Honorable Dwight Y. Takamine, Chair  
and Members of the Senate Committee on Labor

The Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair  
and Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services

Date: Tuesday, February 17, 2009  
Time: 2:15 p.m.  
Place: Conference Room 016  
State Capitol

From: Darwin L.D. Ching, Director  
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations

**Testimony in Support of S.B. 905 - Relating to the Office of Community Services**

**I. OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION**

S.B. 905 transfers the Office of Community Services from the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to the Department of Human Services.

**II. CURRENT LAW**

The Office of Community Services is currently administratively attached to the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations.

**III. HOUSE BILL**

The Department supports the S.B. 905 for the following reasons:

1. The Department recognizes that supportive services and programs for low income, immigrant and refugee groups now comprise much of the Office of Community Services overall budget and programming.
2. The Department recognizes that certain groups of people require a more diverse range of services to obtain self sufficiency. By moving from the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to the Department of Human Services, the Office

of Community Services can provide a more holistic approach to remedying the problems facing their clientele.



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

February 13, 2009

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: The Honorable Dwight Y. Takamine, Chair  
Senate Committee on Labor

The Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair  
Senate Committee on Human Services

FROM: Lillian B. Koller, Director

SUBJECT: **S.B. 905 – RELATING TO THE OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SERVICES**

Hearing: Tuesday, February 17, 2009; 2:15 p.m.  
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

**PURPOSE:** This bill transfers the Office of Community Services from the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to the Department of Human Services.

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department supports this Administration-sponsored bill. The transfer of the Office of Community Services (OCS) from the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) to the Department of Human Services (DHS) will strengthen and improve the delivery of human services programs.

We believe that the primary functions of OCS more readily correspond to the mission, objectives and responsibilities of DHS, which is to provide timely, efficient and effective programs, services, and benefits, for the purpose of achieving the outcome of empowering those who are the most vulnerable in our State to expand their capacity for

self-sufficiency, self-determination, independence, healthy choices, quality of life and personal dignity.

DHS is the appropriate placement for OCS and since they offer programs that give low-income persons, disadvantage persons, refugees, immigrants, and homeless individuals the tools to attain self-sufficiency, such as employment and job training, child care, and general assistance. This realignment will improve the Department of Human Services' coordination and delivery of services to both singles and families.

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



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS  
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### **Testimony of the Office of Community Services**

Good Afternoon Chair Takamine and Chun Oakland, Vice Chairs Taniguchi and Ihara and members of the committee,

My name is Sam Aiona and I am testifying as the Executive Director of the Office of the Community Services in support of SB 905. The Office of Community Services currently administers over seventy contracts in eighteen program areas to ensure the self-sufficiency of low-income persons, refugees, and immigrants. As the Governor mentioned in her state-of-the-State address, it is time for officials of the State to elevate our leadership roles. Offices like our own, which specialize in disadvantaged clients, will be called upon to improve and expand our services while at the same time keeping a tight rein on our spending. We believe that these goals, seemingly at odds with each other, can be accomplished with an administrative move to the Department of Human Services.

OCS was created in part to consolidate a number of programs that deal with economic and personal self-sufficiency, as well as community building. At the time of our establishment, the chief indicator of self-sufficiency was the attainment and maintenance of employment. Our focus then was on programs that trained and readied people for employment, our so-called "Employment Core" services. The definition of "Employment Core" fit well with the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, to which we became administratively attached. Given our flexibility as an attached agency and our broad mission statement, over time OCS acquired and developed supportive services and programs linked to Employment Core services, and appropriately to the low-income, immigrant and refugee population. As the Office's identity emerged, employment training became a component in a more holistic approach to self-sufficiency.

At present, the number of people served by our Employment Core Services in FY 08 numbered slightly over 1,900 individuals, while the number of persons served by other programs in OCS numbered well over 25,000. Though Employment Core is still an important component of our total program package, it is no longer overwhelmingly the focus of our Office. Therefore, our program mission no longer aligns with that of the Department of Labor. OCS, under DHS, would be able to expand upon the good work we do under the DLIR by proposing new, more expansive measures of effectiveness that go beyond the narrower focus of the DLIR's mission.

We believe that Governmental programs should be constantly evaluated. A move to the Department of Human Services, we believe, would create certain efficiencies that would benefit the State and the clients we serve. Though not consolidation in the strictest sense, programs such as First-to-Work (administered by BESSD) and Employment Core would work together to

provide a seamless continuum of services for those that progress from below the Federal poverty line up to 150% of that standard. A continuum such as this could conceivably be administered by a few specialized employees, saving administrative costs. An added benefit of OCS being an attached agency is that in tough economic times, such as those we may yet face, we can adjust our client eligibility standards to consider Hawai`i's economy in relation to the Federal standard.

For our clientele, multiple contracts for similar services awarded to a single service provider would reduce the amount of paperwork required, reduce the amount of accounting hours by DAGS, streamline payment and encumbrance procedures, and reduce the workload on the Procurement Office, streamlining contracting. Also, an enduring relationship between an experienced administrator and the service providers could lead to innovative new programming, institutional memory, and smoother, more educated contract negotiation.

This bill is part of the Administration's efforts to streamline and reorganize current governmental structure to best serve our clients. One such initiative is the current push to move the Homeless program out of the Hawai`i Public Housing Authority. Another such initiative is OCS' move to DHS. This bill addresses only OCS' move to the Department of Human Services. Due to unclear service provider support for the OCS-Homeless Branch merger, we humbly ask your support for the administration's version, SB 905. I thank you for your time and am available to answer any questions you may have.



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

TO: Senator Dwight Y. Takamine, Chair  
Senator Brian T. Taniguchi, Vice Chair  
Committee on Labor

Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair  
Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair  
Committee on Human Services

FROM: Diane M. Terada, Division Administrator

DATE: Tuesday, February 17, 2009 (2:15 p.m., Room 016)

RE: **Support for SB 905, Relating to the Office of Community Services**  
**(with comments)**

Catholic Charities Hawaii (CCH) is a tax exempt, non-profit agency that has been providing social services in Hawaii for over 60 years. The Agency has two contracts with the Office of Community Services (OCS) to provide Employment Core Services for immigrants on the islands of Oahu and Hawai'i.

CCH is also a member of the Inter Agency Council, which has representation from: United States Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS), Department of Health, Kalihi-Palama Health Center, Office of Language Access, Office on Equality and Access to the Courts, Kokua Kalihi Valley, Na Loio, Office of Community Services, Parents and Children Together, Social Security Administration, Domestic Violence Action Center, U.H. Family Services Center, and Catholic Charities Hawai'i. The purpose of the Inter Agency Council is to work together to advocate for the needs of immigrants.

In accordance with the recommendation of the Inter Agency Council, Catholic Charities Hawai'i is in support of the transfer of the Office of Community Services (OCS) from the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) to the Department of Human Services (DHS) and respectfully requests that the **following concerns be noted:**

- 1) That the transfer not affect the ability of OCS to maintain their pattern of **efficient and timely payment to services providers;**
- 2) That the transfer **not result in any cuts to immigrant program funding nor attempts to have services for immigrants absorbed into low income persons programs.**
- 3) That the **concept of self-sufficiency will continue to include job creation** as well as regular employment programs; and
- 4) That the OCS milestone payment system will be operated on **realistic milestone objectives.**

If additional information is needed, please feel free to contact me via phone at 595-5901 or via email at [diane.terada@catholiccharitieshawaii.org](mailto:diane.terada@catholiccharitieshawaii.org). **Thank you.**

**To:** Committee on Labor, Senator Dwight Takamine-Chair and Committee on Human Services, Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair & members of both Committees

**Hearing:** Tuesday, Feb. 17, 2009, 2:15 PM, Conference Room 016, State Capitol

**Regarding:** SB 905, Relating to the Office of Community Services

**FROM:** The Inter-Agency Council for Immigrant and Refugee Services, C/O Susannah Wesley Community Cnt., 1117 Kaili St. Hon. 96819

Dear Senators Dwight Takemine and Suzanne Chun Oakland and committee members:

My name is Dominic Inocelda, president of the Inter-Agency Council for Immigrant and Refugee Services. I would like to state our position on the proposed DLIR Office of Community Services move from the Dept. of Labor and Industrial Relations to the Dept. of Human Services.

The Inter-Agency Council supports the move from DLIR to DHS with the following concerns noted, 1) that OCS strives to maintain efficient and timely payment to service providers, 2) that immigrant program funds are not cut and absorbed into low income person programs, 3) that the concept of self-sufficiency not only include regular employment but also job creation / self employment, and 4) that OCS's milestone payment system operate on realistic milestone objectives.

Members of the IAC are concerned that immigrant programs, mainly employment focused within the Office of Community Services, not get lost in the Department of Human Services and eventually re-categorized as low income welfare programs. Due to their immigration status, immigrants do not qualify for most Federal or State public welfare benefits. It has been our experience that a core motive of immigrants is a strong desire to make a better life for their families. Seeking employment, job training, and development of English language skills are key means toward their success. If the move is approved we want to note, for the record, that a strong focus in these areas is maintained and supported by the Office of Community Services in its programs.

Thanks you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Dominic Inocelda  
IAC President