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
10
11   WHEREAS, due to recent tragic events, the public and news
12   media have raised many questions about the CWSB's operations,
13   including policies, procedures, and management; and
14
15   WHEREAS, a 2017 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 determined to not be in "substantial
21   conformity" with any of the seven outcome categories of the
22   evaluation, including the outcome that "[c]hildren are first and
23   foremost protected from 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, other concerns include insufficient quality and
32   frequency of caseworker visits, children remaining in foster
33   care beyond fifteen months with no viable goal, and maltreatment
34   allegations in pending cases not formally being investigated;
35   and

S.R. NO. 179

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

BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-first Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2022, that the Auditor is requested to conduct a comprehensive performance and management audit of the CWSB; and

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

(1) Investigating and substantiating reports of child abuse and neglect;

(2) Providing services for substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect, including risk assessment methods to assess whether the child is in danger of abuse or neglect;

(3) Establishing, maintaining, and enforcing policies that safeguard the rights of the child and their non-abuser family members;

(4) Sharing information and coordinating investigative duties with county police departments;

(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

1   BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Auditor is requested to
2 examine and provide recommendations for additional personnel and
3 other resources needed for the CWSB to effectively investigate
4 allegations of abuse, and neglect, and otherwise perform CWSB's
5 duties; and
6
7   BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Auditor is requested to
8 submit a report of the Auditor's findings and recommendations,
9 including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later
10 than forty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of
11 2023; and
12
13   BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
14 Resolution be transmitted to the Director of Human Services and
15 Administrator of the Child Welfare Services Branch of the
16 Department of Human Services.
17
18
19
       OFFERED BY: _____