

SCR92/SR46

Measure Title:	REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON THE NUMBER OF INSTANCES WHERE A MINOR PARENT OR PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN RECEIVE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE.
Report Title:	Child Support; Minor Parents; Grandparents; Department of Human Services; Public Assistance
Description:	
Companion:	
Package:	None
Current Referral:	HSH, WAM
Introducer(s):	KIDANI, Chun Oakland, Inouye, Kahele, Shimabukuro, Tokuda

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Robert Olague, President
Judith F. Clark, Executive Director
American Civil Liberties Union of Hawaii
Bay Clinic, Inc.
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Honolulu
Big Island Substance Abuse Council
Blueprint for Change
Bobby Benson Center
Catholic Charities Hawaii
Child and Family Service
Coalition for a Drug Free Hawaii
Domestic Violence Action Center
EPIC, Inc.
Family Programs Hawaii
Family Support Hawaii
Hale Kipa, Inc.
Hale 'Opio Kauai, Inc.
Hawaii Behavioral Health
Hawaii Student Television
Hina Mauka Teen Care
Hui Malama Learning Center
Ka'analike
KEY (Kualoa-Heeia Ecumenical Youth)
Project
Kokua Kalihi Valley
Life Foundation
Marimed Foundation
Maui Youth and Family Services
Palama Settlement
P.A.R.E.N.T.S., Inc.
Parents and Children Together (PACT)
Planned Parenthood of Hawaii
Salvation Army Family Intervention Svcs.
Sex Abuse Treatment Center
Susannah Wesley Community Center
The Catalyst Group
The Children's Alliance of Hawaii
Waikiki Health Center
Women Helping Women
YWCA of Kauai

March 30, 2015

Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
And Members of the Committee on Human Services and Housing

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SCR 92/SR 46 REQUESTING THE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES TO PROVIDE
INFORMATION ON THE NUMBER OF INSTANCES WHERE A
MINOR PARENT OR PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN RECEIVE
PUBLIC ASSISTANCE.**

Hawaii Youth Services Network (HYSN), a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, that supports the intent of SCR 92/SR 46.

Teen parents and their children face many challenges. By age 22, only 50% of teen mothers have graduated from high school. Nationally, 80% receive TANF benefits in the 10 years following the birth of the child. There is no local data currently available on the use in Hawaii of public assistance benefits by minor parents and their children. Local data is needed in order to identify needs and help young parents become successful parents.

HYSN recognizes the beneficial role of the extended family in assisting minor parents in child rearing and the costs to taxpayers of providing TANF benefits to teen parents and their children.

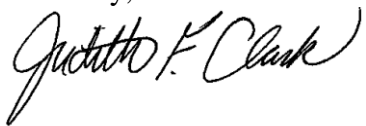
There is potential for conflict when grandparents are providing financial support to a minor parent and her child. Under Hawaii law, the minor parent is the legal guardian of her child. She is responsible and is legally entitled to make decisions regarding the child's health and well-being. At the same time, the minor parent is still under the guardianship of her own parents, Hawaii does not have process for emancipation under these circumstances.

Grandparents who are providing financial support to the minor parent and her child often believe that they are the legal guardians of both their own child and the grandchild, and want to disregard or override the plans and

decisions of the minor parent. Thus, there may be times when it is not in the best interests of the minor parent or her child for the grandparents to provide financial and other support. Any efforts to change provision of TANF benefits and other public assistance to minor parents and their children should take this into consideration.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judith F. Clark". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

Judith F. Clark, MPH
Executive Director