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JAN 1 8 2023

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE ZERO TO THREE COURT.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the Hawai'i Zero to 2 Three court is a specialty court in the first circuit court, 3 family court, established in 2009 with initial funding from the 4 national Zero to Three program. Zero to Three courts are rooted 5 in developmental science and aim to improve outcomes for 6 maltreated infants and toddlers, reduce the reoccurrence of 7 substantiated abuse and neglect of infants and toddlers under 8 the court's jurisdiction, and shift the court's culture to focus 9 on the needs of infants and toddlers. Participation is 10 voluntary for parents who meet the criteria of past family court 11 adjudication and having at least one child between the ages of 12 zero to three years.

Key features of the Zero to Three court include monthly
case conferences for each family, monthly court hearings, and a
court team composed of a lead family court judge, designated
guardian ad litem, parents' counsel, deputy attorneys general,
and social workers from the department of human services. The



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court hearings provide intensive judicial oversight and 1 2 accountability for all parties while keeping the court team 3 focused on timely permanency. Parent activities are held the 4 same day as the monthly court hearings and enhance parenting 5 skills while building a support system among participating 6 families in a safe, judgment free environment. Infants and 7 toddlers in the program receive a comprehensive developmental 8 assessment that results in referrals to appropriate services. 9 Families also participate in parent-child interaction therapy or 10 child-parent psychotherapy to promote healthy family 11 relationships.

12 The legislature further finds that the University of 13 Hawaii's center on disability studies conducted an evaluation of 14 the Hawai'i Zero to Three court, assessing program activities from August 2013 to July 2016. The study concludes that the 15 16 program successfully meets the objectives of reducing parental 17 alcohol or substance use, improving family reunification 18 outcomes, decreasing the length of stay and number of placements 19 in foster care, increasing visitation frequency, ensuring 20 service availability timeliness, and increasing access to 21 services.



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1 The legislature notes that national funding for the Hawai'i 2 Zero to Three court ceased in 2012, and the court has been 3 unable to expand to other circuits. The third circuit, 4 comprising Hawai'i island, has expressed interest in starting a 5 program subject to available funding. 6 The purpose of this Act is to fund a program coordinator 7 position to support expansion of the Hawai'i Zero to Three court 8 to the third circuit. The appropriated funds shall not supplant 9 the judiciary's existent funding nor budget requests. 10 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general 11 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$75,588 or so much 12 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2023-2024 and the 13 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 14 2024-2025 to support a Hawai'i Zero to Three court program 15 coordinator position in the third circuit. 16 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the judiciary 17 for the purposes of this Act. 18 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2023. 19 Kal Mind INTRODUCED BY:



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Report Title:

Zero to Three Court; Third Circuit; Judiciary; Program Coordinator Position; Appropriation

Description:

Establishes a Zero to Three Court Program Coordinator position. Expands the Zero to Three Court to the Third Circuit. Appropriates funds.

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

