

**SB-2758-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/25/2024 5:43:54 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mike Golojuch	Rainbow Family 808	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Rainbow Family 808 Supports SB2758. Please pass this bill.

Mike Golojuch, Sr., Secretary/Board Member



## SB 2758, SD1, HD1, RELATING TO SEX TRAFFICKING

MARCH 28, 2024 · FIN HEARING

**POSITION:** Support.

**RATIONALE:** Imua Alliance supports SB 2758, SD1, HD1, relating to sex trafficking, which authorizes civil claims to be made against a business, owner, or operator of a transient accommodation, or other commercial entity that profits from sexual exploitation.

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 skyrocketed by 330 percent, driven in part by a fivefold increase in direct crisis calls.

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 effort to empower survivors to pursue civil claims against businesses that willingly turn a blind eye to exploitation that happens on their premises.** Too often, the owners and operators of such businesses are allowed to escape culpability for their role in facilitating sex trafficking, as they overlook exploitation to pad their profit margins.

**Kris Coffield · Executive Director, Imua Alliance · (808) 679-7454 · [kris@imuaalliance.org](mailto:kris@imuaalliance.org)**

**TESTIMONY OF EVAN OUE ON BEHALF OF THE  
HAWAII ASSOCIATION FOR JUSTICE (HAJ) IN SUPPORT OF  
SB 2758 SD1 HD1**

Date: Thursday March 28, 2024

Time: 2:00 p.m.

My name is Evan Oue and I am presenting this testimony on behalf of the Hawaii Association for Justice (HAJ) in **SUPPORT OF SB 2758 SD1 HD1**.

HAJ supports this measure which authorizes civil claims to be made against a business, owner of a business, or operator of a business that profits from sexual exploitation. This measure is intended to support survivors of sex trafficking by authorizing civil claims to be made against a business, owner of a business, or operator of a business for coercion into sex trafficking and sexual exploitation.

HAJ appreciates the intent of the legislature to create a cause of action for victims of sex trafficking. We support the negligence standard implemented in this measure for bringing a claim against a business profiting from or promoting sex trafficking. This is the appropriate standard of care that should be employed when contemplating liability thresholds for businesses in our state.

Additionally, we appreciate the previous committee's extension of the Statute of Limitations from 6 to 10 years to allow those coerced into sex trafficking and sexual exploitation to come forward and pursue justice.

HAJ supports the intent of this measure. Thank you for allowing us to testify regarding this measure. Please feel free contact us should you have any questions or desire additional information.

**SB-2758-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/27/2024 9:44:46 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/28/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Christine Johnson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill that holds complicit , colluding ,capitalizing entities financially accountable.

Christine Johnson

Makaha,Hawaii