



HAWAI`I YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

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Vonnell Ramos, President
Cyd Hoffeld, Vice President
Sione Ford Naeata, Treasurer
Jefferson Gourley, Secretary

Judith F. Clark, Executive
Director

Network Membership

Bay Clinic

Big Brothers Big Sisters Hawai`i

*Big Island Substance Abuse
Council*

Bobby Benson Center

Child and Family Service

Coalition for a Drug-Free Hawai`i

Collins Consulting, LLC

Domestic Violence Action Center

EPIC `Ohana, Inc.

Family Programs Hawai`i

Family Support Hawai`i

Friends of the Children's Justice

Center of Maui

Get Ready Hawai`i

Hale Kipa, Inc.

Hale `Opio Kaua`i, Inc.

Hawai`i Children's Action

Network

Hawai`i Health & Harm

Reduction Center

Ho`ola Na Pua

Ho`okele Coalition of Kaua`i

Ka Hale Pomaika`i

Kahi Mohala

Kokua Kalihi Valley

Kaua`i Planning and Action

Alliance

Maui Youth and Family Services

Na Pu`uwai Molokai Native

Hawaiian Health Care

Systems

P.A.R.E.N.T.S., Inc.

Parents and Children Together

PHOCUSED

PFLAG – Kona, Big Island

Planned Parenthood of the

Great Northwest, Hawaii

Alaska, Kentucky, Indiana

Residential Youth Services

& Empowerment (RYSE)

Salvation Army Family

Intervention Services

Sex Abuse Treatment Center

Susannah Wesley Community

Center

The Catalyst Group

March 20, 2023

To: Representative John Mizuno, Chair
And members of the Committee on Human Services

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HCR 130/HR 131
REQUESTING THE OFFICE OF WELLNESS AND RESILIENCE
ESTABLISH THE MALAMA OHANA WORKING GROUP TO IDENTIFY,
DESIGN, AND RECOMMEND TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGES TO THE
STATE'S CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM

Hawaii Youth Services Network, a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations supports HCR 130/HR 131 Requesting the Office of Wellness and Resilience Establish the Malama Ohana Working Group to Identify, Design, and Recommend Transformative Changes to the State's Child Welfare System

Hawaiian and Pacific Islander children and youth are consistently overrepresented in the Child Welfare System. Malama Ohana is a collaborative effort to identify the issues and needs of these children and families and develop culturally appropriate approaches to reduce overrepresentation.

Providing staffing support through the Office of Wellness and Resilience will support and enhance the initiative.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Judith F. Clark, MPH
Executive Director



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HCR 130 & HR 131: RELATING TO CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

TO: House Committee on Human Services

FROM: Rob Van Tassell, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawaii

Hearing: Thursday, 3/23/2023 at 9:00 AM; CR 329 & via videoconference

Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato, and Members, Committee on Human Services

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of **HCR 130 and HR 131**, which establishes the Malama Ohana Working Group under the Office of Wellness and Resilience. While we support this resolution bill, we strongly support SB295 and ask for your assistance in passing this bill. I am Rob Van Tassell, with Catholic Charities Hawaii.

Catholic Charities Hawaii (CCH) is a tax exempt, non-profit agency that has been providing social services in Hawaii for over 75 years. CCH has programs serving children, families, elders, homeless, and immigrants. Our mission is to provide services and advocacy for the most vulnerable in Hawaii. Catholic Charities Hawaii has a long history of providing services for the child welfare system.

The problems that our children and families face need all of us to work together. Child Welfare Services and resources are stretched, especially on the neighbor islands. Services and resources are needed to deal with issues of domestic violence, substance use disorder, mental health issues, poverty and homelessness. Catholic Charities Hawaii supports this bill to establish and provide funding for the Malama Ohana Working Group. This group would provide an avenue for collaboration amongst community partners and most importantly includes those with lived experience.

Catholic Charities Hawaii supports the Office of Wellness and Resilience and their efforts to improve the child welfare system and the outcomes for the children and families in Hawaii. The collective efforts from all stakeholders will provide robust and meaningful recommendations for the child welfare system.

Please contact our Director of Advocacy and Community Relations, Shellie Niles if you have any questions.





TESTIMONY

By: Nā Kama a Hāloa Network

E ka Luna Ho‘omalua Mizuno, ka Hope Luna Ho‘omalua Amato, a me nā Lālā o ke kōmike, aloha!

Thank you for the opportunity to express our **STRONG SUPPORT for Malama ‘Ohana**. We are members of the **Nā Kama a Hāloa network**. Nā Kama a Hāloa is a network of more than 30 community serving organizations and individuals with lived experiences that work collaboratively to improve the lives of native Hawaiian children and families in the child welfare system. The network convenes to address and improve the child welfare system by embedding Native Hawaiian approaches and practices in the daily work of those impacting the lives of keiki Hawai‘i.

The **Mālama ‘Ohana Working Group** was formed and prototyped by the Nā Kama a Hāloa network. Our network asks the legislature to hear the voices of the community to protect the children in and out of the child welfare system. Representation in the working group supports collaboration between service providers with those they serve to lift up the voices of those with lived experience in the child welfare system. We believe that the **Mālama ‘Ohana Working Group** is an important commitment and investment to provide necessary lived experience and community recommendations to improve the child welfare system.

We have experienced how helpful and innovative **community collaboration** can be to improving outcomes for children and families. Since 2018, members of the Nā Kama a Hāloa network have worked with leaders from Child Welfare Services (CWS) to implement several projects that shift certain practices of the child welfare system so that it can approach trauma in families in ways that work better for all families and keiki. These collaborative projects include the following samples of our work:

1. Developed training for new hires to CWS and resource caregivers.
2. Advocated for keeping siblings together.
3. Worked on projects that help resource caregivers and birth parents communicate better so that the children are less traumatized.
4. Formed a small cadre of parents, known as Parent Partners, with lived experience in the child welfare system that have successfully navigated the system. Parent Partners walk alongside parents to speak about their experiences and help parents navigate the system to improve outcomes for their keiki.

We believe that Native Hawaiian culture-based approaches are prudent and sensible solutions to support the development of all vulnerable youth in Hawai‘i, resulting in greater educational, social, health and overall life success.

Thank you for considering our comment and for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.

Catholic Charities
EPIC 'Ohana
Hale Kipa
Kamehameha Schools
Keith Kuboyama, Family Programs Hawai'i
Shawn Kana'iaupuni, Partners in Development Foundation
Jamee Miller, 'Ekolu Mea Nui

Deb Marois, Converge Consulting
Maddy Day LLC & Associates
Karen Worthington, Worthington Consulting
Kristina Shibata, EPIC 'Ohana
Kamaile Miyasato, EPIC 'Ohana
Kailene Nihipali Sanchez, Resource Caregiver
Kayla Samson, Parent with lived experience
Barbie-Lei Burgess, Service Provider
Kholby Akuna, Former Foster Youth
Jaque Kelley-Ueoka, Service Provider
Vivian Kim Seu, Parent with lived experience
April Lum, Resource Caregiver
Ashley Viluan, Parent with lived experience
Lise Vaughan-Sekona, EPIC 'Ohana
Britney Tavares, Parent with lived experience
Chassidy Shinno, EPIC 'Ohana
Deanna Gonda, Resource Caregiver
Kimberly Nabarro, Parent with lived experience
Amanda Mundon, Resource Caregiver
Diane Keliikoa, EPIC 'Ohana
Sasha Autele, Parent with lived experience
Stephanie Hamano, Service Provider
Jeanne Hamilton, Nā Kama a Hāloa Manager
Aponi Boyer, Former Foster Youth
Samantha U'u, Former Foster Youth
Kristen Bachiller, Parent with lived experience
Kamaile Miyasato, EPIC 'Ohana

HCR-130

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 11:20:46 AM

Testimony for HUS on 3/23/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dara Carlin, M.A.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

PLEASE INCLUDE **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE** representation to the list of Malama Ohana invitees!!!

Ignoring domestic violence is the very first step to falling victim to it and if you look at all the interpersonal relationship homicides, you'll notice that the majority of these murders had a history or element of domestic violence involved in them!

I have urged every committee this measure has gone before this session to add domestic violence to the list of invited Malama Ohana participants to no effect. Does anyone remember that this effort stems from the presumed murder of Ariel Sellers whose adoptive/foster father had a history of domestic violence that was ignored? Isn't the Malama Ohana group's purpose to prevent the next Ariel Sellers, Reef Aikau, Talia Williams, Brayden McVeigh (and others) from happening? If you don't include domestic violence, this collaborative effort is meaningless and the next child's demise is already taking shape.

We have several domestic violence agencies to choose from in this state; please tap just one of them to include their expertise in this working group.

Thank you for your time and consideration and apologies for my tone if I sound overly frustrated; domestic violence homicides ARE preventable - you just have to know what to look for and you're not going to know what to look for if you don't have that voice at the table.

HCR-130

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 3:41:57 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/23/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Karen L Worthington	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Committee on Human Services

Hearing on March 23, 2023, 9am

Testimony in SUPPORT of HCR 130 and HR 131, REQUESTING THE OFFICE OF WELLNESS AND RESILIENCE ESTABLISH THE MALAMA OHANA WORKING GROUP TO IDENTIFY, DESIGN, AND RECOMMEND TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGES TO THE STATE'S CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM.

Dear Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato, and Committee Members,

I write to share my strong support for establishing the Mālama 'Ohana Working Group within the Office of Wellness and Resilience. Because of the importance and urgent need for this work in Hawai'i, I ask that you create this work group through SB295 rather than through a resolution. At the same time, I support HCR 130 and HR 131 and urge you to vote yes on these resolutions. I also urge you to appropriate funds to the Office of Wellness and Resilience to support the work group.

The working group brings together child welfare service members and community servicing organizations with parents, children, resource caregivers and family members with lived experience in the child welfare system. As a consultant and Children's Policy Lawyer who has worked on improving child welfare systems in several states and at the national level, I believe this approach of establishing the Mālama 'Ohana Working Group is a unique, powerful, and effective way to seek, design, and recommend transformative changes to the Hawai'i child welfare system. I strongly support the collaboration of service providers with those they serve to improve the outcomes for children in the child welfare system.

Mahalo for your thoughtful consideration of this request. Please contact me at karen@karenworthington.com if I can be of further assistance.

Best regards,

Karen Worthington, JD, Certified Child Welfare Law Specialist (CWLS)

66 Puakea Place

Kula, Hawai'i 96790

HCR-130

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 7:43:09 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/23/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ryan Samonte	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the creation of a working group and hope the group receives funding/state support.

Thank you for creating space to submit testimony.

HCR-130

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 8:42:14 PM

Testimony for HUS on 3/23/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Kunitake	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HCR130. Please support HCR130.

HCR-130

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 10:27:30 AM

Testimony for HUS on 3/23/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shay Chan Hodges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am concerned about the families and children in child welfare. Services and resources are stretched, especially on the neighbor islands. Services and resources are needed to deal with issues of domestic violence, substance use disorder, mental health issues, poverty and houselessness. We need Mālama ‘Ohana to bring the voices of those with lived experience, and the community together to find solutions to these urgent problems.

HCR-130

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 2:19:30 AM

Testimony for HUS on 3/23/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lise Vaughan Sekona	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

I support the Mālama ‘Ohana Working Group to bring together community based organizations, CWS, and those with lived experience to work together for children and families in the child welfare system.

I urge the passage of SB295 as funding is needed to do the work of the working group.

To: Rep. John Mizuno, Chair
Rep. Terez Amato, Vice Chair
Committee on Human Services

Re: HCR 130, relating to Child Welfare Services

Aloha Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato, and Committee Members

As members of the Hawai'i Children's Trust Fund (HCTF) Advisory Council, we testify in STRONG SUPPORT of HCR 130 requesting the Office of Wellness and Resilience establish the Mālama 'Ohana working group to identify, design, and recommend transformative changes to the State's Child Welfare System. We work to ensure that Hawai'i's children can develop into healthy, productive, and caring individuals by promoting the advancement of community family strengthening programs in order to prevent child abuse and neglect.

Collaboration and building relationships, or *pilina*, is key between community and state entities. Listening to understand our communities is critical for transformation of systems that will benefit some of our most vulnerable families and children. This group would gather together invested partners as well as raise the voices of those with lived experiences that have been impacted by the child welfare system here in Hawai'i. We support the community coming together to strengthen the child welfare system of care.

Mahalo for providing the necessary support for the working group to carry out its duties.

Signed,
Kaulana Mossman
Carole Vida-Eleneki
Mai Hall

HCR-130

Submitted on: 3/22/2023 11:41:37 AM

Testimony for HUS on 3/23/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keola Pagud	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha House Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Terez, and the House Committee on Human Services members,

My name is Keola Pagud and I strongly support HCR 130 in order to establish the Malama 'Ohana Working Group. As a foster youth alumus and a human services professional, I have been involved in advocacy and direct service for over a decade. The challenges facing Child Welfare Services (CWS) are complex but are able to be understood by engaging the fuller child welfare community. I've seen the positive impacts of youth-adult partnerships in ensuring safety and assisting youth toward becoming healthy and connected youth. I have been able to witness the support of parents who have experienced CWS who want to share about the honest strengths and challenges of their experience. I kindly ask you to consider passing HCR 130 in order to strengthen our diverse community.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Keola Pagud, MSW