

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

178

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 11 2019

RE: S.B. No. 1022
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirtieth State Legislature
Regular Session of 2019
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Human Services, to which was referred S.B. No. 1022 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO CHILD WELFARE SERVICES,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to establish a Child Welfare Services Task Force to review the Child Welfare Services Branch and examine best practices that will help to improve child care safety through the Child Welfare Services Branch.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from East Hawaii Friends of Foster Families, O'ahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i, and four individuals. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of Human Services, Hawaii Family Advocacy Team, and one individual.

Your Committee finds that in a 2017 review conducted by the Federal Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families, the Child Welfare Services Branch was found to have made no improvements from the previous evaluation conducted in 2009. The review further stated that the Child Welfare Services Branch only met five of the seven systematic factor categories, which were identical to the results in the 2009 evaluation. Your Committee further finds that there are other



concerns about the Child Welfare Services Branch, including vacant positions within the agency, insufficient quality and frequency of caseworker visits, children remaining in foster care beyond fifteen months with no viable goal, and maltreatment allegations in pending cases not being formally investigated. This measure establishes a task force to directly address these concerns and make legislative recommendations to improve the Child Welfare Services Branch and provide the necessary protections for the State's children.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Amending the composition of the task force to include a current or former foster youth, resource caregiver, biological parent of a current or former foster youth, and frontline Child Welfare Services social worker, to be appointed by the Department of Human Services;
- (2) Clarifying that the Department of Human Services may appoint additional members to the task force; and
- (3) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Human Services that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 1022, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 1022, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Human Services,



RUSSELL E. RUDERMAN, Chair



