



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 292 SD 1 HD 1**  
**RELATING TO SEXUAL EXPLOITATION**

House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs  
Hawai'i State Capitol

March 20, 2025

2:00PM

Room 325

---

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** SB292 SD 1 HD 1 which establishes safe harbor protections for survivors of sexual exploitation who seek medical or law enforcement assistance. This crucial initiative represents a significant step towards combating the heinous crime of sex trafficking and providing justice for victims, particularly Native Hawaiians who are disproportionately impacted by this form of exploitation.

Sex trafficking is a pervasive and devastating crime that preys on the most vulnerable members of our society, including minors. By ensuring victims of sex trafficking are not criminalized for their own exploitation, we can advance the delivery of social services and trauma-informed care for those in need. This measure would also advance prosecution efforts by empowering trafficking victims to pursue legal persons and entities that profit from exploitation, and to obtain financial security for the harm they have endured.

Establishing safe harbor protections for survivors of sexual exploitation sends a clear message that our state is committed to protecting the rights and well-being of all individuals, especially our most vulnerable populations. Native Hawaiians are disproportionately affected by sex trafficking due to a combination of factors including socioeconomic disparities and historical trauma. Studies have shown Native Hawaiian women are especially vulnerable to trafficking, and that the majority (43 percent) of sex trafficking cases are Kānaka Maoli girls trafficked in Waikīkī, O'ahu.<sup>1</sup> Notably, 57% of participants served through the Mana'olana Program at Child & Family Services are Native

---

<sup>1</sup> Office of Hawaiian Affairs and Commission on the Status of Women, Missing and Murdered Native Hawaiian Women and Girls Task Force Report p.5 (2022)

Hawaiian females who have experienced human trafficking. Therefore, enacting legislation to strengthen sex trafficking laws is especially critical for protecting Native Hawaiian communities and ensuring that they receive the support and resources they need to combat this issue.

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs urges this committee to **PASS SB 292 SD 1 HD 1** to strengthen protections for victims, hold perpetrators accountable, and provide much-needed support to Native Hawaiian communities who are disproportionately affected by this crime. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

**DEPARTMENT OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY**  
**KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO HO'OPI'I**  
**CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

ALII PLACE  
1060 RICHARDS STREET • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
PHONE: (808) 768-7400 • FAX: (808) 768-7515 • WEBSITE: [www.honoluluprosecutor.org](http://www.honoluluprosecutor.org)

STEVEN S. ALM  
PROSECUTING ATTORNEY  
LOIO HO'OPI'I



THOMAS J. BRADY  
FIRST DEPUTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY  
HOPE MUA LOIO HO'OPI'I

**THE HONORABLE DAVID A. TARNAS, CHAIR**  
**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS**  
**Thirty-Third State Legislature**  
**Regular Session of 2025**  
**State of Hawai'i**

March 19, 2025

**RE: S.B. 292 S.D. 1; RELATING TO SEXUAL EXPLOITATION.**

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney for the City and County of Honolulu submits the following testimony in support of S.B. 292 S.D. 1.

S.B. 292 S.D. 1 establishes safe harbor protections for survivors of sexual exploitation who seek medical or law enforcement assistance. This bill aligns with the Honolulu County Human Trafficking Task Force's objective to offer victim-centered response to those experiencing exploitation.

We prioritize the health and safety of exploited or trafficked individuals and their access to medical care or law enforcement assistance unencumbered by the fear of prosecution. Given the hidden nature of this crime, it is imperative to minimize barriers to these services.

Last session, the Legislature considered a similar bill that raised equal protection issues because it extended safe-harbor provisions exclusively to Waikiki commercial-sex buyers (colloquially "johns"). Under this bill, commercial-sex buyers do not qualify for safe harbor under any provision. We support this change.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**SB-292-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/18/2025 6:26:12 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nadine Ortega	Tagnawa	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

**STRONG SUPPORT for S.B. 292 S.D. 1, H.D. 1**

Aloha nui e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Honorable Members of JHACmtee.,

Tagnawa, an environmental disaster response and recovery organization serving Filipinos in Lahaina, supports S.B. 292.

Tagnawa means "mutual aid" in Ilokano and was the first organization on the ground in West Maui hotels and emergency shelters to translate disaster resources into Filipino languages and to guide Filipino fire victims through aid applications in August 2023. Led by University of Hawai'i Filipino language instructors and mental health professionals, Tagnawa is currently undertaking the first research project to explore how the Lahaina fire has affected women and girls. While data is still being collected and analyzed, initial findings raise serious concerns related to sexual exploitation of female fire survivors.

International and national research already shows that environmental disasters increase the risk of commercial sexual exploitation due to heightened economic pressures, violence, and predatory actors.

Passing this law is important to get in front of potential harmful outcomes of the 2023 wildfire disaster and the ongoing crisis of sexual exploitation in Hawai'i as documented by the Hawai'i State Commission on the Status of Women, Arizona State University, and Office of Hawaiian Affairs.

This measure is about being **both practical and compassionate**, and creating a real opportunity to better assist vulnerable women and girls as they comprise the overwhelming majority of individuals in the sex trade either by cruel economics or force.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of S.B. 292 S.D.1. H.D. 1.

Nadine Ortega, J.D. Executive Director



## SB 292, SD1, HD1, RELATING TO SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

MARCH 20, 2025 · JHA HEARING

**POSITION:** Support.

**RATIONALE:** Imua Alliance supports SB 292, SD1, HD1, 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.**

***Contact us at [imuaalliance.org/contact](https://imuaalliance.org/contact).***

**SB-292-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/19/2025 1:05:54 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Olderr	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

I support this bill. It will protect survivors of sexual exploitation from being demonization while encouraging others to get help and escape their abuse. The way the law stands, Victims might stay in their abusive environment out of fear of being arrested or imprisoned for asking for help.

**SB-292-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/20/2025 7:23:12 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Master Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire	Ohana Unity Party & Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

March 20, 2025

To the Honorable Members of the Hawaii State Legislature  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Esteemed Legislators, (Your Maui Chief of Police Pelletier is 10000% dirty and cannot be trusted with ties to Oprah, P Diddy, the Las Vegas Mafia, Pedophile Elites, etc. If you call 911 on Maui to report crimes against the cops or report drug smuggling = you will get cement boots and be killed by the dirty cops, which is why you don't hear too many locals complaining publicly, but Pikachu knows he's dirty because the Cops & Hawaiians in Vegas have the coconut wireless as well. The dirty chief of police loves Cocaine as his drug of choice from Columbia & South America!)

I am writing with boundless enthusiasm to champion Senate Bill No. 292 of the Thirty-Third Legislature, Regular Session of 2025—a transformative measure establishing safe harbor protections for survivors of sexual exploitation seeking medical or law enforcement assistance. As a [resident of Hawaii/concerned citizen—customize as applicable], I am electrified by this Legislature's bold stand against sex trafficking, a modern-day slavery devastating our communities. This bill is a lifeline for survivors, especially our Native Hawaiian population, and I implore you to pass it with urgency, backed by harrowing data and a resolute commitment to justice.

The scale of sex trafficking in Hawaii is staggering. A 2018 report by Arizona State University and the Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women found that one in eleven adult male residents are online sex shoppers, totaling an estimated 74,362 potential buyers statewide. Imua Alliance reports 150 establishments fueling the commercial sex trade, amplifying trafficking risks. During the COVID-19 pandemic, a local provider saw a 300% spike in service demand—proof of an escalating crisis. Nationally, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) reports 24.9 million people trapped in forced labor globally, with 4.8 million in forced sexual exploitation (Global Estimates of Modern Slavery, 2017). In 2023 alone, DHS's Operation



Predator arrested over 4,400 child sexual predators, many tied to trafficking networks stretching from the mainland to our shores.

Native Hawaiians bear a disproportionate burden. The 2018 survey revealed 64% of sex trafficking survivors in Hawaii have at least partial Native Hawaiian ancestry, a stark overrepresentation linked to systemic inequities like poverty and intergenerational trauma. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) received 36.2 million reports of suspected child sexual exploitation in 2023 via its CyberTipline, with Hawaii contributing 108 human trafficking reports to the National Human Trafficking Hotline in 2020. Locally, Hawaii's Child Welfare Services logged 205 child trafficking reports between 2019 and 2021, confirming 67 cases. These numbers scream for action—S.B. 292 is that action.

Survivors deserve protection, not punishment. DHS notes that victims are often psychologically coerced, unaware of their enslavement, making safe harbor critical. NCMEC's 2023 recovery of 1,083 children from trafficking underscores the need for trauma-informed support at rescue. S.B. 292 amends HRS §§ 712-1200, 712-1206, and 712-1207 to shield survivors from arrest or prosecution when seeking help, dismantling barriers to safety. This isn't leniency—it's a moral imperative to end retraumatization and empower survivors to heal and seek justice against traffickers profiting from their suffering.

Hawaii can lead with these bold solutions, fortified by S.B. 292 and reinforced by data:

- **Educate and Empower:** Launch statewide campaigns using DHS Blue Campaign resources to raise awareness, teaching communities to spot trafficking signs—vital with 74,362 potential buyers lurking.
- **Fund Survivor Services:** Allocate resources to providers like Imua Alliance, which saw a 300% demand surge, ensuring trauma-informed care for the 64% Native Hawaiian survivors and beyond.
- **Strengthen Law Enforcement:** Train police with DHS's victim-centered approaches (e.g., HSI's 61 ICAC Task Forces) to prioritize trafficker arrests—only 19 statewide from 2014-2020—over survivor prosecution.
- **Leverage Data:** Partner with NCMEC to expand Hawaii's trafficking database, mirroring their 180 million CyberTipline reports since 1998, to track and dismantle local networks.
- **Prosecute Exploiters:** Target the 150 sex trade establishments and buyers, using DHS's 4,400+ predator arrests as a model to hold perpetrators accountable, not victims.

This is our moment to act. S.B. 292 aligns with Hawaii's Aloha spirit, offering survivors—especially Native Hawaiians bearing 64% of this burden—a chance to reclaim their lives. The DHS and NCMEC data, paired with local realities (205 child cases, 108 hotline reports), demand we move now, not in 2057. Pass this bill, and Hawaii becomes a sanctuary for the exploited, a model for the nation. I'm ready to testify, advocate, or assist—let's save lives together. Mahalo nui loa for your leadership.

With unwavering support and hope,

Master Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire, HRM

Ohana Unity Party, Chairman

[www.Ohanaunityparty.com](http://www.Ohanaunityparty.com)

Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands, H.I.

**SB-292-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/20/2025 9:47:36 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/20/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Stand in Support