
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO CHILD WELFARE SERVICES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the east Hawaii
2 child welfare services section in the county of Hawaii faces
3 unique challenges as it is responsible for the safety and well-
4 being of the State's most vulnerable children, including those
5 who have been abused, neglected, or are at high risk for abuse
6 and neglect. The office oversees the safety of endangered
7 children in a large geographic area that extends from Honokaa to
8 Ocean View, including the districts of north and south Hilo,
9 Puna, and much of Hamakua and Kau. Furthermore, the rate of
10 confirmed cases for abuse or neglect for Hawaii county in 2015
11 was two hundred thirteen children per 100,000 residents, nearly
12 triple the rate of confirmed cases for the city and county of
13 Honolulu.

14 The legislature further finds that due to challenging
15 economic times and funding cuts in Hawaii's child welfare
16 services, layoffs and hiring restrictions have caused the east
17 Hawaii child welfare services section to lose nineteen of the



1 fifty-six positions it had in 2009, resulting in a dramatic
2 increase in average caseload per caseworker. The recommended
3 number of caseloads for child welfare services social workers is
4 no more than fifteen children, but child welfare services social
5 workers in east Hawaii regularly have caseloads of forty to
6 fifty children. These higher caseloads increase the potential
7 for harm to children at risk for neglect or abuse, further
8 contributing to the high rate of confirmed cases in Hawaii
9 county, and has even prompted the family court to sanction the
10 east Hawaii child welfare services section because of late
11 filings of reports and failure to meet court deadlines.
12 Therefore, the legislature finds that it is necessary to
13 undertake a pilot project to demonstrate the positive impact of
14 adequate staffing levels on the safety and well-being of at-risk
15 children and families in east Hawaii.

16 The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds for:

17 (1) The department of human services to establish a five-
18 year pilot program in the east Hawaii child welfare
19 services section in Hawaii county that limits the
20 number of children per child welfare services
21 caseworker to no more than twenty; and



1 (2) Additional case managers and support staff for the
2 pilot program.

3 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
4 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much
5 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2018-2019 for:

6 (1) The department of human services, child welfare
7 services branch, to establish a five-year pilot
8 program that limits the number of children supervised
9 by each child welfare services caseworker to no more
10 than twenty in the east Hawaii child welfare services
11 section in the county of Hawaii, provided that the
12 pilot program shall commence on July 1, 2018 and shall
13 terminate on June 30, 2023; and

14 (2) Eight full-time equivalent (8.0 FTE) case managers and
15 fifteen full-time equivalent (15.0 FTE) support staff
16 positions for the pilot program.

17 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
18 human services for the purposes of this Act.

19 SECTION 3. The department of human services shall submit a
20 report of its findings and recommendations relating to the pilot
21 program, including any proposed legislation, to the legislature



1 no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the regular
2 session of 2019.

3 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2050.



Report Title:

Child Welfare Services; DHS; Caseworker; Pilot Program; Hawaii County; Appropriation; Reporting

Description:

Appropriates funds for the Department of Human Services (DHS) to establish a five-year pilot program in the east Hawaii child welfare services section in Hawaii County that limits the number of children per child welfare services caseworker to no more than twenty. Appropriates funds for additional case managers and support staff for the pilot program. Requires DHS to submit report to the Legislature. (SB2276 HD1)

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

