

MAR 09 2018

SENATE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE AUDITOR TO CONDUCT A COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE
AND MANAGEMENT AUDIT OF THE CHILD WELFARE SERVICES BRANCH
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES.

1 WHEREAS, the purpose of the Child Welfare Services Branch
2 (CWSB) of the Department of Human Services is to:

3
4 (1) Ensure the safety, stability, and well-being of
5 children in the State; and
6

7 (2) Respond to allegations of child abuse and neglect
8 while providing supportive services to children and
9 their families; and
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11 WHEREAS, the public and news media have raised many
12 questions about the agency's operations, including policies,
13 procedures, and management; and
14

15 WHEREAS, a recent review conducted by the United States
16 Administration for Children and Families concluded that CWSB
17 made no improvements from the previous evaluation conducted in
18 2009; and
19

20 WHEREAS, CWSB was not in "substantial conformity" with any
21 of the seven outcome categories of the evaluation, including the
22 outcome that "[c]hildren are first and foremost protected from
23 abuse and neglect"; and
24

25 WHEREAS, CWSB only met five of the seven systematic factor
26 categories, an identical result to the 2009 evaluation; and
27

28 WHEREAS, attracting and retaining qualified employees has
29 been a significant, long-standing concern for CWSB; and
30

31 WHEREAS, at the end of 2017, about a quarter of the
32 agency's one hundred eighty positions for social workers and
33 human-service professionals were vacant; and
34



1 WHEREAS, other concerns include insufficient quality and
2 frequency of caseworker visits, children remaining in foster
3 care beyond fifteen months with no viable goal, and maltreatment
4 allegations in pending cases not formally being investigated;
5 and

6
7 WHEREAS, CWSB is still recovering from the State's fiscal
8 crises in 2009 and 2010, when the Department of Human Services
9 cut dozens of positions, implemented budget cuts, and eliminated
10 or reduced certain services, including services that assist
11 families; and

12
13 WHEREAS, this body recognizes child abuse and neglect as
14 serious problems and that there is an urgent need to determine
15 whether CWSB has the personnel and resources necessary to
16 effectively investigate allegations of abuse and neglect, and
17 otherwise perform the agency's duties; now, therefore,

18
19 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-ninth
20 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2018,
21 that the Auditor is requested to conduct a comprehensive
22 performance and management audit of the Child Welfare Services
23 Branch of the Department of Human Services; and

24
25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Auditor is requested to
26 examine, as part of the audit, the effectiveness of and
27 compliance with the CWSB's policies and procedures, including:

- 28
29 (1) Investigating and substantiating reports of child
30 abuse and neglect;
31
32 (2) Providing services for substantiated cases of child
33 abuse and neglect, including risk assessment methods
34 to assess whether the child is in danger of abuse or
35 neglect;
36
37 (3) Establishing, maintaining, and enforcing policies that
38 safeguard the rights of the child and their non-abuser
39 family members;
40
41 (4) Sharing information and coordinating investigative
42 duties with county police departments;



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- (5) Sharing information and coordinating duties with the Department of the Attorney General Family Law Division's policies and procedures;
- (6) Inputting and maintaining the records in the Child Abuse and Neglect Registry database; and
- (7) Providing effective oversight and supervision of all child welfare offices in the State; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Auditor examine and provide recommendations for additional personnel and other resources needed for the CWSB to effectively investigate allegations of abuse, and neglect, and otherwise perform the agency's duties; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Auditor is requested to submit a report of the Auditor's findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2019; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Auditor, Director of Human Services, and Administrator of the Child Welfare Services Branch of the Department of Human Services.

OFFERED BY:

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