



**STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

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**Testimony COMMENTING on SB 1367, SD1  
Relating to Project Kealahou**

REPRESENTATIVE DELLA AU BELATTI, CHAIR, COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Hearing Date: March 20, 2015, 10:30 AM      Room Number: 329

1    **Fiscal Implications:** Funding to continue direct services.

2    **Department Testimony:** The purpose of this measure is to ensure the continuation of Project  
3    Kealahou (“new pathways” in Hawaiian), whose federal funding ends in October, 2015. The  
4    Department of Health takes no position on the appropriations request, deferring to the  
5    Governor’s Executive Budget request for fiscal priorities.

6            Project Kealahou has been grant-funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
7    Administration (SAMHSA) since 2009 and has proven its cost effectiveness, as described below.  
8    The SAMHSA grant will expire in October 2015.

9            Over the past 5 years, over 300 girls have been referred for services. An extensive  
10    evaluation of the project shows that the program is effective at engaging youth, improving girls’  
11    functioning and reducing the strain felt by their parents.

12            Housed within The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division of the Department of  
13    Health, Project Kealahou was developed in response to broad recognition among leaders and

1 workers in Hawaii's public child-serving system that established treatment programs do not  
2 adequately address challenges encountered by adolescent girls.

3 Project Kealahou emphasizes gender-responsive and trauma-informed care when  
4 serving its target audience of adolescent females age eleven through twenty-one who have  
5 experienced significant trauma in their lives. Project Kealahou offers an array of community-  
6 based services and supports that provide cost-effective deterrents and alternatives to more  
7 expensive and disruptive out-of-home placements for youth and a range of cultural and  
8 recreational community-based group activities to help youth and their families.

9 We thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

10 **Offered Amendments:** N/A



*The Judiciary, State of Hawai'i*

**Testimony to the House Committee on Health**  
Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair  
Representative Richard P. Creagan, Vice Chair

Friday, March 20, 2015, 10:30 a.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 329

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY**

By

R. Mark Browning  
Senior Judge, Deputy Chief Judge  
Family Court of the First Circuit

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**Bill No. and Title:** Senate Bill No. 1367, S.D. 1, Relating to Project Kealahou.

**Purpose:** Appropriates monies for the continued funding of Project Kealahou, within the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division of the Department of Health.

**Judiciary's Position:**

The Judiciary submits this testimony in strong support of Senate Bill No. 1367, S.D. 1, which will enable Project Kealahou to continue operating after a six year appropriation of federal funds ends this year.

Several years ago, when the Family Court began researching the need for a Girls Court, two primary findings became clear early in our research: (1) nearly all of the girls in the court system, regardless of age, had suffered major trauma and were exhibiting acting out behaviors in an effort to cope with the past trauma and (2) the juvenile justice system, developed in response to boys' misbehaviors, had very little expertise when it came to dealing with girls.

Project Kealahou has and continues to address these two findings. The program has and continues to provide valuable services to girls who have suffered from child abuse/neglect,



Senate Bill No. 1367, S.D. 1, Relating to Project Kealahou  
Senate Committee on Health  
Friday, March 20, 2015 at 10:30 a.m.  
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bullying, domestic violence, date rape, exploitation by older men in the sex trade, and human trafficking. Project Kealahou provides a spectrum of services including specialized therapy as well as in-community, holistic strategies such as mentoring and peer support. Of equal importance to their direct service delivery, Project Kealahou has also begun very important steps to share their hard earned expertise by writing curriculum for professional training and have begun plans to offer this training to other service providers.

Project Kealahou is an important partner to the Family Court. Failure to fund its continuation will result in the loss of crucial expertise and will deprive critical services to our most vulnerable youth. Such loss will result in human and economic losses for the youth and our community. We respectfully request passage of this bill with an approved appropriation amount and that the funding become effective in the state's next fiscal year.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this bill.

# COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

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## COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

Rep. Della Au Belatti, Chair

Rep. Richard Creagan, Vice Chair

Friday, March 20, 2015

10:30 am

Room 329

## SUPPORT for SB 1367 SD1 – PROJECT KEALAHOU

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Creagan and Members of the Committee!

My name is Kat Brady and I am the Coordinator of Community Alliance on Prisons, a community initiative promoting smart justice policies for almost two decades. This testimony is respectfully offered on behalf of the 5,600 Hawai'i individuals living behind bars, always mindful that more than 1,600, and soon to be rising number of Hawai'i individuals who are serving their sentences abroad, thousands of miles away from their loved ones, their homes and, for the disproportionate number of incarcerated Native Hawaiians, far from their ancestral lands.

SB 1367 SD1 appropriates funds for the continued funding of Project Kealahou within the Department of Health Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division and requires an annual report.

Community Alliance on Prisons supports this important measure for our girls. There are just not enough community programs that address the needs of our young women.

We need programs like Project Kealahou to address the many issues facing our young women today in a holistic way using the principles of trauma-informed care to guide their practices.

Please support our future women leaders!

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

# HAWAII YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

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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 SB 1347  
Domestic Violence Action Center  
EPI C, 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'analiike  
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 18, 2015

To: Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair  
And members of the Committee on Health

## **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 1367 SD1 RELATING TO PROJECT KEALAHOU**

Hawaii Youth Services Network (HYSN), a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, supports SB 1367 SD1 Relating to Project Kealahou

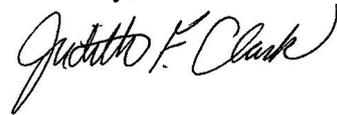
Project Kealahou provides mental health and family support services to girls who have experienced trauma. The program is currently funded through a federal grant that will be phased out.

Funding from the Hawaii Legislature will allow this effective, evidence-informed program to continue to provide therapy and education to the girls and their families, which results in better parent/child communication and increased school attendance. The program reduces the risk of suicide and family violence as well as future involvement in the juvenile and adult criminal justice systems.

I have served on the Executive Committee for Project Kealahou for the past 6 years and have seen the positive effects on the youth and their families.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Judith F. Clark, MPH  
Executive Director



# Chaminade University

O F H O N O L U L U

March 18, 2015

To Whom it May Concern:

Please support HB1435/SB1367. Project Kealahou provides important services to at-risk juvenile girls who have experienced traumatic experiences. Girls in the system who have been traumatized need gender-responsive services to address their unique pathways into the system, and the damage done by traumatizing experiences that often include sexual and/or physical abuse, often at the hands of someone they know. We know that, left untreated, this trauma will often lead to self-medicating behavior such as alcohol and drug use as well as entrée into risky and unhealthy relationships. Too, it is all too common for girls with untreated trauma to end up in the adult criminal justice system where it may take them years to break the cycle of unwanted behavior. Gender-responsive treatment for girls works and positively contributes to public safety. Please make the sensible choice and support Project Kealahou via HB1435/SB1367.

Dr. Janet T. Davidson, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Criminology & Criminal Justice

Chaminade University of Honolulu

*Lesley A. Slavin, Ph.D.*  
317C Olomana Street  
Kailua, HI 96734  
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## **House Committee on Health**

### **SB 1367, Relating to Project Kealahou**

I am grateful for this opportunity to address the committee about Project Kealahou (PK). This is an exciting, innovative mental health intervention for a very vulnerable and commonly underserved population – Adolescent girls who have been exposed to significant trauma including abuse, neglect, and sexual assault. These are the girls who frequently run away from home, who may develop serious behavior problems such as suicide attempts and self-harm, and who sometimes end up living on the streets, being victimized by sex traffickers and so on. Frequently, these girls are detained in the Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility (HYCF) on minor charges because of the perceived lack of other options to keep them safe. Standard intervention programs in mental health and juvenile justice historically have not been adequate to meet their specialized needs.

Project Kealahou is a 6-year project funded by a grant from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA) with some required state matching funds. Funding available in this grant program ranges from one million dollars in the first and last years to two million dollars in the middle two years of the grant. Funding for FY15 (the final grant year) is 1.0 million dollars. Thanks to an appropriation from last year's legislature, PK has been able to continue serving girls on Oahu as the federal funds have dwindled. We are very grateful for this show of support!

Project Kealahou includes a major evaluation component, and it is part of a national evaluation being conducted by SAMHSA. Preliminary results on the first sample of youth followed by the evaluation suggest PK is showing a lot of success. Girls have shown significant increases in competence, significant decreases in school absences and significant decreases in impairment. Their parents or other caregivers also have shown significant decreases in their level of strain. Anecdotally, we know that some of girls who were chronic “runners” have stopped running and are much safer.

Because of these initial excellent outcomes, the staff and volunteers involved in PK are committed to sustaining the major components of Project Kealahou and assuring that girls in Hawaii have access to the kind of supports it provides. Some of the promising practices include: mentoring by a single worker who stays with the girl from intake throughout the program; the use of peer specialists – young adults who have received mental health services in the past – to provide support to the girls; family and youth cultural activities; evidence-based trauma treatment; and Girls Circle groups held in community settings.

In addition to providing services to girls and their families, the project has done extensive inter-agency collaborative work with colleagues in the Office of Youth Services, the Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility (HYCF), Girl's Court and Probation around girls involved in the Juvenile Justice System. This has led to an emerging consensus that the gender-informed approaches used by Project Kealahou are “best practices” that should be instituted statewide.

The proposed legislation is designed to spread these mental health services to all the girls who need them in our state. Doing this would build on the six years of effort by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Division and the millions of taxpayer dollars that have been invested in learning what works with high-risk girls. I urge you to continue to fund this vital effort by passing this bill.

creagan1 - Dannah

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Thursday, March 19, 2015 5:16 PM  
To: HLTtestimony  
Cc: lho@hawaiiublicpolicy.com  
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB1367 on Mar 20, 2015 10:30AM

**SB1367**

Submitted on: 3/19/2015

Testimony for HLT on Mar 20, 2015 10:30AM in Conference Room 329

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Melissa Pavlicek	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Project Kealahou promotes community based, individualized, culturally- and linguistically-competent, family-driven, youth guided, and evidence based services. Project Kealahou emphasizes gender responsive and trauma informed care when serving its target population of adolescent females ages eleven through twenty-one who have experienced significant trauma in their lives. This program is essential to effectively serve girls who are the victims of trauma. Please continue to support this important program.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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Rep. Dee Morikawa

RE: Support of SB1367/HB 1435 Relating to Project Kealahou

Dear Committee on Health,

My name is Puafisi Tupola. I in support of SB1367, Relating to Project Kealahou. My occupation allows me the privilege of working with teenage adolescents. Many of them were participants with the Project Kealahou.

Project Kealahou is an important and effective program in the state Department of Health. The program assists girls who have been the victims of trauma and who struggles with the issues. They provide them with an outlet that is gender specific, where these girls can express themselves freely.

The funding to help continue this project is essential and ask that you support this bill to pass.

Sincerely,

Puafisi Tupola