
SENATE RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE HAWAII'S
HOME VISITING PROGRAM.

1 WHEREAS, positive experiences in early childhood promote
2 healthy socio-emotional and physical development, and a healthy,
3 nurturing home is imperative for families of newborns throughout
4 the State; and

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6 WHEREAS, home visiting programs provide individually
7 tailored support, resources, and information to expectant
8 parents and families with young children, which is especially
9 important for families at risk of child maltreatment and neglect
10 and other adverse childhood experiences, including living with
11 parents involved in domestic violence, substance abuse, mental
12 health problems, or incarceration; and

13
14 WHEREAS, home visiting services can reduce the risk of
15 child abuse and developmental delays by reducing risk factors,
16 fostering family functioning, promoting infant mental health and
17 development, enhancing positive parenting skills, and linking
18 parents to community resources, including childcare, housing,
19 employment, health and mental health services, early childhood
20 education, family literacy, and social services; and

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22 WHEREAS, the Hawaii Healthy Start program was pioneered in
23 Hawaii in 1985 and became a model for the national Healthy
24 Families American program, and the Hawaii programs were
25 certified as Healthy Families American programs during the
26 2000s; and

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28 WHEREAS, the Healthy Families America-Hawaii program, run
29 by the Department of Health, was the State's primary home
30 visiting child abuse prevention program, serving around 2,400
31 high-risk families annually, with an excellent track record
32 consistently showing a ninety-nine percent non-abuse rate among
33 children of families served; and



1 WHEREAS, the Healthy Families America-Hawai'i program was
2 dismantled in 2008 due to budget restrictions, leaving only the
3 Hilo and Wai'anae sites; and
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5 WHEREAS, a Hawai'i home visiting program was established
6 within the Department of Health for hospital-based screening and
7 home visiting services for newborns' families, by Act 91,
8 Regular Session of Hawaii 2013; and
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10 WHEREAS, a study of the Healthy Families America-Hawai'i
11 program in the 2014 Journal of Family Violence showed that among
12 4,466 O'ahu families screened as high-risk, children of families
13 not receiving services were hospitalized four times more
14 frequently than families receiving services, affirming that the
15 services were effective among the highest-risk families; and
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17 WHEREAS, in 2018, the Department of Health successfully
18 obtained competitive funding from the United States Department
19 of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services
20 Administration for a Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home
21 Visiting program that included the two existing Healthy Families
22 America-Hawai'i sites, Parents as Teachers services, and Home
23 Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters services, two
24 initiatives that are evidence-based models targeting specific
25 outcomes including cognitive development and school readiness,
26 intervention with developmental delays, and prevention of child
27 abuse; and
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29 WHEREAS, while intake criteria for the Maternal, Infant,
30 and Early Childhood Home Visiting program includes low income,
31 history of child welfare, substance abuse, developmental delays,
32 low educational status, smoking, and being in the military, it
33 does not include the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths
34 tools; and
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36 WHEREAS, conditions for many families in Hawai'i have become
37 more stressful since 2008, with forty-eight percent of families
38 living below or near the poverty level per a recent Aloha United
39 Way Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed report, and more
40 families are living in extremely stressful financial conditions



1 including lack of housing, which makes safe child rearing often
2 impossible; and

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4 WHEREAS, Department of Health data from the former
5 statewide program showed that between ten and twelve percent of
6 families, or around 1,377 families, had very high-risk
7 assessments, meaning a score of forty and above on the parent
8 survey, similar to four or more adverse childhood experiences
9 (ACEs); and

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11 WHEREAS, such data correlates well with data from ACE
12 studies that estimate that about twelve percent of families with
13 ACE scores of four and above experience high levels of negative
14 outcomes related to health, including high rates of drug use,
15 HIV/AIDS, depression and attempted suicide, and poor work
16 attendance; and

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18 WHEREAS, the ACE study showed that without interventions,
19 children of parents with multiple ACEs tend to experience the
20 same problems thereby creating an intergenerational cycle of
21 trauma, and that there remains a need for services that can
22 identify and effectively serve families at highest risk for
23 child abuse and neglect who have experienced multiple ACEs; and

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25 WHEREAS, services that are specifically designed to reduce
26 ACE risk factors and avert abuse and neglect can reduce
27 intergenerational trauma and the social impact of this trauma
28 related to mental health and attempted suicide, substance
29 dependence, anti-social and criminal behavior, and related
30 costs, which recent state budgets total nearly \$1,000,000,000
31 annually for Hawai'i; and

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33 WHEREAS, the ACE risk reduction services can augment the
34 Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting program,
35 potentially forming two levels of needed services, including
36 comprehensive services for lower and moderate-risk families and
37 intensive evidence-based risk reduction services for families at
38 very high-risk for child abuse and neglect; now, therefore,

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40 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirtieth Legislature
41 of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2020, that the
42 Department of Health is urged to continue expanding and



1 improving its home visiting program, including reinstatement of
2 a network of evidence-based home visiting services for families
3 at highest risk for child abuse and neglect; and
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5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
6 Resolution be transmitted to the Director of Health and
7 Executive Director of the Hawaii Family Support Institute at the
8 University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

