

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 04 2025

RE: S.B. No. 265

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2025
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Judiciary, to which was referred S.B. No. 265 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO COMPENSATION FOR COURT-APPOINTED REPRESENTATION,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to increase the rate of compensation and maximum allowable amounts per case for court-appointed counsel and guardians ad litem in family court proceedings.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Judiciary, Department of Human Services, Office of the Public Defender, one member of the Kaua'i County Council, ACLU Hawai'i, Hawaii State Bar Association, Legal Aid Society of Hawai'i, Hawaii Coalition for Child Protective Reform, and two individuals.

Your Committee finds that guardians ad litem perform a critical role in a wide range of family court cases, such as representing the best interest of children who have been abused or neglected in Child Protective Act cases; involuntary hospitalization proceedings; and all assisted community treatment proceedings initiated pursuant to section 334-123, Hawaii Revised Statutes. Your Committee also finds that court appointed attorneys play a similarly critical role in family court cases by providing constitutionally-mandated representation to individuals



whose parental rights are at stake in Child Protective Act cases and to minors who have been charged with law violations. Your Committee believes that, due to the complexity and important nature of these cases, it is in the community's best interest to attract and retain highly competent individuals to serve as guardians ad litem and court appointed attorneys in family court cases. This measure will increase the pool of individuals willing and able to perform the critical work of guardians ad litem and court appointed attorneys in family court cases and allow the family court to hear cases without unnecessary delay by enhancing the rates at which the Judiciary can compensate guardians ad litem and court appointed attorneys

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Judiciary that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 265 and recommends that it pass Second Reading and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Judiciary,



KARL RHOADS, Chair



