

HB-2183-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/21/2024 1:07:44 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/27/2024 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Golojuch	Testifying for Rainbow Family 808	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Rainbow Family 808 supports HB2183. Please pass this bill.

Mike Golojuch, Secretary/Board Member



HB 2183, HD1, SD1, RELATING TO SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

MARCH 27, 2024 · JDC HEARING

POSITION: Support.

RATIONALE: Imua Alliance supports HB 2183, HD1, SD1, relating to sexual exploitation, which establishes safe harbor protections for survivors of sexual exploitation who seek medical or law enforcement assistance.

Imua Alliance is a victim service provider for survivors of sex trafficking. Over the past 15 years, we have provided comprehensive direct intervention (victim rescue) services to over 200 victims, successfully emancipating them from slavery and assisting in their restoration, while providing a range of targeted services to over 1,000 victims and individuals at risk of sexual exploitation. **During the pandemic, demand for victim services to our organization has skyrocketed by 330 percent, driven in part by a fivefold increase in direct crisis calls from potential trafficking victims.**

Each of the victims we have assisted has suffered from complex and overlapping trauma, including post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and anxiety, dissociation, parasuicidal behavior, and substance abuse. Trafficking-related trauma can lead to a complete loss of identity. A victim we cared for in 2016, for example, had become so heavily trauma bonded to her pimp that while under his grasp, she couldn't remember her own name. Yet, sadly, many of the victims with whom we work are misidentified as so-called "voluntary prostitutes" and are subsequently arrested and incarcerated, with no financial resources from which to pay for their release.

Sex trafficking is a profoundly violent crime. At least 23 percent of trafficking victims in Hawai'i report being first exploited before turning 18, according to a recent report, with the average age of trafficked keiki's initial exposure to exploitation being 11. Based on regular outreach and monitoring, we estimate that approximately 150 high-risk sex trafficking establishments operate in Hawai'i. In a recent report conducted by the State Commission on the Status of Women, researchers from Arizona State University found that 1 in every 11 adult males living in our state buys sex online. When visitors are also counted, that number worsens to 1 in every 7 men walking the streets of our island home and a daily online sex buyer market of 18,614 for O'ahu and a total sex buyer population for the island of 74,362, including both tourists and residents.

ASU's findings are grim, but not surprising to local organizations that provide services to survivors of sex trafficking. Imua Alliance, for example, has trained volunteers to perform outreach to victims in high-risk locations, like strip clubs, massage parlors, and hostess bars. More than 80 percent of runaway youth report being approached for sexual exploitation while on the run, over 30 percent of whom are targeted within the first 48 hours of leaving home. With regard to mental health, sex trafficking victims are twice as likely to suffer from PTSD as a soldier in a war zone.

Greater than 80 percent of victims report being repeatedly raped and 95 percent report being physically assaulted, numbers that are underreported, according to the United States Department of State and numerous trauma specialists, because of the inability of many victims to recognize sexual violence. As one underage survivor told Imua Alliance prior to being rescued, "I can't be raped. Only good girls can be raped. I'm a bad girl. If I *want* to be raped, I have to *earn* it."

Accordingly, **we support measures to advance our state's fight against sexual servitude, including this bill's extension of safe harbor protections for survivors of sexual exploitation who seek medical or law enforcement assistance.** Survivors of sex trafficking should not be held legally responsible for the trauma they have endured. Over 30 states have enacted safe harbor protections for sex trafficking victims. Hawai'i should join that list.

Kris Coffield · Executive Director, Imua Alliance · (808) 679-7454 · kris@imuaalliance.org

March 22, 2024.

TO: Representative Karl Rhoads, Chair
Representative Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

FROM: Billie Anne Yutaka

SUBJECT: H.B. 2183 H.D. 1 S.D. 1- RELATING TO SEXUAL EXPLOITATION.

My name is Billie Yutaka, and I am an MSW student at UH Manoa. I wholeheartedly **SUPPORT** H.B. 2183 H.D. 1 S.D. 1- RELATING TO SEXUAL EXPLOITATION because it offers a pathway to both safety and justice for victims of sex trafficking and exploitation in Hawaii.

The statistics outlined in the bill are alarming yet sadly reflect a reality many know firsthand. Sex trafficking isn't an abstract problem; it's happening in our communities, disproportionately harming Native Hawaiian sisters and daughters. The current law, while well-intended, can leave victims trapped in a devastating cycle of fear. Criminalizing those who have been exploited only compounds their trauma.

This bill takes a critical step by offering safe harbor. Victims who desperately need medical help or a way out of a dangerous situation should not have to worry about arrest or prosecution. By ensuring immunity when victims seek help, we remove a major barrier to the vital services and support they deserve.

Furthermore, this bill recognizes the importance of a trauma-informed approach. Sex trafficking survivors have endured unimaginable abuse. Offering pathways to healing, financial security, and the chance to hold their exploiters accountable is essential in breaking the cycle.

I understand concerns about the complexity of the sex trade and ensuring bad actors are not shielded from prosecution. However, this bill clearly focuses on victims. It allows those being exploited an opportunity to escape their abusers, without retraumatizing them.

Hawaii has a chance to lead the way in showing that compassion and justice can coexist. This bill protects those who need it most and gives them a fighting chance on the path to recovery. I strongly urge you to pass this legislation.

Thank you for your commitment to the safety and well-being of all our residents.

Sincerely,

Billie Anne Yutaka

(808) 383-1554

HB-2183-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2024 1:09:01 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/27/2024 9:45:00 AM

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

Comments:

Stand in Support

H.B. NO 2183

Date: Wednesday, March 27, 2024

Time: 9:45 AM

Place: Conference Room 016 & Videoconference
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

Dear Representatives and Committee Members,

My name is AA Relm Park. I am a student representative from the University of Hawaii at Manoa Thompson School of Social Work and Public Health. I am in support of H.B. NO 2183 establishing safe harbor protections for survivors of sexual exploitation who seek medical or law enforcement.

I strongly support this bill because the survivors of sexual exploitation are in a highly vulnerable state in which they may need the assistance of medical services and law enforcement. According to Lara Gerassi (2015), “sexual exploitation broadly refers to any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes, including but not limited to profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from sexual exploitation.” Sexual exploitation can be referred to any individual, regardless of age, who was affected by sexual violence for political or social advancement. Sexual exploitation includes sex trafficking, commercial sex exploitation, modern-day slavery, prostitution, trading, and transaction sex.

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 was introduced and implemented for one purpose: to protect victims by collaborating to eliminate human trafficking in the United States, domestically and internationally (Haynes, 2008). The consequences of victims or survivors of sexual exploitation may be at risk of mental health, substance abuse, and PTSD (Gerassi, 2015). The medical services can help victims or survivors who are suffering from mental health due to sexual exploitation. Furthermore, law enforcement can protect and keep the victims or survivors safe, so they can collaborate with law enforcement to assist law enforcement.

In closing, again, I would like to accentuate that I strongly support the HB NO 2183 bill. The survivors of sexual exploitation are in a highly impuissant state in which they may need the assistance of medical services and law enforcement. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
AA Relm Park
Graduate student

Gerassi, L. (2015). From exploitation to industry: Definitions, risks, and consequences of domestic sexual exploitation and sex work among women and girls. *Journal of human behavior in the social environment*, 25(6), 591-605,
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4696486/>

Haynes, D. F. (2008). Good Intentions are not enough: four recommendations for implementing the trafficking victims protection act. *U. St. Thomas LJ*, 6, 77.
https://heinonline-org.eres.library.manoa.hawaii.edu/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/usthomlj6&div=9&g_sent=1&casa_token=&collection=journals

HB-2183-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2024 8:02:14 AM

Testimony for JDC on 3/27/2024 9:45:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ellen Awai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB2183.HD1SD1 for sex trafficking. Sex trafficking is lead by many on the continent and even by well intentioned precautions. I have seen signs on the back of bathroom doors that try to warn youth to be cautious, but who can ignore advertisments to free trips to Hawaii! Many youths especially in California is drawn across the country to the beaches and Hollywood and can be seen by so many movies to come out west. Education is needed on the continent!

Hawaii doesn't have the problem, the culture on the continent is unlike Hawaii's where our youth are cared for by most local families long after they are adults, at times outliving parents in multi-generational homes. I've been involved with huge grass roots organizations that won't listen to their children and instead will either kick them out of their homes or deprive them of their liberties, to the extent of incarcerating them with Tough Love. Just because they want to be like their peers in teen years. A chemical imbalance that is a natural part of growing up, like every decade after that, or other traumatic events going to another state college, living with others, noticing their own sexual identities, child rearing, and all events of being human.

Support HB2183 but extend to the education to the continent!