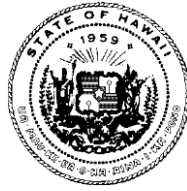


SB 2070

Measure Title:	RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES.
Report Title:	Foster Grandparent Program; Senior Companion Program; Appropriation (\$)
Description:	Appropriates funds to the department of human services to create one full-time program specialist position for Maui county within the adult protective and community services branch to oversee the foster grandparent program and senior companion programs on Maui, Molokai, and Lanai.
Companion:	HB1877
Package:	Kupuna Caucus
Current Referral:	HMS, WAM
Introducer(s):	CHUN OAKLAND, GALUTERIA, IHARA, Nishihara, Shimabukuro



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

February 4, 2016

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

FROM: Rachael Wong, DrPH, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 2070 – RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES**

Hearing: Thursday, February 11, 2016, 1:20 p.m.
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in our Executive Budget. DHS provides the following comments.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this measure is to appropriate funds to DHS to create one (1) full-time permanent civil service program specialist position to oversee the Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) and the Senior Companion Program (SCP) in Maui County. This position will be placed in the Adult Protective and Community Services Branch (APCSB) of the DHS Social Services Division (SSD). The goal is to afford income eligible seniors age 55 and older with an opportunity to actively age by offering mentorship to exceptional and special needs children and companionship and assistance to older adults.

FGP mentors and tutor special and exceptional needs children through Head Start Centers, private preschools, elementary through high schools and other youth facilities. FGP provides an opportunity for intergenerational relationships between the children and the FGP volunteers. SCP volunteers provide companionship and support to home-bound seniors, allowing

those individuals to continue living independently in their homes for as long as possible. SCP also provides much needed respite and relief to caregivers.

The Maui District Special Education Office reported having 2,148 special education students. All 31 Department of Education Schools in Maui County have students that are in need of additional support based on their special education status. At present, Maui County represents less than 1% of the total program volunteer base for both FGP and SCP. FGP has three (3) active volunteers on Maui despite having 115 volunteers for all other counties combined. SCP maintains a pool of six (6) volunteers on Maui and none on Molokai and Lanai while maintaining 82 volunteers for all other counties combined.

Maui County's percentage of older adults in comparison to the total population is 20.5%. This represents the potential resource pool for senior volunteerism in Maui County. The recruitment and training of volunteers and community partners in Maui County requires a physical presence in the county. Having a program specialist position based on Maui Island will also assist with the retention of these volunteers and serve to promote senior volunteerism throughout the county.

Civic engagement prolongs seniors' life span by approximately ten (10) years, increases their independence, and increases their sense of purpose and well-being, thus allowing the seniors to remain active and healthy. FGP and SCP recruit and train limited income senior volunteers to serve as role models in their communities.

With the baby boomers aging into the 60+ benchmark, Maui County is facing a notable increase in the older age range population that will be needing services. The Hawaii Health Survey 2012 of the Department of Health indicates that of the 60+ population on Maui, 9.4% or 2,745 people are at the below poverty or near poverty income level based on U.S. Department Health and Human Services poverty guidelines.

Maui County's population of special and exceptional needs children and frail seniors could benefit from the services that both FGP and SCP provide. While both programs are federally mandated to provide services statewide, Maui County has been underserved. Maui, Molokai and Lanai each have unique populations with very diverse community profiles. The establishment of a permanent civil service program specialist position based on the island of Maui is essential to fulfilling the federal grant requirements of serving communities statewide.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.