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February 7, 2023

TO: The Honorable Representative John M. Mizuno, Chair
House Committee on Human Services

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: [HB 225 HD1](#) – RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES.

Hearing: February 9, 2023, 9:00 a.m.
Conference Room 329 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this measure, which is similar to administrative measure HB 1067 and SB 1365 relating to Act 317, Session Laws of Hawaii 2022 (Act 317), regarding the development of a comprehensive child welfare information system (CCWIS).

PURPOSE: Amends Act 317, Session Laws of Hawaii 2022, to give the Department of Human Services flexibility in developing a comprehensive child welfare information system and extend the appropriation lapse date.

DHS appreciates the Legislature's attention to improving the child welfare system and supports this measure to amend Act 317. The amendments to Act 317 will allow DHS the flexibility to develop a new Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS). To develop CCWIS, DHS needs to be able to work with more than one potential service provider consistent with procurement law to get the best value for the State. As it stands, Act 317 will not allow DHS to do that, and the Department would not be able to expend the appropriation.

This measure will also give DHS more time to expend the appropriation and leverage available federal match funds through a reimbursement model. Currently, DHS estimates the overall planning and implementation cost of the CCWIS at about \$35 million to \$40 million, with a 50/50 federal match done through reimbursement. However, costs to other states that have already developed their CCWIS project range from \$60 million to \$80 million. Therefore, DHS needs to maximize all federal reimbursement matching opportunities and will request additional general fund resources in the future through the executive budget.

Improving Child Welfare Services Branch (CWSB) IT systems will support the staff in its work to assist the most vulnerable children and their families. CWSB is replacing and decommissioning its current, outdated system of record, the Child Protective Services System (or CPSS). CPSS went live on Oahu in 1989 and was deployed on all neighbor islands by 1992. While the CPSS data elements have been updated to align with federal reporting mandates, the system is difficult to use and modify to meet current business requirements. It is minimally able to serve the needs of the Department and is time-consuming. For example, CPSS cannot provide real-time data to allow caseworkers and managers to make data-informed quick decisions. CPSS is also inaccessible to many partner agencies, youth in foster care, and resource caregivers. Accessing and providing data for case or policy decision-making, reporting, including Uniform Information Practices Act (UIPA) requests, and system quality control and improvement are also very time-consuming.

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF)'s Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) Final Rule describes that it is to “assist title IV–E agencies in developing information management systems that leverage new innovations and technology in order to better serve children and families. More specifically, this final rule supports the use of cost effective, innovative technologies to automate the collection of high-quality case management data and to promote its analysis, distribution, and use by workers, supervisors, administrators, researchers, and policymakers.”

With significant support from the Department's Enterprise Officer, the Office of Information Technology, and the Legislature, CWSB has cautiously begun planning to develop and implement Hawaii's CCWIS and retire CPSS. DHS has made several meaningful breakthroughs in the past year, including the hiring of new CCWIS staff, procurement of a

project management vendor and an Independent Validation and Verification (IV and V) vendor, securing technical assistance from Capacity Building Center for States as authorized by ACF, adoption of a structured Project Management Framework, and continued strengthening of relationships with other states and federal partners.

The current CCWIS project budget is \$28,400,000, including \$14,200,000 from a CIP bond, and anticipated a 50% \$14,200,000 Title IV-E CCWIS reimbursement match from ACF. Based on current market research and discussions with other states and federal partners, the project's cost will likely exceed this, so additional funding requests are likely as the project moves forward.

Allowing DHS to use all appropriated state funds to develop and build CCWIS and access available federal-matched reimbursements is highly appreciated.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.